

Draft recommendations on the future electoral arrangements for Calderdale

February 2003

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What is The Boundary Committee for England?

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

Members of the Committee are:

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

Archie Gall (Director)

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

Summary

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

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

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

- **in five of the 18 wards the number of electors represented by each councillor varies by more than 10% from the average for the borough;**
- **by 2006 this situation is expected to worsen, with the number of electors per councillor forecast to vary by more than 10% from the average in six wards and by more than 20% in one ward.**

Our main draft recommendations for future electoral arrangements (see Tables 1 and 2 and paragraphs 112-113) are that:

- **Calderdale Borough Council should have 51 councillors, three less than at present;**
- **there should be 17 wards, instead of 18 as at present;**
- **the boundaries of the 18 existing wards should be modified, resulting in a net reduction of one, and no wards should retain their existing boundaries.**

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

- **In all 17 of the proposed 17 wards the number of electors per councillor would vary by no more than 10% from the borough average.**
- **An improved level of electoral equality is forecast to continue, with the number of electors per councillor in all 17 wards expected to vary by no more than 10% from the average for the borough in 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 Todmorden Town Council.**

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

- **We will consult on these proposals for eight weeks from 11 February 2003. We take this consultation very seriously. We may decide to move away from our draft recommendations in the light of comments or suggestions that we receive. It is therefore important that all interested parties let us have their views and evidence, *whether or not* they agree with our draft recommendations.**
- **After considering local views, we will decide whether to modify our draft recommendations. We will then submit our final recommendations to The Electoral Commission, which will be responsible for implementing change to local authority electoral arrangements.**
- **The Electoral Commission will decide whether to accept, modify or reject our final recommendations. It will also determine when any changes come into effect.**

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

**Team Leader
Calderdale 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	Brighouse	3	Brighouse ward; part of Rastrick ward.	6 and 7
2	Calder Valley	3	The parishes of Blackshaw, Erringdon, Heptonstall and Wadsworth; part of the parish of Todmorden (the revised Stoodly parish ward); part of the parish of Hebden Royd (the existing Birchcliffe, Fairfield and West End parish wards).	1-4
3	Elland	3	Part of Elland ward; part of Greetland & Stainland ward; part of Rastrick ward.	7
4	Greetland & Stainland	3	Part of Greetland & Stainland ward; part of Ryburn ward.	4, 5 and 7
5	Highroad Well	3	Part of Mixenden ward; part of Sowerby Bridge ward; part of Warley ward.	4 and 6
6	Hipperholme & Lightcliffe	3	Part of Hipperholme & Lightcliffe ward; part of Northowram & Shelf ward; part of Town ward.	6
7	Illingworth	3	Part of Illingworth ward; part of Ovenden ward; part of Mixenden ward.	3, 4 and 6
8	Luddendenfoot	3	Part of the parish of Hebden Royd (the existing parish wards of Caldene, Cragg Vale and White Lee); part of Luddendenfoot ward (unparished area); part of Ryburn ward; part of Sowerby Bridge ward.	3-5
9	Ovenden	3	Part of Ovenden ward; part of Illingworth ward; part of Mixenden ward; part of St John's ward.	4 and 6
10	Northowram & Shelf	3	Part of Hipperholme and Lightcliffe ward, part of Northowram & Shelf ward and part of Town ward.	6
11	Rastrick	3	Part of Rastrick ward; part of Elland ward.	7
12	Ryburn	3	Part of Ryburn ward (the parish of Ripponden and part of the unparished area).	4 and 5
13	St John's	3	Part of St John's ward; part of Skircoat ward; part of Town ward; part of Warley ward.	4 and 6
14	Skircoat	3	Part of Skircoat ward; part of Town ward.	6 and 7
15	Southowram	3	Part of Elland ward; part of St John's ward; part of Town ward.	6 and 7

	Ward name	Number of councillors	Constituent areas	Large map reference
16	Sowerby Bridge	3	Part of Sowerby Bridge ward; part of Luddendenfoot ward; part of Ryburn ward; part of Skircoat ward; part of Warley ward.	4, 6 and 7
17	Todmorden	3	Part of the parish of Todmorden (the existing parish wards of Central, Cornholme, Stansfield and Walsden, and the revised Langfield parish ward).	1, 2 and 5

Notes:

- 1) *Part of the borough is parished and comprises Calder Valley, Luddendenfoot (part), Ryburn (part) and Todmorden wards.*
- 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 ward boundaries adhere to ground detail. These changes do not affect any electors.*

Table 2: Draft recommendations for Calderdale

	Ward name	Number of councillors	Electorate 2001	Number of electors per councillor or	Variance from average %	Electorate 2006	Number of electors per councillor	Variance from average %
1	Brighouse	3	8,593	2,864	-1	8,557	2,852	-2
2	Calder Valley	3	9,031	3,010	4	9,252	3,084	6
3	Elland	3	8,146	2,715	-6	8,077	2,692	-7
4	Greetland & Stainland	3	8,418	2,806	-3	8,583	2,861	-2
5	Highroad Well	3	8,809	2,936	2	8,950	2,983	3
6	Hipperholme & Lightcliffe	3	8,193	2,731	-5	8,204	2,735	-6
7	Illingworth	3	9,248	3,083	7	8,853	2,951	2
8	Luddenden-foot	3	7,798	2,599	-10	7,924	2,641	-9
9	Ovenden	3	8,638	2,879	0	8,471	2,824	-3
10	Northowram & Shelf	3	8,560	2,853	-1	8,745	2,915	0
11	Rastrick	3	8,759	2,920	1	8,579	2,860	-2
12	Ryburn	3	8,171	2,724	-6	8,645	2,882	-1
13	St John's	3	9,414	3,138	9	9,289	3,096	7
14	Skircoat	3	8,956	2,985	3	9,149	3,050	5
15	Southowram	3	9,104	3,035	5	9,208	3,069	6
16	Sowerby Bridge	3	8,245	2,748	-5	8,500	2,833	-2
17	Todmorden	3	9,079	3,026	5	9,190	3,063	5
	Totals	51	147,162	-	-	148,176	-	-
	Averages	-	-	2,886	-	-	2,905	-

Source: *Electorate figures are based on information provided by Calderdale 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. 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 Calderdale, on which we are now consulting. We are reviewing the five metropolitan boroughs in West Yorkshire as part of our programme of periodic electoral reviews (PERs) of all 386 principal local authority areas in England. The programme started in 1996 and is currently expected to finish in 2004.

