

Draft recommendations on the  
future electoral arrangements for  
Peterborough

*February 2002*

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A large map illustrating the existing and proposed ward boundaries for Peterborough is inserted inside the back cover of the report.



## WHAT IS THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT COMMISSION FOR ENGLAND?

The Local Government Commission for England is an independent body set up by Parliament. Our task is to review and make recommendations on whether there should be changes to local authorities' electoral arrangements.

Members of the Commission are:

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

Barbara Stephens (Chief Executive)

We are 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, and the number of councillors, ward names and the frequency of elections. We can also recommend changes to the electoral arrangements of parish councils.

With effect from 1 April 2002, the Electoral Commission has assumed the functions of the Local Government Commission for England and taken over responsibility for making Orders putting in place the new arrangements resulting from periodic electoral reviews (powers which currently reside with the Secretary of State). As part of this transfer the Electoral Commission will set up a Boundary Committee for England which will take over responsibility for the conduct of PERs from the Local Government Commission. The Boundary Committee for England will conduct electoral reviews following the same rules and in the same manner as the Local Government Commission for England. The Boundary Committee for England's final recommendations on future electoral arrangements will then be presented to the Electoral Commission which will be able to accept, modify or reject the Boundary Committee for England's findings. Under these new arrangements there will remain a further opportunity to make representations directly to the Electoral Commission after the publication of the final recommendations, as was previously the case with the Secretary of State. Interested parties will have a further six weeks to send comments to the Electoral Commission.



## SUMMARY

We began a review of the electoral arrangements for Peterborough on 10 July 2001.

- **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 Peterborough:

- **in three of the 24 wards the number of electors represented by each councillor varies by more than 10 per cent from the average for the district and two wards vary by more than 20 per cent 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 per cent from the average in five wards and by more than 20 per cent in two wards.**

Our main draft recommendations for future electoral arrangements (see Tables 1 and 2 and paragraphs 98–99) are that:

- **Peterborough City Council should have 57 councillors, the same as at present;**
- **there should be 25 wards, instead of 24 as at present;**
- **the boundaries of 17 of the existing wards should be modified, resulting in a net increase of one ward, and seven wards should retain their existing boundaries;**
- **elections should continue to take place by thirds.**

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

- **In 21 of the proposed 25 wards the number of electors per councillor would vary by no more than 10 per cent from the district average.**
- **This level of electoral equality is expected to improve further with the number of electors per councillor in 23 wards expected to vary by no more than 10 per cent from the average for the district in 2006.**

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

- **revised warding arrangements and the re-distribution of councillors for the parishes of Bretton and Eye;**
- **revised warding arrangements for Orton Longueville Parish Council;**
- **revised warding arrangements and an increase in the number of councillors serving Orton Waterville Parish Council.**

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

- **We will consult on these proposals for eight weeks from 26 February 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, with effect from 1 April 2002, 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 22 April 2002:

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

**Fax: 020 7404 6142  
E-mail: [reviews@lgce.gov.uk](mailto:reviews@lgce.gov.uk)  
Website: [www.lgce.gov.uk](http://www.lgce.gov.uk)**

Table 1: Draft Recommendations: Summary

	<b>Ward name</b>	<b>Number of councillors</b>	<b>Constituent areas</b>	<b>Map reference</b>
1	Barnack	1	the parishes of Bainton, Barnack, Helpston, Southorpe, St Martin's Without, Ufford and Wothorpe	Map 2
2	Central	3	<i>Unchanged:</i> Central ward	Map 2 and the large map
3	Dogsthorpe	3	Dogsthorpe ward; part of North ward	Map 2 and the large map
4	East	3	East ward; the proposed Finchfield parish ward of Eye parish	Map 2 and the large map
5	Eye & Thorney	2	the parish of Thorney; the proposed Eye parish ward of Eye parish	Map 2
6	Fletton	3	part of Fletton ward; part of South ward	Map 2 and the large map
7	Glington & Wittering	2	the parishes of Ailsworth, Castor, Glington, Marholm, Sutton, Thornhaugh, Upton, Wansford and Wittering	Map 2
8	Newborough	1	<i>Unchanged:</i> the parishes of Borough Fen, Newborough and Peakirk	Map 2
9	North	2	part of North ward	Map 2 and the large map
10	North Bretton	3	the proposed North Bretton parish ward of Bretton parish	Map 2 and the large map
11	Northborough	1	the parishes of Deeping Gate, Etton, Maxey and Northborough	Map 2
12	Orton Longueville	3	the proposed parish ward of Longueville of Orton Longueville parish; the proposed parish ward of Orton Goldhay East of Orton Waterville parish	Map 2 and the large map
13	Orton Waterville	3	the proposed parish wards of Orton Goldhay West, Orton Wistow, Orton Village and Orton Brimbles & Southgate of Orton Waterville parish	Map 2 and the large map
14	Park	3	<i>Unchanged:</i> Park ward	Map 2 and the large map
15	Paston	3	<i>Unchanged:</i> Paston ward	Map 2 and the large map
16	Ravensthorpe	2	part of Ravensthorpe ward, part of South Bretton ward and part of West ward	Map 2 and the large map
17	South	2	part of South ward	Map 2 and the large map
18	South Bretton	1	the proposed South Bretton parish ward of Bretton parish	Map 2 and the large map
19	Stanground Central	3	the parish of Stanground North; part of Fletton ward; part of South ward; part of Stanground ward;	Map 2 and the large map
20	Stanground East	1	part of Stanground ward	Map 2 and the large map
21	Walton	2	<i>Unchanged:</i> Walton ward	Map 2 and the large map
22	Werrington North	3	<i>Unchanged:</i> Werrington North ward	Map 2 and the large map
23	Werrington South	3	<i>Unchanged:</i> Werrington South ward	Map 2 and the large map

	<b>Ward name</b>	<b>Number of councillors</b>	<b>Constituent areas</b>	<b>Map reference</b>
24	West	3	part of Ravensthorpe ward; part of South Bretton ward; part of West ward	Map 2 and the large map
25	Woodston	1	the proposed Botolph parish ward of Orton Longueville parish; part of Fletton ward; part of South ward	Map 2 and the large map

*Notes: 1. The wards on the above table are illustrated on Map 2 and the large map at the back of the report.*

*2. 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 Peterborough

	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	Barnack	1	2,010	2,010	5	2,212	2,212	7
2	Central	3	5,453	1,818	-5	5,670	1,890	-9
3	Dogsthorpe	3	5,670	1,890	-1	5,785	1,928	-7
4	East	3	5,815	1,938	1	6,447	2,149	4
5	Eye & Thorney	2	4,017	2,009	5	4,413	2,207	7
6	Fletton	3	5,565	1,855	-3	6,400	2,133	3
7	Glington & Wittering	2	4,000	2,000	4	4,586	2,293	11
8	Newborough	1	1,720	1,720	-10	2,152	2,152	4
9	North	2	3,675	1,838	-4	3,785	1,893	-9
10	North Bretton	3	6,375	2,125	11	6,409	2,136	3
11	Northborough	1	2,057	2,057	7	2,232	2,232	8
12	Orton Longueville	3	6,625	2,208	15	6,696	2,232	8
13	Orton Waterville	3	6,071	2,024	6	6,467	2,156	4
14	Park	3	5,985	1,995	4	6,060	2,020	-2
15	Paston	3	5,410	1,803	-6	5,980	1,993	-4
16	Ravensthorpe	2	4,362	2,181	14	4,410	2,205	7
17	South	2	603	302	-84	3,645	1,823	-12
18	South Bretton	1	2,072	2,072	8	2,175	2,175	5
19	Stanground Central	3	6,334	2,111	10	6,420	2,140	3
20	Stanground East	1	2,060	2,060	8	2,080	2,080	1
21	Walton	2	3,971	1,986	4	4,070	2,035	-2
22	Werrington North	3	5,524	1,841	-4	5,578	1,859	-10
23	Werrington South	3	5,567	1,856	-3	5,670	1,890	-9
24	West	3	6,332	2,111	10	6,491	2,164	5
25	Woodston	1	1,827	1,827	-5	2,137	2,137	3
	<b>Totals</b>	<b>57</b>	<b>109,100</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>117,970</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>
	<b>Averages</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>1,914</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>2,070</b>	<b>-</b>

Source: Electorate figures are based on Peterborough City 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 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 proposals for the electoral arrangements for the city of Peterborough, on which we are now consulting. We are now reviewing Peterborough as part of our programme of periodic electoral reviews (PERs) of all 386 principal local authority areas in England. Our programme started in 1996 and is currently expected to finish in 2004.

2 Our last review of the electoral arrangements was a Directed Electoral Review carried out in December 1996 prior to Peterborough becoming a unitary authority. The previous review of Peterborough was carried out by our predecessor, the Local Government Boundary Commission (LGBC), which reported to the Secretary of State in November 1975 (Report no. 86).

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

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

4 Full details of the legislation under which we work are set out in a document entitled *Guidance and Procedural Advice for Local Authorities and Other Interested Parties* (fourth edition published in December 2000). This *Guidance* sets out our approach to the reviews.

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 councils in the district.

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

7 The broad objective of PERs is to achieve, as far as possible, equal representation across the district 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.

8 We are not prescriptive on council size. We start from the assumption that the size of the existing council already secures effective and convenient local government, but we are willing to look carefully at arguments why this might not be so. However, we have found it necessary to safeguard against upward drift in the number of councillors, and we believe that any proposal for an increase in council size will need to be fully justified. In particular, we do not accept that an increase in 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.

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 In July 1998 the Government published a White Paper called *Modern Local Government – In Touch with the People*, which set out legislative proposals for local authority electoral arrangements. In two-tier areas, it proposed introducing a pattern in which both the district and county councils would hold elections every two years, ie in year one, half of the district council would be elected, in year two, half the county council would be elected, and so on. In unitary authority areas the White Paper proposed elections by thirds. The Government stated that local accountability would be maximised where every elector has an opportunity to vote every year, thereby pointing to a pattern of two-member wards (and divisions) in two-tier areas and three-member wards in unitary authority areas. However, it stated that there was no intention to move towards very large electoral wards in sparsely populated rural areas, and that single-member wards (and electoral divisions) would continue in many authorities. The proposals were taken forward in the Local Government Act 2000 which, among other matters, states that the Secretary of State may make Orders to change authorities’ electoral cycles. However, until such time as the Secretary of State makes any Order under the 2000 Act, we will continue to operate on the basis of existing legislation, which provides for elections by thirds or whole-council elections in two-tier areas, and our current *Guidance*.

11 Stage One began on 10 July 2001, when we wrote to Peterborough City Council inviting proposals for future electoral arrangements. We also notified Cambridgeshire Police Authority, the local authority associations, parish councils in the district, the Members of Parliament with constituency interests in the district, the Members of the European Parliament for the Eastern Region, and the headquarters of the main political parties. We placed a notice in the local press, issued a press release and invited Peterborough City Council to publicise the review further. The closing date for receipt of representations, the end of Stage One, was 1 October 2001.

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

13 We are currently at Stage Three. This stage, which began on 26 February 2002 and will end on 22 April 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.**

14 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

15 The city of Peterborough was initially established as a railway town but has more recently become a major industrial, commercial and shopping centre. It was designated as a New Town in 1968 with development to be concentrated in four new residential townships. The fourth of these is currently under construction to the south of the city (the Hampton development) and is expected to provide over 5,000 houses and 12,000 jobs. Peterborough gained unitary status in 1998. The city has excellent transport links with the main east coast railway line passing through the centre. The River Nene separates the southern area of the city from the northern area and the city is further divided by a network of dual carriageways.

16 The district contains 28 parishes, but much of the city of Peterborough itself is unparished. The city of Peterborough comprises 87 per cent of the district's total electorate.

17 The electorate of the district is 109,100 (February 2001). The Council presently has 57 members who are elected from 24 wards, 18 of which are urban in Peterborough with the remaining six being predominantly rural. Fourteen of the wards are each represented by three councillors, five are each represented by two councillors and five are single-member wards. The Council is elected by thirds.

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

19 At present, each councillor represents an average of 1,914 electors, which the District Council forecasts will increase to 2,070 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 three of the 24 wards varies by more than 10 per cent from the district average and two wards vary by more than 20 per cent. The worst imbalance is in Glinton ward where the councillor represents 28 per cent more electors than the district average.

*Map 1: Existing Wards in Peterborough*

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	Barnack	1	1,942	1,942	1	2,120	2,120	2
2	Central	3	5,453	1,818	-5	5,670	1,890	-9
3	Dogsthorpe	3	5,336	1,779	-7	5,450	1,817	-12
4	East	3	5,661	1,887	-1	6,290	2,097	1
5	Eye & Thorney	2	4,171	2,086	9	4,570	2,285	10
6	Fletton	3	5,763	1,921	0	6,790	2,263	9
7	Glington	1	2,452	2,452	28	2,530	2,530	22
8	Newborough	1	1,718	1,718	-10	2,150	2,150	4
9	North	2	4,009	2,005	5	4,120	2,060	0
10	North Bretton	3	5,676	1,892	-1	5,710	1,903	-8
11	Northborough	1	1,947	1,947	2	2,120	2,120	2
12	Orton Longueville	3	6,179	2,060	8	6,230	2,077	0
13	Orton Waterville	3	6,494	2,165	13	6,870	2,290	11
14	Park	3	5,985	1,995	4	6,060	2,020	-2
15	Paston	3	5,410	1,803	-6	5,980	1,993	-4
16	Ravensthorpe	3	5,338	1,779	-7	5,400	1,800	-13
17	South	2	2,925	1,463	-24	6,030	3,015	46
18	South Bretton	2	4,057	2,029	6	4,160	2,080	1
19	Stanground	3	5,967	1,989	4	6,060	2,020	-2
20	Walton	2	3,971	1,986	4	4,070	2,035	-2
21	Werrington North	3	5,526	1,842	-4	5,580	1,860	-10
22	Werrington South	3	5,567	1,856	-3	5,670	1,890	-9
23	West	3	5,827	1,942	1	6,080	2,027	-2
24	Wittering	1	1,726	1,726	-10	2,260	2,260	9
	<b>Totals</b>	<b>57</b>	<b>109,100</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>117,970</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>
	<b>Averages</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>1,914</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>2,070</b>	<b>-</b>

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

Note: The 'variance from average' column shows by how far, in percentage terms, the number of electors per councillor varies from the average for the district. The minus symbol (-) denotes a lower than average number of electors. For example, in 2001, electors in South ward were relatively over-represented by 24 per cent, while electors in Glington ward were relatively under-represented by 28 per cent. Figures have been rounded to the nearest whole number.