2 This is our first review of the electoral arrangements of Calderdale. Calderdale's last review was carried out by the Local Government Boundary Commission, which reported to the Secretary of State in 1978 (Report no. 308).

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

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

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

5 Our task is to make recommendations to The Electoral Commission on the number of councillors who should serve on a council, and the number, boundaries and names of wards. We can also propose changes to the electoral arrangements for parish and town councils in the 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% in any ward will have to be fully justified. Any imbalances of 20% or more should only arise in the most exceptional circumstances, and will require the strongest justification.

7 We are not prescriptive on council size. However, we believe that any proposals relating to council size, whether these are for an increase, a reduction or no change, should be supported by evidence and argumentation. Given the stage now reached in the introduction of new political management structures under the provisions of the Local Government Act 2000, it is important that whatever council size interested parties may propose to us they can demonstrate that their proposals have been fully thought through, and have been developed in the context of a review of internal political management and the role of councillors in the new structure. However, we have found it necessary to safeguard against upward drift in the number of councillors, and we believe that any proposal for an increase in council size will need to be fully justified. In particular, we do not accept that an increase in electorate should automatically result in an increase in the number of councillors, or 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 who 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 8 May 2002, when we wrote to Calderdale Borough Council inviting proposals for future electoral arrangements. We also notified West Yorkshire Police Authority, the Local Government Association, Yorkshire Local Councils Association, parish and town councils in the borough, Members of Parliament with constituency interests in the borough, Members of the European Parliament for the Yorkshire & the Humber Region, and the headquarters of the main political parties. We placed a notice in the local press, issued a press release and invited Calderdale Metropolitan Borough Council to publicise the review further. The closing date for receipt of representations, the end of Stage One, was 27 August 2002.

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

12 We are currently at Stage Three. This stage, which began on 11 February 2003 and will end on 7 April 2003, involves publishing the draft proposals in this report and public consultation on them. **We take this consultation very seriously and it is therefore important that all those interested in the review should let us have their views and evidence, whether or not they agree with these draft proposals.**

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

2 Current electoral arrangements

14 With a population of some 193,000, Calderdale Borough covers an area of 36,346 hectares and is situated in the west of West Yorkshire. The borough is bounded by the districts of Bradford and Kirklees to the north, south and east and Lancashire to the west. The town of Halifax constitutes the main urban settlement, with the Calder Valley area to the west constituting a rural hinterland. Much of the rural west of the borough consists of the upland of the South Pennines, broken by narrow steep valleys, and contains the settlements of Hebden Bridge, Ripponden and Todmorden. The borough contains seven parishes in the rural Calder Valley area.

15 At present, each councillor represents an average of 2,725 electors, which the Borough Council forecasts will increase to 2,744 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 five of the 18 wards varies by more than 10% from the borough average. The worst imbalance is in Greetland & Stainland ward where each of the councillors represents 18% more electors than the borough average. All wards are three-member wards.

16 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 Calderdale

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	Brighouse	3	7,744	2,581	-5	7,657	2,552	-7
2	Calder Valley	3	9,140	3,047	12	9,338	3,113	13
3	Elland	3	8,035	2,678	-2	7,847	2,616	-5
4	Greetland & Stainland	3	9,620	3,207	18	9,838	3,279	20
5	Hipperholme & Lightcliff	3	8,004	2,668	-2	8,015	2,672	-3
6	Illingworth	3	6,862	2,287	-16	6,542	2,181	-21
7	Luddenden-foot	3	8,585	2,862	5	8,765	2,922	6
8	Mixenden	3	7,094	2,365	-13	7,214	2,405	-12
9	Northowram & Shelf	3	8,637	2,879	6	8,822	2,941	7
10	Ovenden	3	7,345	2,448	-10	7,200	2,400	-13
11	Rastrick	3	8,077	2,692	-1	8,019	2,673	-3
12	Ryburn	3	9,182	3,061	12	9,652	3,217	17
13	St John's	3	8,007	2,669	-2	7,892	2,631	-4
14	Skircoat	3	8,642	2,881	6	8,824	2,941	7
15	Sowerby Bridge	3	7,742	2,581	-5	7,993	2,664	-3
16	Todmorden	3	7,843	2,614	-4	7,922	2,641	-4
17	Town	3	8,792	2,931	8	8,907	2,969	8
18	Warley	3	7,811	2,604	-4	7,729	2,576	-6
	Totals	54	147,162	-	-	148,176	-	-
	Averages	-	-	2,725	-	-	2,744	-

Source: *Electorate figures are based on information provided by Calderdale 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 Illingworth ward were relatively over-represented by 16%, while electors in Greetland & Stainland ward were relatively under-represented by 18%. Figures have been rounded to the nearest whole number.*

3 Submissions received

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

18 During this initial stage of the review, officers from The Boundary Committee visited the area and met officers and members from the Borough Council. We are grateful to all concerned for their co-operation and assistance. We received seven representations during Stage One, including borough-wide schemes from the Calderdale Labour Group and Calderdale District Labour Party (the Labour Group), the Liberal Democrat Group (the Lib Dem Group), the Conservative Group and the Calder Valley Conservative Association (the CV Conservatives), all of which may be inspected at our offices and those of Calderdale Borough Council.

Calderdale Labour Group and Calderdale District Labour Party

19 The Labour Group proposed a council of 51 members, three fewer than at present, serving 17 wards, compared to the existing 18.

20 The Labour Group's proposals resulted in amendments to all but one of the existing wards, with limited evidence and argumentation provided for the proposed wards. However, detailed argumentation was provided in support of the proposed council size of 51. Under the Labour Group's proposals all wards would vary by less than 6% from the borough average by 2006.

Liberal Democrat Group

21 The Lib Dem Group proposed a council of 51 members, three fewer than at present, serving 17 wards, compared to the existing 18.

22 The Lib Dem Group's proposals provided for the creation of 17 revised wards, all of which would vary by less than 8% from the borough average by 2006. The submission contended that the proposed wards were based largely on the creation of distinctive communities or groups of communities. Detailed evidence and argumentation were provided in support of these proposals, including detailed argumentation in support of the proposed council size of 51.