### 3 SUBMISSIONS RECEIVED

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

21 During this initial stage of the review, officers from the LGCE visited the area and met officers and members from the City Council. We are grateful to all concerned for their co-operation and assistance. We received 37 representations during Stage One, including a district-wide scheme from the City Council. All of these representations may be inspected at our offices and those of the City Council.

#### **Peterborough City Council**

22 The City Council proposed retaining the existing council size of 57 members, serving 24 mixed-member wards, as at present. The Council's scheme was largely based on the existing ward structure and included two options (A and B) regarding Orton Longueville and Orton Waterville wards. The scheme would result in only two wards having a variance of more than 10 per cent by 2006, but these two variances would be extremely high (17 per cent and 39 per cent above the district average). The Council proposed retaining the current system of elections by thirds.

#### **North West Cambridgeshire Constituency Labour Party**

23 The North West Cambridgeshire Constituency Labour Party provided basic details of a proposed scheme based on a council size of 58 representing 25 mixed-member wards. However, it did not provide any detail in terms of maps, descriptions of wards or argumentation for such a scheme within the consultation period.

#### **Peterborough Civic Society**

24 The Peterborough Civic Society proposed a reduced council size of 42 councillors which, it argued, would bring Peterborough more into line with other unitary authorities. It also proposed a move to whole-council elections and favoured an arrangement where all wards were "about the same size and served by more than one councillor".

#### **Parish Councils**

25 We received seven representations from parish councils. Orton Waterville Parish Council opposed the proposal put forward by the City Council to move some streets on the Lady Lodge Estate from Orton Waterville ward into Orton Longueville ward (Option A). As an alternative, it proposed moving electors in Orton Goldhay from Orton Waterville ward into Orton Longueville ward, a change similar to Option B of the Council's submission. It also endorsed the contents of a letter sent to the Commission by a resident regarding the mapping error in the Final Recommendations report for Peterborough dated December 1996.

26 Castor Parish Council objected to the City Council's proposal splitting Castor and Ailsworth parish councils into two separate wards "as it is not in the interests of the local community and local democracy". Ailsworth Parish Council also objected to the proposal to split these two parishes and stated that Castor and Ailsworth parishes have "two separate parish councils but one community".

27 Southorpe Parish Council stated that it should remain in Barnack ward as it shares many services with Barnack parish. Maxey Parish Council was “pleased to note that the City Council proposes that Maxey shall remain within the ward of Northborough”. Etton Parish Council proposed that Etton parish should remain in Barnack ward. Glinton Parish Council stated that under the proposals put forward by the City Council “the City areas are over-represented and the rural areas under-represented” and considered that “it is difficult to believe that a better solution could not be found than to separate two adjoining parishes (Castor and Ailsworth)”.

## **Other Representations**

28 We also received three representations from local councillors and a further 24 representations from local residents. Councillors Miners, Pobjee and Ash recommended that if the boundaries of Dogsthorpe ward had to be altered, then a part of Bluebell Estate should be added to the current Dogsthorpe ward. They also questioned the accuracy of the projected electorate figures for 2006.

29 Councillor Swift requested that the existing ward boundaries be left alone and stated that “increasing the South Ward by one extra councillor, to take into account the Hampton development... would resolve the situation”.

30 Councillors Sandford and Sharp supported Option B of the Council’s consultation document regarding arrangements for Orton Longueville and Orton Waterville wards and proposed retaining the existing ward boundaries wherever possible, with particular reference to Walton ward.

31 The Chairman of Orton Waterville Parish Council provided details of a proposal to move electors in Orton Goldhay from Orton Waterville ward to Orton Longueville ward rather than splitting the Lady Lodge Estate. A resident opposed Option A of the Council’s submission and proposed that any necessary adjustments should be made in Orton Goldhay.

32 A resident of Finchfield requested that they be transferred from Eye & Thorney ward into a Peterborough city ward.

33 A resident of Orton Waterville requested that a mapping error, concerning Orton Southgate, contained in the December 1996 report on the Final Recommendations on the Future Electoral Arrangements for Peterborough be rectified.

34 We received 20 letters from residents of Dogsthorpe ward recommending that the existing ward boundaries be retained.

## **4 ANALYSIS AND DRAFT RECOMMENDATIONS**

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

36 As described earlier, our prime aim in considering the most appropriate electoral arrangements for Peterborough is to achieve electoral equality. In doing so we have regard to section 13(5) of the Local Government Act 1992 – the need to secure effective and convenient local government, and reflect the identities and interests of local communities – and Schedule 11 to the Local Government Act 1972, which refers to the number of electors per councillor being “as nearly as may be, the same in every ward of the district or borough”.

37 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.

38 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.

39 Our *Guidance* states that 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**

40 Since 1975 there has been a 41 per cent increase in the electorate of Peterborough district. The City Council submitted electorate forecasts for the year 2006, projecting an increase in the electorate of approximately 8 per cent from 109,100 to 117,970 over the five-year period from 2001 to 2006. It expects most of the growth to be in South ward, although a significant amount is also expected in East, Fletton, Paston and Wittering wards. We recognise that the Council’s submission and its emphasis on the 2001 rather than 2006 figures (particularly with regard to South ward) may have been influenced by the experience of the 1996 review when growth of 4,000 electors that was predicted in the southern area of the city over the five years to 2001 largely failed to materialise. However, we have visited the area and are confident that this large-scale development is now well underway.

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

42 Councillors Miners, Pobjee and Ash queried the figures provided by the Council arguing that the forecast growth for Dogsthorpe ward was too low. However the methodology used to predict the 2006 projections has been confirmed by the Council officers. We accept that forecasting electorates is an inexact science, and in light of the Council's figures and confirmation of them, are content that they represent the best estimates that can reasonably be made at this time.

## **Council Size**

43 As explained earlier, we start by assuming that the current council size facilitates effective and convenient local government, although we are willing to look carefully at arguments why this might not be the case.

44 Peterborough City Council presently has 57 members. The City Council proposed retaining this council size while the North West Cambridgeshire Constituency Labour Party (hereafter referred to as the Labour Party) proposed an increase to 58 members. The Council stated that "no political party has advanced the view that the total number of councillors should be changed at this point". It also considered that "in light of the government's expressed desire to increase political involvement and increase the contact between local elected members and the public, we believe that it would be counterproductive to reduce the number of elected members". The Labour Party did not provide any evidence or argumentation in support of its proposal for an increase to a council of 58 members.

45 Peterborough Civic Society proposed a reduction to a council of 42 members. It argued that this would bring Peterborough more into line with other unitary authorities but did not provide any details of a scheme based on a 42-member council. We considered that a decrease of 15 members would require substantial evidence and justification and were not of the opinion that this evidence was provided by Peterborough Civic Society. Also, we do not accept that changes should be made to the size of an authority simply to make it more consistent with other, similar authorities. We have therefore decided not to adopt a council size of 42.

46 Councillor Swift proposed increasing the number of councillors by one, to 58, with the extra councillor being allocated to South ward and all wards retaining their current boundaries. However, in the light of the alternative proposals that we received, we were not convinced that there was local support for this increase in council size, or that retaining the existing ward pattern provided the best balance between electoral equality and the statutory criteria.

47 When determining what council size is most appropriate for an authority, one of the factors we consider is the allocation of councillors between distinct areas, for example rural and urban areas, provided by particular council sizes. The closer the respective allocations are to whole numbers the better the electoral equality provided by the resultant scheme will be. In Peterborough, a council size of 57 provides a reasonable allocation of councillors between the rural and urban areas. However, we investigated other council sizes to see whether a different council size would provide a better allocation and therefore an improved level of electoral equality. An increase in council size to 58 does not provide a better allocation of councillors between the rural and urban areas but we found that a reduction to a council of 54 members would. However, due to the fact that Peterborough can be further divided into four distinct areas, this reduced council size would not result in a better level of electoral equality without breaching extremely strong boundaries such as the River Nene, the main east coast railway line and dual carriageways. In the light of this, the fact that there has been no local support for a 54-member

council and that the Council had stated in its submission that it did not wish for a reduction in council size from 57, we do not believe there is sufficient evidence for a move to a 54-member council.

48 We have also not been convinced by the argumentation in support of an increase to 58 councillors, which does not provide a better allocation of councillors, or by a reduction in council size to 42. 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 57 members.

## **Electoral Arrangements**

49 The City Council's proposed scheme was the only complete district-wide scheme that we received at Stage One. It proposed retaining the existing council size of 57 members, serving 24 wards, as at present. The Council's scheme was largely based on the existing ward structure and included two options (A and B) regarding Orton Longueville and Orton Waterville wards. The scheme would result in only two wards having a variance of more than 10 per cent by 2006, but these two variances would be extremely high (17 per cent above the district average in Wittering ward and 39 per cent above the district average in South ward). The Council proposed retaining the current system of elections by thirds. It stated that its proposals "reject the concept of change for change's sake" and only "propose changes which advance one of the principal criteria used by the Commission, that is, to correct an electoral imbalance or to give proper weight to a physical or geopolitical boundary or to recognise another element of community identity".

50 The Labour Party put forward a scheme for a 58-member council representing 25 wards but did not provide any details or argumentation in support of its proposals.

51 The Peterborough Civic Society proposed a 42-member council to bring Peterborough more in line with other unitary authorities. It did not provide a detailed scheme but favoured "an arrangement in which all wards are about the same size and are served by more than one councillor".

52 Councillor Swift proposed increasing the number of councillors representing South ward from two to three and leaving all ward boundaries unchanged.

53 Having carefully considered all the representations received, and in order to secure the best balance between electoral equality and the statutory criteria, we propose basing our draft recommendations on the City Council's scheme. However, to improve electoral equality further and having regard to local community identities and interests, we have decided to move away from the City Council's proposals in three areas. Under a 57-member council the western area of Peterborough would be entitled to 9.4 councillors by 2006. The Council's scheme allocates 10 councillors to this western area and only 15 to the southern area, which is entitled to 16 councillors under a council size of 57. We have therefore looked to redress this misallocation as part of our draft recommendations.

54 We have also built on the Council's proposals in the western and southern areas to utilise strong, easily identifiable boundaries while taking account of community identity and providing improved electoral equality. In the rural area we are proposing a two-member Glington & Wittering ward as we consider that this provides improved electoral equality while taking account of community identity. We have been unable to adopt a number of the Council's

proposals for minor boundary amendments, particularly in the Orton Longueville and Orton Waterville area, since we do not possess the power to change external parish boundaries and thus adopting the Council's proposals would involve the creation of parish wards containing no or very few electors. However, under the 1977 Local Government and Rating Act local authorities have the power to review external parish boundaries and we would suggest that the Council carries out a parish review following the completion of this review to enable these boundaries to be clarified and tied to firm ground detail. For district warding purposes, the following areas, based on existing wards, are considered in turn:

- (a) Fletton, Orton Longueville, Orton Waterville, South and Stanground wards;
- (b) North Bretton, Ravensthorpe, South Bretton and West wards;
- (c) Central, Dogsthorpe, East, North and Park wards;
- (d) Paston, Walton, Werrington North and Werrington South wards;
- (e) Barnack, Eye & Thorney, Glinton, Newborough, Northborough and Wittering wards.

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

### **Fletton, Orton Longueville, Orton Waterville, South and Stanground wards**

56 These five wards lie to the south of the River Nene and form the southern part of the city of Peterborough. Fletton ward, Orton Longueville ward (comprising Longueville parish ward of Orton Longueville parish and Orton Goldhay East parish ward of Orton Waterville parish), Orton Waterville ward (comprising Orton Goldhay West, Orton Wistow, Orton Village and Orton Brimbles & Southgate parish wards of Orton Waterville parish) and Stanground ward (including Stanground North parish) are each represented by three councillors while South ward is represented by two councillors. The number of electors per councillor in Fletton, Orton Longueville, Orton Waterville and Stanground wards is equal to the district average, 8 per cent, 13 per cent and 4 per cent above the district average respectively (9 per cent above, equal to the district average, 11 per cent above and 2 per cent below the district average by 2006). The number of electors per councillor in South ward is 24 per cent below the district average (46 per cent above the district average by 2006).

57 The City Council proposed a revised warding arrangement in the southern area of Peterborough retaining the same ward names and number of councillors with the exception of South ward which would gain an additional councillor to take account of the enormous growth anticipated in this area. It proposed an enlarged three-member South ward to include all the electors currently contained in West ward in the area to the south of the River Nene, to the east of Nene Parkway and to the west of the railway line. This amended South ward would also contain all the electors currently contained in Orton Longueville ward in the Leighton, Tofthland and Wildlake area. The City Council also proposed to move the boundary between Orton Longueville ward, Orton Waterville ward and South ward from its current position to run along the centre of Fletton Parkway. It proposed two options (A and B) for an amendment to the boundary between Orton Longueville and Orton Waterville wards. Option A proposed transferring an area of the Lady Lodge Estate to the south of Church Drive and the east of Valence Road from Orton Waterville ward to Orton Longueville ward. Option B proposed transferring all the electors on Mandeville and Stagsden as well as all those electors on roads to the south of the Orton Centre (apart from Hinchcliffe and Riseholme) from Orton Waterville ward to Orton Longueville ward. The Council stated that "the two alternatives each has adherents". It also proposed moving electors currently contained in West ward in the area south

of the River Nene and west of Nene Parkway into Orton Longueville ward. An amended Fletton ward would see the Woodston Industrial Area transferring from Fletton ward to South ward and the south-western boundary of Fletton ward would move north-east to the railway line. Under the Council's proposals, the area currently contained in West ward to the west of the existing Fletton ward bordered by the River Nene to the north and the railway to the south would also transfer into an amended Fletton ward. Finally, the Council proposed an amendment to the northern boundary of Stanground ward to move the boundary south to run along the north bank of the River Nene.

58 Under the Council's proposals, the number of electors per councillor in the proposed wards of Fletton, Orton Longueville, Orton Waterville, South and Stanground would be 2 per cent below, 7 per cent above, 6 per cent above, 9 per cent below and 4 per cent above the district average respectively (5 per cent above, equal to, 4 per cent above, 39 per cent above and 2 per cent below the district average by 2006).