Conservative Group

23 The Conservative Group proposed a council of 51 members, three fewer than at present, serving 17 wards, compared to the existing 18.

24 The Conservative Group's proposals resulted in amendments to all but one of the existing wards, with limited evidence and argumentation provided for the proposed wards. However, detailed argumentation was provided in support of the proposed council size of 51. The submission contended that the proposals were based largely on achieving good levels of electoral equality, however, consideration was given to removing geographical and social anomalies where possible. Under the Conservative Group's proposals, all wards would vary by less than 5% from the borough average by 2006.

Calder Valley Conservative Association

25 The CV Conservatives original proposals were based on eight wards in the Calder Valley Constituency. Further proposals were submitted for eight wards in the Halifax Constituency. The two sets of proposals were combined to form a borough-wide scheme proposing a council size of 48 members representing 16 wards. It was argued that in the future this would enable the

Parliamentary Boundary Commission to equalise the representation of the electorate for the parliamentary constituencies in the borough. The scheme was supported by limited argumentation for each of the proposed wards and the proposed council size. Under the CV Conservatives, proposals, all wards would vary by less than 4% from the borough average by 2006.

Other representations

26 A further three representations were received at Stage One. West Yorkshire Police Authority proposed that any amendments to the existing wards in the West Yorkshire area should be kept to a minimum to avoid disruption to both residents and police officers as recent changes to the boundaries of policing divisions have attempted to follow existing ward boundaries.

27 The North Halifax Partnership Ltd submitted proposals relating to four wards in the north of the Halifax town area. It proposed a number of boundary amendments in order that the wards better represent the natural geographical boundaries of local communities.

28 Councillor McManus proposed a ward name change, suggesting that Calder Valley ward be renamed Top ward to better reflect the area and to avoid confusion.

4 Analysis and draft recommendations

29 We have not finalised our conclusions on the electoral arrangements for Calderdale 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.

30 As described earlier, the prime aim in considering the most appropriate electoral arrangements for Calderdale 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'.

31 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.

32 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.

33 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

34 Since 1975 there has been a 3% increase in the electorate of Calderdale borough. The Borough Council submitted electorate forecasts for the year 2006, projecting an increase in the electorate of less than 1% from 147,162 to 148,176 over the five-year period from 2001 to 2006. It expects most of the growth to be in Ryburn ward, although a significant amount is also expected in Sowerby Bridge ward. However, a number of wards, in parts of Halifax and in the south-east of the borough, 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.

35 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.

Council size

36 Calderdale Borough Council presently has 54 members. At Stage One, the Labour Group proposed a decrease in council size from 54 members to 51. The Labour Group argued that a strong case existed for a reduction in council size due to the modernisation process, which has 'significantly changed the role of elected members', and the fact that 'ward sizes in Calderdale are well below those in neighbouring Metropolitan authorities'. In addition, the Labour Group argued that Calderdale, with its combination of small towns, villages and rural areas provides a case for retaining a size of authority that enables councillors to develop strong links with local communities. It also noted that the requirement for three-member wards in the borough has been restrictive, notably in the rural area.

37 The Lib Dem Group also proposed a decrease in council size of three members to 51. However, it decided to submit a scheme based on a council size of 51 following the decision of the Borough Council to support a council consisting of 51 members.

38 The Conservative Group also proposed a decrease in council size of three-members to 51, based on the proposal to retain nine wards in the Calder Valley Parliamentary Constituency and to have eight wards in the Halifax Parliamentary Constituency. In addition, it was argued that consideration should be given to 'removing geographical and social anomalies where this is possible'.

39 The CV Conservatives' initial submission was based on a council size of 48, proposing eight wards each in the Calder Valley and Halifax Parliamentary Constituencies. They argued that Calderdale should be kept as one council with two parliamentary constituencies and that, 'In order to achieve that we must ...attempt to equalise the ward size at the same time as equalising the parliamentary boundary size'. However, we noted that the initial scheme only provided details of the proposed wards in the Calder Valley Parliamentary Constituency.

40 We considered the proposals submitted and were not persuaded that the argumentation and evidence put forward for the proposed council sizes, particularly in relation to the internal management of the Borough Council, was sufficient to support the respective schemes. We therefore considered that the argumentation we received was insufficient to enable us to reach a judgement on the most appropriate council size for Calderdale. Therefore, we wrote to the four respondents who had proposed council sizes, namely the Labour Group, the Lib Dem Group, the Conservative Group and the CV Conservatives requesting further evidence and information on why the proposed council sizes of 51 and 48 would provide for effective and convenient local government, in particular, with regard to the Borough Council's internal political management and the role of councillors in the new structure.

41 Further evidence was duly received from each of the respondents. The three respondents who proposed a council size of 51 each submitted detailed further evidence and argumentation addressing the issues on which we had sought further information, identifying a number of points in support of the proposed council size of 51. Each of the respondents put emphasis on the representational role of councillors in the new internal management structure and the internal management of the Council under a modernised constitutional framework.

42 The CV Conservatives based their further evidence on the need to create two parliamentary constituencies of equal size and to 'equate the number of councillors from each of the constituencies hence ensuring equal council representation to each half of the valley'. In addition, it was argued that a reduction in council size would reduce the financial cost of the Council. In conjunction with their further evidence on council size, they submitted more detailed proposals for the warding arrangements for the Halifax constituency. Thus, the two sets of proposals for the warding arrangements in the borough were combined to form a borough-wide scheme based on a council size of 48.

43 Having considered all the representations and the further evidence received, we note that a large amount of information has been provided in order to inform us in relation to the issue of council size, and we are grateful to all those who have contributed. We have been persuaded that a case has been made for a council size of 51 and propose putting this forward as part of our draft recommendations. The three Groups on the council put this proposal forward and we received a significant level of evidence and argumentation from them in relation to this issue. Each Group considered how the Council would operate under the reduced council size, taking into account the role of the Council in the new management structure, in particular, the role of the councillors, their accountability in decision making and allocation to council bodies. We note that the three groups submitted broadly similar argumentation and evidence in support of the proposed council size, thus highlighting the cross-party consensus of approach to this issue. We also note that the Conservative Group and the Lib Dem Group provided similar proposals for the possibility of establishing 'Area Committees' in the future, which they argued, would be aided by a council size of 51.