59 Orton Waterville Parish Council opposed the Council's proposal to transfer part of the Lady Lodge Estate from Orton Waterville to Orton Longueville, and stated that "the best solution to balance numbers would be to move more of Orton Goldhay into Orton Longueville ward, thus uniting more of that area within the Orton Longueville ward", a proposal very similar to Option B put forward by the Council. It also supported a letter sent by a resident regarding a mistake in the mapping of the parish wards of Orton Waterville Parish Council contained in the 1996 Final Recommendations report on Future Electoral Arrangements for Peterborough.

60 Councillors Sandford and Sharp "urge the Commission to adopt the Option B put forward in the Council submission, as we feel this best accords with community identities in the area". Their submission also included a comment from Councillor Crane, the Liberal Democrat Councillor for Orton Waterville, who stated that "Option B for the Orton Waterville ward has the full support of Orton Waterville Parish Council, as it does not cut across natural boundaries, communities or identities by splitting the long established Parish of Orton Waterville around which the ward is based".

61 The Chairman of Orton Waterville Parish Council supported the submission by Orton Waterville Parish Council, and proposed that "any changes required between the wards of Orton Waterville and Orton Longueville should be made by moving the boundary in Orton Goldhay". He proposed moving the streets of Mandeville, Stagsden, Kinnears Walk, Osprey and Sayers Court from Orton Waterville ward into Orton Longueville ward. In opposition to Option A, he stated that "to drive from the properties in the Lady Lodge Estate (Option A) to the nearest properties in Orton Goldhay (Orton Longueville Ward) means a drive of approximately two miles" and that "splitting the well-established Lady Lodge Estate would be a mistake".

62 A resident stated that "Option A proposals fail to give proper consideration to the identity and interests of a local community, as well as unnecessarily cutting across existing Parish Council ward boundaries, which are based on communities" and proposed making "the necessary adjustments to Orton Waterville Ward in those parts of Orton Goldhay that are in the Orton Waterville parish, (as was done in the 1996 review)".

63 A resident requested that a mapping error concerning Orton Southgate contained in the Final Recommendations on the Future Electoral Arrangements for Peterborough report of December 1996 be rectified. This is discussed in more detail in the parishing section at the end of this chapter.

64 We have carefully considered all the representations received regarding this area. The Council's scheme allocates 10 councillors to the western area and 15 to the southern area. Under a council size of 57, however, the western area is only entitled to nine councillors while the southern area is entitled to 16 councillors. We are therefore proposing to remove a councillor from the western area and add an extra councillor to the southern area to take account of the growth anticipated in South ward. We appreciate that the growth in this area over the last five years has been slower than anticipated but, having visited the area, we are content that the figures provided by the City Council are the best estimate available at this time.

65 We have decided to recommend an amended two-member South ward using the east coast railway line as its eastern boundary and Fletton Parkway and the existing boundary with Orton Longueville and Orton Waterville wards as the northern boundary. We are unable to adopt the Council's proposal to move the boundary between Orton Longueville, Orton Waterville and South wards to run along the Fletton Parkway as this would involve the creation of new parish wards in both Orton Longueville and Orton Waterville parishes which would contain no electors. While this proposed ward would provide an extremely high level of inequality in 2001 (84 per cent below the district average) this is forecast to improve to 12 per cent below the district average by 2006. We also consider that this ward would provide a better reflection of community identity than the proposals of the City Council.

66 Given the local opposition to the Council's Option A in the Orton Longueville and Orton Waterville area, we are adopting an amended version of Option B (the proposal put forward by the Chairman of Orton Waterville Parish Council) as we consider that this provides a good level of electoral equality while reflecting community identity. We propose retaining the existing eastern boundary of Orton Longueville ward but support the Council's proposal to transfer the area to the south of the River Nene and the west of Nene Parkway from West ward into an amended Orton Longueville ward. We consider that the Council's proposal to transfer all the electors in the Leighton, Toftland and Wildlake area from Orton Longueville ward into South ward does not provide a good reflection of community identity. We are proposing a new single-member Woodston ward with boundaries of Fletton Parkway to the south, the railway line to the east and north-east, Nene Parkway to the west and the River Nene to the north. We are proposing an amended three-member Fletton ward which we consider provides a better reflection of community identity. All of the electors currently in South ward in the area bordered by High Street, London Road and the railway line would become part of Fletton ward while all the electors to the east of the railway line and to the south of Fellowes Road and Fletton Avenue would move from Fletton ward into an amended Stanground ward. We are also proposing an amended Stanground ward, to be represented by three members and to be named Stanground Central ward. The western boundary of this proposed ward would run north along the main railway line, east along Fellowes Road and Fletton Avenue to rejoin the existing boundary running north along Frank Perkins Parkway. We propose that this ward should retain the existing northern boundary between Stanground and East wards as the adoption of the Council's proposal to move the boundary south to north bank of the river Nene would involve the warding of Stanground North parish and the creation of a parish ward which would contain no electors. The proposed Stanground Central ward would include all the electors contained in the existing Stanground ward with the exception of a number in the east of the existing ward, where we are proposing a new single-member Stanground East ward. The proposed Stanground East ward would contain all the electors in the polling district STA3 with the exception of those electors in Coneygree Road no's 128–178 and 113–155 and the addition of those in the area bordered by Whittlesey Road, Kingston Drive and Coneygree Road. Given the particular difficulties posed by this area due to the housing development in South ward, we consider that our proposals offer the

best balance between electoral equality and the recognition of community identity. We would, however, welcome comments on our proposals at Stage Three.

67 Under our draft recommendations the number of electors per councillor in our proposed Fletton, South and Woodston wards would be 3 per cent, 84 per cent and 5 per cent below the district average respectively (3 per cent above, 12 per cent below and 3 per cent above the district average by 2006). The number of electors per councillor in our proposed Orton Longueville, Orton Waterville, Stanground Central and Stanground East wards would be 15 per cent, 6 per cent, 10 per cent and 8 per cent above the district average respectively (8 per cent, 4 per cent, 3 per cent and 1 per cent above the district average by 2006). Our draft proposals are illustrated on Map 2 and the large map at the back of the report.

### **North Bretton, Ravensthorpe, South Bretton and West wards**

68 These four wards form the western part of the city of Peterborough. North Bretton ward (comprising North Bretton parish ward of Bretton parish), Ravensthorpe ward and West ward are each represented by three councillors while South Bretton ward (comprising South Bretton parish ward of Bretton parish) is represented by two councillors. The number of electors per councillor in South Bretton and West wards is 6 per cent and 1 per cent above the district average respectively (1 per cent above and 2 per cent below the district average by 2006). The number of electors per councillor in North Bretton and Ravensthorpe wards is 1 per cent and 7 per cent below the district average respectively (8 per cent and 13 per cent below the district average by 2006).

69 The City Council proposed retaining the existing North and South Bretton wards but put forward amendments to Ravensthorpe and West wards to improve electoral equality and to provide stronger and more easily identifiable boundaries. It proposed moving all the electors in the area south of Westfield Road who are currently in Ravensthorpe ward into West ward. It also proposed moving into Ravensthorpe ward from West ward all the electors in the area bordered by Atherstone Avenue to the north, Enfield Gardens to the west and all those living on Portman Close to the south. It also proposed transferring all electors to the south of the River Nene who are currently in West ward into an enlarged South ward, to be represented by three councillors. It proposed that the amended Ravensthorpe ward should be represented by two councillors rather than three as at present, but that the revised West ward should continue to be represented by three councillors.