44 With regard to the CV Conservatives proposed council size of 48, we are of the view that limited argumentation was provided in support of this proposal and that the main aim of the submission was to equalise the size of the parliamentary constituencies. However, as outlined in our *Guidance*, we take no account of Parliamentary Constituency Boundaries in recommending new warding arrangements, and do not believe that a future review of parliamentary constituency boundaries is sufficient justification for significantly changing council size.

45 In view of the consensus from the three Groups, the detailed argumentation that we received and 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 51 members.

46 We are aware that in the parished area of the borough there are a number of uncontested seats on some parish and town councils. It is the view that good levels of local representation should be achieved at parish and town council level, but we are concerned that there are a number of vacant seats on parish and town councils in the borough. We are of the view that this is not ideal for local democracy and that this should be addressed, either by The Boundary Committee as part of this review or by the carrying out a parish review in the area by the borough council. During a PER, a parish or town council can make a request to The Boundary Committee asking us to make recommendations for changes to its electoral arrangements. These may or may not be as a consequence of proposed changes to the principal authority's electoral arrangements. We would welcome views at Stage Three on this issue, particularly from parish and town councils in the area.

Electoral arrangements

47 Having given careful consideration to all of the representations received at Stage One, we consider that all four borough-wide schemes had some merit, providing for good levels of electoral equality and on the whole, utilising strong boundaries. We note that there is a level of consensus in the north-east of the borough, but limited agreement on the most appropriate rewarding for the remainder of the borough. Having analysed each of the schemes, we are of the view that the proposals put forward by the Labour and Conservative Groups and the CV Conservatives contain revised warding arrangements which we are not persuaded would provide an adequate reflection of the statutory criteria. In addition, we received limited evidence and argumentation in support of the proposed wards. We therefore propose basing the draft recommendations on the Lib Dems scheme as in our view, it provides for the best balance of the statutory criteria.

48 In relation to the Labour Group's scheme, its proposal was broadly based on using existing polling districts as building blocks while respecting existing community boundaries and local preferences. We note that very limited evidence and argumentation was received. In addition, we are not persuaded by its proposals in the south-east of the borough and to the north and west of the Halifax town area, particularly its proposed Halifax West, North Halifax, Sowerby Bridge and Warley Royd wards, which in our view divide communities and do not utilise strong boundaries.

49 We are of the view that the proposals submitted by the Conservative Group have similarities with the Lib Dem Group's proposals in the east of the borough. However, in the Halifax and rural Calder Valley areas there are marked differences, particularly the proposed Greetland & Stainland ward which breaches the railway line and the proposed Hebble ward which divides the community of Ovenden, with the proposals not utilising identifiable boundaries and dividing communities.

50 In relation to the CV Conservatives proposals, we note that limited evidence and argumentation was provided in support of these proposals and in addition, they were derived from the desire to create two parliamentary constituencies of equal size. The scheme was also based on a council size of 48, and given that we are proposing to base the draft recommendations on a council size of 51, our capacity to endorse the CV Conservatives proposals is limited.

51 With regard to the proposals put forward by the North Halifax Partnership Ltd, we propose adopting these proposals as they coincide with the Lib Dem Group's proposals for the area, are locally derived and provide supporting evidence and argumentation.

52 Having considered carefully all the submissions received, we have been persuaded that the Lib Dem Group's proposals provide for the best reflection of the statutory criteria. We note the more detailed level of evidence and argumentation provided in support of the proposed wards and the desire to use strong identifiable boundaries and to avoid dividing communities. However, we do recognise that some aspects of the other schemes received are compatible with a council size of 51, and we have sought to adopt any areas of consensus as part of our draft recommendations. We also propose a number of minor amendments to the Lib Dems scheme to provide for more clearly identifiable boundaries, some of which are based on the alternative proposals submitted at Stage One. For borough warding purposes, the following areas, based on existing wards, are considered in turn:

- a) Calder Valley, Luddendenfoot, Ryburn and Todmorden wards;
- b) Illingworth, Mixenden and Ovenden wards;
- c) St John's, Skircoat and Town wards;
- d) Sowerby Bridge and Warley wards;
- e) Brighouse, Elland, Greetland & Stainland and Rastrick wards;
- f) Hipperholme & Lightcliffe and Northowram & Shelf wards.

53 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.

Calder Valley, Luddendenfoot, Ryburn and Todmorden wards

54 The existing wards of Calder Valley, Luddendenfoot, Ryburn and Todmorden are situated in the more rural west of the borough. Each ward is represented by three councillors. Calder Valley ward comprises the parishes of Blackshaw, Erringden, Heptonstall and Wadsworth, the Birchcliffe and West End parish wards of Hebden Royd parish and the Stoodly and Walsden parish wards of Todmorden parish. Luddendenfoot ward comprises the Caldene, Cragg Vale, Fairfield and White Lee parish wards of Hebden Royd parish and an unparished area. Ryburn

ward comprises Ripponden parish and an unparished area. Todmorden ward comprises the Central, Cornholme, Langfield and Stansfield parish wards of Todmorden parish. Under the current arrangements Calder Valley, Luddendenfoot and Ryburn wards are slightly under-represented, containing 12%, 5% and 12% more electors per councillor than the borough average respectively (13%, 6% and 17% more by 2006), while Todmorden ward contains 4% fewer electors per councillor than the borough average (4% fewer by 2006).

55 At Stage One, the Labour Group proposed transferring polling district TN from Calder Valley ward to Todmorden ward to form a revised Todmorden ward. It argued that 'it is not possible to accommodate the local wish to include Walsden within the ward [Todmorden] without in turn losing Cornholme and creating an equal anomaly. We therefore proposed to include TN polling district from Calder Valley which includes the Poets Estate and areas that come within a few hundred yards of the centre of Todmorden.' It further proposed transferring the Fairfield parish ward, of Hebden Royd parish, from Luddendenfoot ward to Calder Valley ward and transferring the area broadly around Chiserley and Midgeley Moor (in the north-east of Calder Valley ward) into a new Warley Royd ward, to form a revised Calder Valley ward. It stated that 'the whole of Hebden Bridge is now included within a single division [ward]'. In relation to Luddendenfoot ward, it proposed including the area broadly to the east of Rochdale Canal and south of Roebucks Wood (polling district QC) in a revised Sowerby Bridge ward, as detailed below. The remainder of Luddendenfoot ward would be combined with part of the existing Warley ward, the area to the west of Vicar Park Road and Norton Drive (until the end of the path) and to the south of Bank End and Windle Royd Lane (polling district EE), and the area broadly around Chiserley and Midgeley Moor, as detailed earlier, to form a new Warley Royd ward. With regard to Ryburn ward, it proposed transferring the Barkisland area in the south-east (polling district RG) to a new Stainland ward, as detailed below, with the remainder of the ward forming a revised Ryburn ward.

56 Under the Labour Group's proposals, Calder Valley, Ryburn, Todmorden and Warley Royd wards would have equal to, 8% fewer, 2% more and 5% fewer electors per councillor than the borough average respectively (2% more, 3% fewer, 3% more and 4% fewer than the average by 2006).

57 The Lib Dem Group proposed to form a revised Todmorden ward by transferring Walsden parish ward, of Todmorden parish, from Calder Valley ward to Todmorden ward and transferring the Kilnhurst area from Todmorden ward to a new Upper Calder ward. The Lib Dem Group acknowledged that its proposals for these wards would have implications for the electoral arrangements for the parish of Todmorden, but offered no specific proposals for these arrangements. Fairfield parish ward, of Hebden Royd parish, would be transferred from Luddendenfoot ward and combined with the remainder of the Calder Valley ward and the Kilnhurst area, as detailed earlier, to form a new Upper Calder ward. The remainder of Luddendenfoot ward, less the properties in Canal View, would be combined with the area south of Blackwall Lane and north of Burnley Road (westwards from Blackwall Lane), from the existing Sowerby Bridge ward, and with the rural area broadly to the west of Boulder Clough and to the east of Long Edge Moor, from the existing Ryburn ward, to form a revised Luddendenfoot ward. The Lib Dem Group noted that Mytholmroyd becomes the 'main population centre for this ward so a change of name might be appropriate, though Luddendenfoot remains the geographical centre'. With regard to Ryburn ward, it further proposed transferring the rural area around Norland Town to a new Stainland ward and including Lower Bentley Royd Farm and the properties to the east of Cemetery Lane in a revised Sowerby Bridge ward, with the remainder of the Ryburn ward forming a revised Ryburn ward.

58 Under the Lib Dem Group's proposals, Luddendenfoot, Ryburn, Todmorden and Upper Calder wards would have 8% fewer, 6% fewer, 5% more and 4% more electors per councillor than the borough average respectively (8% fewer, 1% fewer, 5% more and 6% more than the average by 2006).

59 The Conservative Group proposed transferring the area broadly around Lumbutts and Mankinholes from Calder Valley ward to Todmorden ward, to form revised Calder Valley and Todmorden wards. It proposed combining the rural area broadly to the west of Boulder Clough and east of Long Edge Moor (slightly more to the west than the Lib Dem Group's proposed boundary) from the existing Ryburn ward with the existing Luddendenfoot ward, to form a revised Luddendenfoot ward. It further proposed that the area to the east of the centre of Norland Town, from the existing Ryburn ward, be included in a revised Greetland & Stainland ward, as detailed below, with the remainder of the existing Ryburn ward forming a revised Ryburn ward.

60 Under the Conservative Group's proposals, Calder Valley, Luddendenfoot, Ryburn, and Todmorden wards would have 1% more, 3% more, equal to and 5% fewer electors per councillor than the borough average respectively (2% more, 4% more, 5% more and 4% fewer than the average by 2006).

61 Councillor McManus proposed that Calder Valley ward be renamed Top ward 'since the ward isn't coterminous with Calder Valley constituency'.

62 We have carefully considered all representations received regarding these wards. As detailed previously, we intend basing our draft recommendations on the Lib Dem Group's proposals, particularly as we note that there are areas of consensus between the Lib Dem Group's scheme and the Labour Group and Conservative Groups' schemes. We therefore intend adopting the Lib Dem Group's proposals for Calder Valley, Luddendenfoot, Ryburn and Todmorden wards, subject to three amendments in order to provide for more identifiable boundaries and to retain two ward names. We propose retaining the ward names of Calder Valley and Luddendenfoot as we believe they better reflect the areas covered by the wards. We propose including the properties to the north of Burnley Road, from Blackwell Lane to the back of the properties in Water Hill and to the south of Blackwall Lane and Hoyle House Farm, in the revised Sowerby Bridge ward. These properties are linked to the Sowerby Bridge area and we propose including them in a revised Sowerby Bridge ward in the interest of community identity. We also note that the CV Conservatives revised Luddendenfoot ward is broadly similar to the Lib Dem Group's revised Luddendenfoot ward. We also propose adopting the Conservative Group's proposed boundary between the north-west of Ryburn ward and the south-east of Luddendenfoot ward as we are of the view that it provides for a more identifiable boundary. Our proposals for the electoral arrangements of Todmorden Parish Council, as a consequence of our proposals for the borough wards, are discussed later in this report.

63 Under our draft recommendations, Calder Valley ward would retain the parishes of Blackshaw, Erringdon, Heptonstall and Wadsworth. It would also comprise the existing Birchcliffe, Fairfield and West End parish wards of Hebden Royd parish, the revised Stoodly parish ward of Todmorden parish. Luddendenfoot ward would comprise the existing Caldene, Cragg Vale and White Lee parish wards of Hebden Royd parish and an unparished area. Todmorden ward would comprise the existing Central, Cornholme and Stansfield parish wards, the revised Langfield parish ward and the existing Walsden parish ward of Todmorden parish. Ryburn ward would retain the parish of Ripponden and include a revised unparished area.

64 Under our draft recommendations, Calder Valley and Todmorden wards would have 4% and 5% more electors per councillor than the borough average respectively (6% and 5% more by 2006 respectively). Luddendenfoot and Ryburn wards would have 10% and 6% fewer electors per councillor than the borough average (9% and 1% fewer by 2006).