70 Councillors Sandford and Sharp noted that “proposals in the Council submission regarding the Ravensthorpe ward could potentially alter the delicate political balance on the Council” and stated that they would like to “see other proposals considered which may be less disruptive”. However, we do not consider the effect that any changes in electoral arrangements may have on the political make-up of an authority as part of a Periodic Electoral Review, and thus were unable to take their comments into account while formulating our draft recommendations.

71 We have carefully considered the scheme put forward by the Council in this area, but are proposing our own warding arrangement in this area which we consider will provide for stronger, more easily identifiable boundaries while improving electoral equality. The existing South Bretton ward, which the Council proposed retaining, breaches the A47. We consider that a dual carriageway such as the A47 provides an extremely strong boundary and are therefore keen to use such features as boundaries, if at all possible. We are proposing an amended three-member North Bretton ward with all the electors in the Deerleap, Muskham and Sprignall area west of Bretton Way transferring from South Bretton ward into North Bretton ward. An amended South

Bretton ward would be represented by one councillor rather than two as at present and would have the boundaries of the A47 to the east and south, the existing boundary to the west and the southern edge of the Sprignall, Deerleap and Muskham estate to the north. The area to the east of the A47 that is currently contained in South Bretton ward would be split between amended Ravensthorpe and West wards. All those electors east of Breamore Gardens and Vine Walk and all the electors on Ledbury Road and Portman Close east of Tiverton Road would transfer from South Bretton ward to Ravensthorpe ward. The remainder of the electors to the east of the A47 who are currently in South Bretton ward would move into West ward.

72 Under our draft recommendations the number of electors per councillor in our proposed North Bretton, Ravensthorpe, South Bretton and West wards would be 11 per cent, 14 per cent, 8 per cent and 10 per cent above the district average respectively (3 per cent, 7 per cent, 5 per cent and 5 per cent above the district average by 2006). Our draft proposals are illustrated on Map 2 and the large map at the back of the report.

### **Central, Dogsthorpe, East, North and Park wards**

73 These five wards form the eastern part of the city of Peterborough. Central ward, Dogsthorpe ward, East ward and Park ward are each represented by three councillors while North ward is represented by two councillors. The number of electors per councillor in North and Park wards is 5 per cent and 4 per cent above the district average respectively (equal to and 2 per cent below the district average by 2006). The number of electors per councillor in Central, Dogsthorpe and East wards is 5 per cent, 7 per cent and 1 per cent below the district average respectively (9 per cent and 12 per cent below and 1 per cent above the district average by 2006).

74 The City Council proposed retaining the existing warding arrangements in these five wards with three amendments. The first of these was the proposal to move part of the Bluebell Estate (the area to the east of Lavender Crescent and on Furze Ride) from North ward into Dogsthorpe ward. The Council stated that this area “is more closely identified with Dogsthorpe than with North ward and contains a large number of residents who – if asked – would claim to live in Dogsthorpe now!” The second amendment was the proposal to create a new parish ward of Eye Parish to move all the electors in Finchfield and St Michael’s Gate from Eye & Thorney ward into East ward. The Council stated that “these two streets – although apparently within the ancient parish boundaries of Eye – are now physically within the built up area of East ward and share its community identity/transport, etc”. The final amendment was the proposal to move the southern boundary of East ward from its existing position to run along the north bank of the River Nene.

75 Councillors Miners, Pobgee and Ash recommended that if the boundaries of Dogsthorpe ward had to be altered, then a part of Bluebell Estate (Harebell Close, Ferndale Way, Heath Row, Meadow Grove, Ling Garth, Laburnam Grove, Furze Ride and all electors on the north side of Welland Road from the junction of Lavender Crescent up to the Welland Road bridge) should be moved from North ward to Dogsthorpe ward. This is the same amendment as put forward by the City Council. Councillors Miners, Pobgee and Ash stated that the electors in this area “do not associate themselves as living in North ward” and also questioned the accuracy of the projected electorate figures for 2006.

76 Letters were received from 20 residents of Dogsthorpe ward recommending “leaving our ward boundaries as they are now”.

77 A resident of Finchfield requested that they be transferred from Eye & Thorney ward into a Peterborough city ward.

78 Having carefully considered all the representations received, we are proposing to adopt the City Council's proposals, with the exception of the amendment to the southern boundary of East ward. We consider that the proposed amendment to Dogsthorpe ward provides for improved electoral equality while also taking account of community identity. We also consider that the proposal to move Finchfield and St Michael's Gate from Eye & Thorney ward into East ward is a good reflection of community identity. However, we are unable to move the southern boundary of East ward to the north bank of the River Nene as this would involve creating a parish ward of Stanground North Parish which would contain no electors. We therefore propose to retain the existing southern boundary of East ward.

79 Under our draft recommendations the number of electors per councillor in our proposed Central, Dogsthorpe and North wards is 5 per cent, 1 per cent and 4 per cent below the district average respectively (9 per cent, 7 per cent and 9 per cent below the district average by 2006). The number of electors per councillor in our proposed East and Park wards would be 1 per cent and 4 per cent above the district average respectively (4 per cent above and 2 per cent below the district average by 2006). Our draft proposals are illustrated on Map 2 and the large map at the back of the report.

### **Paston, Walton, Werrington North and Werrington South wards**

80 These four wards are situated in the north of the city of Peterborough. Paston ward, Werrington North ward and Werrington South ward are each represented by three councillors while Walton ward is represented by two councillors. The number of electors per councillor in Walton ward is 4 per cent above the district average (2 per cent below the district average by 2006) while the number of electors in Paston, Werrington North and Werrington South wards is 6 per cent, 4 per cent and 3 per cent below the district average respectively (4 per cent, 10 per cent and 9 per cent below the district average by 2006).

81 The City Council proposed retaining the existing arrangements in the northern area of Peterborough with one amendment which would affect very few electors. This proposed amendment would involve moving the boundary between Newborough ward and Werrington North ward to run along the Glinton bypass and would involve the warding of Newborough parish.

82 Councillors Sandford and Sharp proposed retaining the existing Walton ward in its entirety, as put forward by the Council.

83 Having considered the representations received regarding this area we are content to endorse the proposals put forward by the Council, with one exception. We consider that the existing wards provide a reasonable level of electoral equality which could not be improved without breaching extremely strong boundaries. However, the Council's proposal to ward Newborough parish would result in the creation of a parish ward which would contain very few electors. We therefore propose retaining the existing boundary between Newborough ward and Werrington North ward.

84 Under our draft recommendations the number of electors per councillor in our proposed Paston, Werrington North and Werrington South wards would be 6 per cent, 4 per cent and 3 per cent below the district average respectively (4 per cent, 10 per cent and 9 per cent below the

district average by 2006). The number of electors per councillor in our proposed Walton ward would be 4 per cent above the district average (2 per cent below the district average by 2006). Our draft proposals are illustrated on Map 2 and the large map at the back of the report.