Illingworth, Mixenden and Ovenden wards

65 The existing wards of Illingworth, Mixenden and Ovenden are situated in the north of the borough and are unparished. Each ward is represented by three councillors. Under the current

arrangements Illingworth, Mixenden and Ovenden wards are slightly over-represented, containing 16%, 13% and 10% fewer electors per councillor than the borough average respectively (21%, 12% and 13% fewer by 2006).

66 At Stage One, the Labour Group proposed combining the area to the north of Mount Tabor and Gibb Lane, from the existing Mixenden ward, with the existing Illingworth ward, less the area to the south of Furness Drive, Illingworth Road and Tar Hill (the boundary would follow along the centre of Furness Drive until Furness Avenue, continuing eastwards along the back of the houses on Turner Avenue South and Turner Place, then following north along Keighley Road and Wrigley Hill until Illingworth Road, continuing north along Illingworth Road until Moss Drive, then following south along Moss Drive, Whitehall Drive and Tar Hill plantation), to form a new Halifax North ward. The remaining part of Mixenden ward, less the area to the east of Springhall Lane, would be combined with part of the existing Warley ward (the area to the east of Vicar Park Road and Norton Drive (until the end of the path) and to the north of Bank End and Windle Royd Lane, less the area to the east of Springhall Lane, Gibraltar Road and Rippon Street (polling districts EA and ED)) and part of the existing Skircoat ward (the area broadly to the north-west of Savile Park (polling district FF)) to form a new Halifax West ward. Finally, the remaining part of the existing Illingworth ward would be combined with the existing Ovenden ward and Lee Mount area, from the existing St John's ward, to form a revised Ovenden ward.

67 Under the Labour Group's proposals, Halifax West, North Halifax and Ovenden wards would have equal to, 8% more and 5% more electors per councillor than the borough average respectively (2% fewer, 5% fewer and 2% more than the average by 2006).

68 The Lib Dem Group proposed combining the Mixenden village settlement to the north of Clyde Bank Beck and Clough Lane, from the existing Mixenden ward, with the existing Illingworth ward (less the area broadly to the south of Raw Lane) and the area north of the properties on Watkinson Road and east of the Beechwood Works, from the existing Ovenden ward, to form a revised Illingworth ward. The Lib Dem Group argued that 'this unites the community of Holmfield and provides a clearer boundary between our suggested Ovenden and Illingworth wards'. The Lib Dem Group further proposed combining the remainder of the existing Ovenden and Illingworth wards with the Lee Mount area, from the existing St John's ward, the area broadly around Hebble Gardens, from the existing Mixenden ward, and the rural area in the north of the existing St John's ward, to form a revised Ovenden ward. In addition, it proposed that the remainder of Mixenden ward be combined with parts of the existing Sowerby Bridge and Warley wards, as detailed later, to form a new Highroad Well ward.

69 Under the Lib Dem Group's proposals, Highroad Well, Illingworth and Ovenden wards would have 2% more, 7% more and equal to the borough average number of electors per councillor respectively (3% more, 2% more and 3% fewer than the average by 2006).

70 The Conservative Group proposed combining the existing Illingworth ward with the rural areas in the north of Mixenden and St John's wards and the area broadly around Ovenden Park and Drakes Industrial Estate, from the existing Ovenden ward, to form a new North Halifax ward. The remainder of the existing Ovenden ward would be combined with the Mixenden village settlement, from the existing Mixenden ward, and the Lee Mount area, from the existing St John's ward, to form a new Hebble ward. It argued that 'The new ward is a geographically compact area which has many traditional links.' It was further proposed that the remainder of the existing Mixenden ward, less the area to the east of Springhill Lane, be combined with the existing Warley ward, less the area to the east of Springhall Lane, Gibraltar Road and Rippon Street and to the north of Trimmingham Road and Warley Road, to form a revised Warley ward (the eastern boundary of the revised Warley ward would follow the Labour Group's proposed eastern boundary of their proposed Halifax West ward).

71 Under the Conservative Group's proposals, Hebble, North Halifax and Warley wards would have 5% more, 1% more and 4% more electors per councillor than the borough average respectively (2% more, 4% fewer and 4% more than the average by 2006).

72 The North Halifax Partnership Ltd proposed that the Lee Mount area be transferred from St John's ward to Ovenden ward as 'it has natural links with the Ovenden area'. It also stated that there is currently an 'unnatural boundary between Illingworth and Ovenden wards at Furness Grove' as it divides the Furness estate community. It further stated that the existing 'Mixenden ward does not form a natural community as it includes Mixenden proper, areas of countryside, Pellon and then includes an area adjoining St John's ward'.

73 We have carefully considered all the representations received regarding these wards. As detailed previously, we intend basing our draft recommendations on the Lib Dem Group's proposals, and we note that there are areas of consensus between the Lib Dem Group's scheme and the Labour and Conservative Groups' schemes. We therefore intend adopting the Lib Dem Group's proposals for Illingworth, Ovenden and Mixenden wards without amendment. In our view, the Lib Dem Group's proposals provide for more identifiable boundaries and do not divide communities. We note that a number of boundaries proposed by the Labour Group and the Conservative Group would divide communities, provide for less identifiable boundaries and thus not provide an adequate reflection of the statutory criteria in these wards. With regard to the Mixenden settlement, in the north of the existing Mixenden ward, we note that it has no real links with the settlements to the south or east of the borough and links more with the existing Ovenden ward. However, we are of the view that in order to facilitate a good scheme in the north of the Halifax area the Mixenden settlement would need to be combined with the settlement to the east, in the existing Illingworth ward. It would enable the Lee Mount area to be included in a revised Ovenden ward, as proposed by the Lib Dem, Labour and Conservative Groups, CV Conservatives and the North Halifax Partnership. It would also enable the Furness Estate area to be included in a revised Ovenden ward, as proposed by the Lib Dem Group and the North Halifax Partnership. Therefore, we believe that the Lib Dem Group's revised Illingworth and Ovenden wards and new Highroad Well ward would provide the best balance between the statutory criteria in the area and facilitate a good scheme across the borough as a whole.

74 Under our draft recommendations, the number of electors per councillor for the proposed Illingworth, Ovenden and Highroad Well wards would be the same as under the Lib Dem Group's proposals.