## **Barnack, Eye & Thorney, Glington, Newborough, Northborough and Wittering wards**

85 These six wards form the rural part of the district to the east, west and north of the city of Peterborough. Barnack ward (comprising the parishes of Bainton, Barnack, Etton, Helpston, Southorpe, St Martin's Without and Ufford), Glington ward (comprising the parishes of Ailsworth, Castor, Glington and Marholm), Newborough ward (comprising the parishes of Borough Fen, Newborough and Peakirk), Northborough ward (comprising the parishes of Deeping Gate, Maxey and Northborough) and Wittering ward (comprising the parishes of Sutton, Thornhaugh, Upton, Wansford, Wittering and Wothorpe) are each represented by one councillor while Eye & Thorney ward (comprising the parishes of Eye and Thorney) is represented by two councillors. The number of electors per councillor in Barnack, Eye & Thorney, Glington and Northborough wards is 1 per cent, 9 per cent, 28 per cent and 2 per cent above the district average respectively (2 per cent, 10 per cent, 22 per cent and 2 per cent above the district average by 2006). The number of electors per councillor in Newborough and Wittering wards is 10 per cent below the district average (4 per cent above and 9 per cent above the district average respectively by 2006).

86 The City Council proposed a scheme consisting of five single-member wards and one two-member ward for the rural area, largely based on the existing warding arrangements with certain amendments to improve electoral equality. It stated that "the council strongly believes that single member wards should be retained in areas comprised principally of villages for three reasons". The first of these is that "ward councillors typically attend a majority of meetings in all of 'their' parishes, taking up several evenings per month; both the ward councillors and the parish councils thereby enjoy the benefits of continuity of contact without putting an undue burden on the ward councillors". Secondly, "the rural wards are extremely large and relatively sparsely populated" and increasing the size of these wards would "impose substantial additional burdens on the ward councillors without, we submit, improving the quality of services". Finally the Council argues that "single-member wards are a long-standing tradition" and "parish councillors and local residents like to know who their ward councillor is".

87 The Council proposed a revised single-member Barnack ward with Etton parish moving from Barnack ward into Northborough ward and Wothorpe parish moving from Wittering ward into Barnack ward. It proposed retaining the majority of the existing two-member Eye & Thorney ward but proposed warding Eye parish to take account of the urban overspill in the Finchfield area. This parish ward would transfer from Eye & Thorney district ward into East district ward. It proposed an amended single-member Glington ward with Ailsworth parish moving from Glington ward into Wittering ward. The Council proposed retaining the existing single-member Newborough ward with just one small change to the south-western boundary with Werrington North ward, which would only affect two electors. This amendment would involve moving the existing boundary between Newborough ward and Werrington North ward to run along the Glington Bypass. It put forward an amended single-member Northborough ward with Etton parish moving from Barnack ward into Northborough ward. Finally, the Council proposed an amended single-member Wittering ward with Ailsworth parish moving from Glington ward into Wittering ward and Wothorpe parish moving from Wittering ward into Barnack ward. Under the Council's proposals, the number of electors per councillor in the proposed Barnack, Eye & Thorney, Glington, Newborough, Northborough and Wittering wards would be 5 per cent above, 5 per cent

above, 10 per cent above, 10 per cent below, 7 per cent above and 1 per cent below the district average respectively (7 per cent, 7 per cent, 4 per cent, 4 per cent, 8 per cent and 17 per cent above the district average by 2006).

88 Ailsworth Parish Council opposed the Council's proposal to place them in a different ward to Castor parish. It stated that the villages of Ailsworth and Castor have "two separate parish councils but one community" and that the villages "share the church, chapel, village hall, shops, doctor, dentist, school, recreation facilities and many thriving organisations such as Brownies, Evergreen, Bowls, WI, Cricket, Football, Judo, WEA". It stated that "we appeal to you to apply a common sense approach and place Ailsworth in the same ward as Castor".

89 Castor Parish Council opposed the Council's proposals to place them in a different ward to Ailsworth parish and stated that "separate ward councillors would be uneconomic, duplicate effort and could lead rise to conflicting views and lack of alignment regarding the needs of what is actually one community". It stated that "in the community of Castor and Ailsworth all local services, amenities and places of worship are in the joint names and used by the whole community" and considered that splitting these two parishes would not be "in the interests of local community and local democracy".

90 Etton Parish Council wished to remain within Barnack ward. It stated that children from Etton "traditionally attend the Primary School at Helpston" in Barnack ward. Glington Parish Council stated that the Council's proposals meant that "the City areas are over represented and the rural areas under represented" and that in relation to Ailsworth and Castor "it is difficult to believe that a better solution could not be found than to separate two adjoining parishes".

91 Maxey Parish Council stated that it "is pleased to note that the City Council proposes that Maxey shall remain within the ward of Northborough". Southorpe Parish Council stated that they were "absolutely adamant that Southorpe should remain connected with Barnack as we share many services with them, eg church and cemetery". A resident of Finchfield requested that they be transferred from Eye & Thorney ward into a Peterborough city ward.

92 We have carefully considered all the representations received regarding this area. In general we are content to endorse the proposals put forward by the City Council as we consider that they provide a good balance between electoral equality and the preservation of community identity. However, we consider that the level of electoral inequality provided by the Council's proposal for Wittering ward (17 per cent above the district average) is unacceptably high and does not provide a good reflection of community identity. We have been persuaded by the argumentation put forward by Ailsworth and Castor parish councils and, having visited the area, are of the opinion that these two parish councils form part of the same community and should not be placed in separate wards. Therefore, in the absence of any alternative, we are proposing our own two-member Glington & Wittering ward comprising all the parishes in the existing Glington and Wittering wards with the exception of Wothorpe parish which, as proposed by the Council, will transfer to Barnack ward. While we accept that two single-member wards would be preferred locally, we were unable to achieve this without either warding parishes, or proposing wards that would result in unacceptably high levels of electoral equality.

93 In the remainder of the rural area we are content to endorse the proposals put forward by the City Council with the exception of their proposal to move the boundary between Newborough ward and Werrington North ward to run along Glington by-pass. Moving this boundary would involve moving the external boundary of Newborough parish which we do not have the power to do as part of a Periodic Electoral Review or creating a parish ward containing very few electors

which we do not consider provides effective and convenient local government. In the rest of the rural area we consider that the Council's proposals provide a good balance between electoral equality and the recognition of community identity.

94 Under our draft recommendations the number of electors per councillor in our proposed Barnack ward (comprising the parishes of Bainton, Barnack, Helpston, Southorpe, St Martin's Without, Ufford and Wothorpe), Eye & Thorney ward (comprising Thorney parish and the parish wards of Eye and Eye Green of Eye parish), Glington & Wittering ward (comprising the parishes of Ailsworth, Castor, Glington, Marholm, Sutton, Thornhaugh, Upton, Wansford and Wittering) and Northborough ward (comprising the parishes of Deeping Gate, Etton, Maxey and Northborough) would be 5 per cent, 5 per cent, 4 per cent and 7 per cent above the district average respectively (7 per cent, 7 per cent, 11 per cent and 8 per cent above the district average by 2006). The number of electors per councillor in our proposed Newborough ward (comprising the parishes of Borough Fen, Newborough and Peakirk) would be 10 per cent below the district average (4 per cent above the district average by 2006). Our draft proposals are illustrated on Map 2.

## **Electoral Cycle**

95 We received two representations regarding the City Council's electoral cycle. The City Council itself stated that it wished to retain the current arrangement of elections by thirds. It stated that "no political party has advanced the view that the timing of elections ought to change" and that "the present system of elections by thirds has been in effect for many years and, apparently, has a high level of elector acceptance".