St John's, Skircoat and Town wards

75 The existing wards of St John's, Skircoat and Town are situated in the centre of the borough, in the unparished area, and cover the majority of central Halifax. Each ward is represented by three councillors. Under the current arrangements St John's, Skircoat and Town wards contain 2% fewer, 6% more and 8% more electors per councillor than the borough average respectively (4% fewer, 7% more and 8% more by 2006).

76 At Stage One, the Labour Group proposed combining the existing St John's ward, less the area transferred to a revised Ovenden ward, as detailed earlier, and less the area to the north of Dean Clough and North Bridge (which is transferred to a new Halifax East ward), with parts of the existing Mixenden and Warley wards, as detailed earlier, and with the area west of Kings Road and People's Park, from the existing Town ward, to form a revised St John's ward. It further proposed transferring the area to the west of Shaw Lane, Haigh Lane, Farrah Mill Lane and Rookery Lane, from the existing Town ward, and the area to the east of Calderdale College, south of Hopwood Lane, west of Kings Cross Street/Burdock Way (until West Parade), south of West Parade and Blackwall, west of Harrison Road and south of Prescott Street and Lilly Lane, also from the existing Town ward, to a revised Skircoat ward. The remainder of the existing Town ward would be combined with part of the existing St John's ward, as detailed

earlier, to form a new Halifax East ward. Finally, it proposed combining the existing Skircoat, less the area broadly to the north-west of Savile Park, as detailed earlier, with parts of the existing Town ward, as detailed earlier, to form a revised Skircoat ward.

77 Under the Labour Group's proposals, Halifax East, Skircoat and St John's wards would have 4% fewer, equal to and equal to the borough average number of electors per councillor respectively (5% more, 2% more and 1% fewer than the average by 2006).

78 The Lib Dem Group proposed combining the existing St John's ward, less the area transferred to a revised Ovenden ward, as detailed earlier, and less the area to the north of Dean Clough and North Bridge (transferred to a new Boothtown/Southowram ward), with the area to the north and west of Burdock Way, from the existing Skircoat and Town wards, and with part of the existing Warley ward, as detailed earlier, to form a new Kingston Park ward. It further proposed combining the remainder of the existing Skircoat ward, less the area transferred to a revised Sowerby Bridge ward, as detailed earlier, with the area to the east of Burdock Way until Hopwood Lane, south of Hopwood Lane, Kings Cross Street and Fountain Street, and to the west of Commercial Street, Portland Palace and Skircoat Road, from the existing Town ward, to form a revised Skircoat ward. The remainder of the existing Town ward, less the area transferred to a revised Hipperholme & Lightcliffe ward, as detailed later, would be combined with part of the existing Ovenden ward, as detailed earlier, and the Park Nook area in the north of the existing Elland ward, to form a new Boothtown/Southowram ward. A new ward name was not proposed but the Lib Dem Group argued that 'As much of the centre of Halifax is lost from the existing Town ward, a change of [ward] name is thought desirable here. Boothtown and Southowram would be the main population centres of this ward.'

79 Under the Lib Dem Group's proposals, Boothtown/Southowram, Kingston Park, and Skircoat wards would have 5%, 9% and 3% more electors per councillor than the borough average respectively (6%, 7% and 5% more than the average by 2006).

80 The Conservative Group's proposed wards for this area showed large amounts of consensus with the Labour Group's wards. It proposed the same revised St John's ward, apart from the area to the east of Calderdale College, which would be retained in a revised Town ward, and the boundary with the revised Ovenden ward, which would follow along Shroggs Road. It further proposed a broadly similar revised Skircoat ward. However, the proposed southern boundary of its revised Skircoat ward would follow Wakefield Road and the north-western boundary would deviate along Spring Edge South. The northern boundary would also deviate, following along Skircoat ward's existing boundary, then following north along Savile Park Road, east along Blackwall, south along Harrison Road, Oxford Road and Skircoat Road, then joining the existing boundary, deviating slightly to include Shaw Lodge, to form a revised Skircoat ward. Its also proposed a broadly similar revised Town ward. It proposed the same ward as the Labour Group however, it proposed to include part of the existing Town ward (to the north of Skircoat ward), in a revised Skircoat ward, as detailed earlier, and it proposed including part of the existing Town ward in a revised Northowram & Shelf ward, as detailed later.

81 Under the Conservative Group's proposals, Skircoat, St John's and Town wards would have 1%, 3% and 2% more electors per councillor than the borough average respectively (3%, 2% and 3% more than the average by 2006).

82 We have carefully considered all the representations received regarding these wards. As detailed previously, we intend basing our draft recommendations on the Lib Dem Group's proposals, and we note that there is consensus between the Lib Dem Group's scheme and the Labour Group's and Conservative Group's schemes in the east of Town ward. We therefore intend adopting the Lib Dem Group's proposals for St John's, Skircoat and Town wards. However, we propose amendments to the Lib Dem Group's proposals for Skircoat ward to provide for more identifiable boundaries and to better reflect community identity and interests. We propose adopting the Labour Group's proposed boundary from Burdock Way to Harrison

Road and the Conservative Group's boundary from Harrison Road to Skircoat Road, to form the northern boundary of a revised Skircoat ward, in order to retain a majority of the town centre in a single ward. We also propose utilising the Labour Group and Lib Dem Group's proposed eastern boundary for Skircoat ward (also proposed by the CV Conservatives) as we are of the view that the properties around Rossley Hill are provided with better links to the properties in Skircoat ward. We propose that Town ward be renamed Southowram ward to better reflect the area however, we would welcome suggestions at Stage Three on this proposal.

83 Under our draft recommendations, Skircoat, Southowram and St John's wards would have 3%, 5% and 9% more electors per councillor than the borough average respectively (5%, 6% and 7% more than the average by 2006).

Sowerby Bridge and Warley wards

84 The existing wards of Sowerby Bridge and Warley are situated in the area to the west of Halifax and are unparished. Each ward is represented by three councillors. Under the current arrangements Sowerby Bridge and Warley wards contain 5% fewer and 4% fewer electors per councillor than the borough average respectively (3% and 6% fewer by 2006).