96 The Peterborough Civic Society put forward the option of a full election every two years but stated that "if the choice has to be between 'thirds' and a single election every four years, we favour the latter". It considered that whole council elections would "impose fewer costs on the Council and on individual political parties and we believe that elections nearly every year can be destabilising". It also put forward the hope that "one simple whole-council election would gain greater involvement from the electorate" and that it saw merit "in moving to a standard approach for all unitaries and understand that two-thirds of them already adopt the single election approach".

97 We have considered carefully all representations. While we appreciate the argument put forward by the Peterborough Civic Society, their proposal for whole-council elections does not appear to have local support and, at present, there appears to be a majority view that the current electoral cycle should be retained. We therefore propose no change to the existing cycle of elections by thirds.

## **Conclusions**

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

- a council of 57 members should be retained;
- there should be 25 wards;

- the boundaries of 17 of the existing wards should be modified, resulting in a net increase of one ward, and seven wards should retain their existing boundaries;
- elections should continue to be held by thirds.

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

- in the southern area of Peterborough we are proposing our own warding arrangement;
- in the western area of Peterborough we are proposing an amended version of the Council's proposals;
- in the rural area we are proposing our own two-member Glington & Wittering ward.

100 Table 5 shows how our draft recommendations will affect 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	57	57	57	57
Number of wards	24	25	24	25
Average number of electors per councillor	1,914	1,914	2,070	2,070
Number of wards with a variance more than 10 per cent from the average	3	4	5	2
Number of wards with a variance more than 20 per cent from the average	2	1	2	0

101 As shown in Table 5, our draft recommendations for Peterborough City Council would result in an increase in the number of wards with an electoral variance of more than 10 per cent from three to four. By 2006, however, only two wards are forecast to have an electoral variance of more than 10 per cent.

**Draft Recommendation**

Peterborough City Council should comprise 57 councillors serving 25 wards, as detailed and named in Tables 1 and 2, and illustrated on Map 2 and the large map inside the back cover. The Council should continue to hold elections by thirds.

## Parish Council Electoral Arrangements

102 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 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 Bretton, Eye, Orton Longueville and Orton Waterville to reflect the proposed district wards.

103 The parish of Bretton is currently served by 20 councillors representing two wards: North Bretton ward (represented by 13 councillors) and South Bretton ward (represented by seven councillors). In the light of the scheme we have adopted for district warding in the area, we propose amending the boundary between the existing parish wards of North Bretton and South Bretton. We propose that the amended North Bretton ward should be represented by 15 councillors and the amended South Bretton ward should be represented by five councillors.

### **Draft Recommendation**

Bretton Parish Council should comprise 20 councillors, as at present, representing two wards: North Bretton (returning 15 councillors) and South Bretton (returning five councillors). The parish ward boundaries should reflect the proposed district ward boundaries in the area, as illustrated and named on Map 2 and the large map at the back of the report.

104 The parish of Eye is currently served by 15 councillors representing two wards: Eye ward (represented by 12 councillors) and Eye Green ward (represented by three councillors). As put forward by the City Council we are proposing to create a third parish ward in Eye parish in order to transfer the urban overspill in the Finchfield area from Eye & Thorney district ward into East district ward. We propose that this new parish ward should be named Finchfield and should be represented by one councillor while Eye parish ward should be represented by 11 councillors, a reduction of one.

### **Draft Recommendation**

Eye Parish Council should comprise 15 councillors, as at present, representing three wards: Eye ward (represented by 11 councillors), Eye Green ward (represented by three councillors) and Finchfield ward (represented by one councillor). The parish ward boundaries should reflect the proposed district ward boundaries in the area, as illustrated and named on the large map at the back of the report.

105 The parish of Orton Longueville is currently served by 11 councillors representing two parish wards: Botolph (represented by three councillors) and Longueville (represented by eight councillors). As put forward by the City Council and in light of the scheme we have adopted for district warding in the area, we propose amending the boundary between Botolph and Longueville parish wards so that the area to the west of Nene Parkway and north of Oundle Road (currently part of Botolph parish ward and West district ward) becomes part of Longueville parish ward and Orton Longueville district ward. This amendment would affect very few electors and the allocation of parish councillors between these two wards would remain unchanged. In

the light of our proposed district warding scheme we are also proposing that Botolph parish ward becomes part of the proposed Woodston district ward.

**Draft Recommendation**  
Orton Longueville Parish Council should comprise 11 parish councillors, as at present, representing two wards: Botolph (returning three councillors) and Longueville (returning eight councillors). The parish ward boundaries should reflect the proposed district ward boundaries in the area, as illustrated and named on the large map at the back of the report.

106 The parish of Orton Waterville is currently served by 12 councillors representing five parish wards: Orton Brimbles & Southgate (represented by three councillors), Orton Goldhay East (represented by one councillor), Orton Goldhay West (represented by two councillors), Orton Village (represented by three councillors) and Orton Wistow (represented by three councillors). In light of the scheme for district warding that we are proposing in this area, we propose amending the boundary between the parish wards of Orton Goldhay East and Orton Goldhay West to reflect the proposed district ward boundary amendment. To improve equality of representation in the area we are also proposing to increase the number of councillors representing Orton Goldhay East from one to two. We would welcome local views on this proposal at Stage Three.

107 We are also proposing an amendment to the boundary between Orton Brimbles & Southgate and Orton Goldhay West parish wards to rectify a mistake in the Final Recommendations on the Future Electoral Arrangements for Peterborough report of December 1996. As put forward by a resident of Orton Waterville we propose moving the boundary between Orton Brimbles & Southgate and Orton Goldhay West from its current position (running north along Orton Parkway from the roundabout near Orton Centre to Oundle Road) to run south along Orton Parkway from the roundabout near Orton Centre to Fletton Parkway.

**Draft Recommendation**  
Orton Waterville Parish Council should comprise 13 parish councillors, one more than at present, representing five wards: Orton Brimbles & Southgate (returning three councillors), Orton Goldhay East (returning two councillors), Orton Goldhay West (returning two councillors), Orton Village (returning three councillors) and Orton Wistow (returning three councillors). The parish ward boundaries should reflect the proposed district ward boundaries in the area, as illustrated and named on the large map at the back of the report.

108 We are not proposing any change to the electoral cycle of parish councils in the district.

**Draft Recommendation**  
Parish council elections should continue to take place every four years, at the same time as elections for the district ward of which they are part.

*Map 2: Draft Recommendations for Peterborough*

## 5 WHAT HAPPENS NEXT?

109 There will now be a consultation period, during which everyone is invited to comment on the draft recommendations on future electoral arrangements for Peterborough contained in this report. We will take fully into account all submissions received by 22 April 2002. Any received *after* this date may not be taken into account. All responses may be inspected at our offices and those of the City Council. A list of respondents will be available from us on request after the end of the consultation period.

110 Express your views by writing directly to us:

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

Fax: 020 7404 6142

E-mail: [reviews@lgce.gov.uk](mailto:reviews@lgce.gov.uk)

[www.lgce.gov.uk](http://www.lgce.gov.uk)

111 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

### 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](http://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. Non-Departmental Public Bodies, such as the Local Government Commission 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: LGCE 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.