85 At Stage One, the Labour Group proposed combining the existing Sowerby Bridge ward with the Friendly and Barwood area (polling district QC), as detailed earlier, from the existing Luddendenfoot ward, to form a revised Sowerby Bridge ward. It stated that 'Historically, this area has been associated with Sowerby'. With regard to Warley ward, it proposed transferring polling district EE to a new Warley Royd ward, as detailed earlier, and further proposed transferring polling districts EA and ED, as detailed earlier, to a new Halifax West ward. The remainder of the existing Warley ward, polling districts EB and EC, would be transferred into a revised St John's ward, as detailed earlier.

86 Under the Labour Group's proposals, Sowerby Bridge ward would have equal to the borough average number of electors per councillor (2% more than the average by 2006).

87 The Lib Dem Group proposed combining the existing Sowerby Bridge ward, less the properties south of Blackwall Lane and north of Burnley Road, as detailed earlier, and the properties north of Burnley Road, from Windle Royd Lane to Trimmingham Lane, with part of the existing Ryburn ward, as detailed earlier, the area to the south of the Burnley Road, from the existing Warley ward and the area broadly to the north-west of Savile Park, from the existing Skircoat ward, to form a revised Sowerby Bridge ward. It further proposed combining the remainder of the existing Warley ward, less the area north of the Burnley Road, west of West View Park and Springhill Lane and south of Gibbet Street (which is transferred to a new Kingston Park ward), with part of the existing Mixenden ward to form a new Highroad Well ward, as detailed earlier.

88 Under the Lib Dem Group's proposals, Sowerby Bridge ward would have 6% fewer electors per councillor than the borough average (4% fewer than the average by 2006).

89 The Conservative Group proposed combining the existing Sowerby Bridge ward with part of the existing Warley ward, as detailed earlier, with the area to the north-west of Savile Park, from the existing Skircoat ward, and with the Old Copley Village area (north of the River Calder), to form a revised Sowerby Bridge ward. It further proposed combining the remainder of the existing Warley ward, less the area being transferred to a revised St John's ward, as detailed earlier, with part of the existing Mixenden ward, as detailed earlier, to form a revised Warley ward. It stated that 'The boundaries have been changed to bring Warley back to its more historic position'.

90 Under the Conservative Group's proposals, Sowerby Bridge ward would have 2% more electors per councillor than the borough average (4% more than the average by 2006).

91 We have carefully considered all the representations received regarding these wards. As detailed previously, we intend basing our draft recommendations on the Lib Dem Group's proposals, and we note that there is consensus between the Lib Dem Group's scheme and the Labour and Conservative Groups' schemes in the south of Sowerby Bridge. We therefore intend adopting the Lib Dem Group's proposals for Sowerby Bridge and Warley wards, subject to a boundary amendment. The Lib Dem Group's proposals provide for more identifiable boundaries, utilising the significant boundaries of the railway line and Burnley Road/Burdock Way (which we note the use of is necessary to facilitate a good scheme in the Halifax area), and do not divide communities. We also note that a number of boundaries proposed by the Labour Group and the Conservative Group would divide communities, provide for less identifiable boundaries (with neither scheme utilising Burnley Road, which leads onto Aachen Way, Kings Cross Street and Burdock Way, which is the main road running through the Halifax area), and would thus not provide an adequate reflection of the statutory criteria in these wards. However, we do propose amending the boundary between the Lib Dem Group's proposed Sowerby Bridge and Luddendenfoot wards, as detailed earlier. Therefore, we believe that the Lib Dem Group's revised Sowerby Bridge and new Highroad Well wards, subject to a boundary amendment, would provide the best balance between the statutory criteria in the area.

92 Under our draft recommendations, the number of electors per councillor in the proposed Sowerby Bridge ward would be the same as under the Lib Dem Group's proposals.

Brighouse, Elland, Greetland & Stainland and Rastrick wards

93 The existing wards of Brighouse, Elland, Greetland & Stainland and Rastrick are situated in the south and east of the borough and are unparished. Each ward is represented by three councillors. Under the current arrangements Brighouse, Elland, Greetland & Stainland and Rastrick wards contain 5% fewer, 2% fewer, 18% more and 1% fewer electors per councillor than the borough average respectively (7% fewer, 5% fewer, 20% more and 3% fewer by 2006).

94 At Stage One, the Labour Group proposed combining the existing Brighouse ward, less the area transferred to a revised Northowram & Shelf ward, as detailed later, with the area north of Rastrick High School and Longroyde Road and west of Thornhill Road, from the existing Rastrick ward, to form a revised Brighouse ward. It argued that 'in future, the Brighouse ward will actually include the centre of Brighouse'. The remainder of the existing Rastrick ward would be combined with most of the Field Lane estate (polling district NC), from the existing Elland ward, to form a revised Rastrick ward. The remainder of the existing Elland ward would be combined with the area to the east of Holywell Brook and Black Brook, from the existing Greetland & Stainland ward, to form a revised Elland ward. It stated that 'We believe this [ward] has much greater consistency than either the existing G&S [Greetland & Stainland] or Elland wards'. It further proposed that the remainder of the existing Greetland & Stainland ward be combined with part of the existing Ryburn ward, as detailed earlier, to form a new Stainland ward.

95 Under the Labour Group's proposals, Brighouse, Elland, Stainland and Rastrick wards would have 1% fewer, 3% more, 7% fewer and 1% fewer electors per councillor than the borough average respectively (2% fewer, 1% more, 6% fewer and 4% fewer by 2006).

96 The Lib Dem Group proposed combining the existing Brighouse ward with the area to the north of the River Calder, from the existing Rastrick ward, to form a revised Brighouse ward. The remainder of the existing Rastrick ward, less the area to the west of Slade Lane and south of Clough Lane (transferred to a revised Elland ward), would be combined with the area to the north of Lower Edge Road, from the existing Elland ward, to form a revised Rastrick ward. The remainder of Elland ward, less the area transferred to a new Boothtown/Southowram ward, as detailed earlier, would be combined with part of the existing Rastrick ward, as detailed earlier, and the area to the east of Holywell Brook, south of Long Heys Farm and the properties on Ravenstone Drive, east of the western side of Ravenstone Wood and broadly east of Woodside

View and Woodside Terrace, from the existing Greetland & Stainland ward, to form a revised Elland ward. It argued that 'Under our proposals, the Elland ward gains areas associated with the town of Elland'. The remainder of the existing Greetland & Stainland ward would be combined with the Norland Town area, from the existing Ryburn ward, to form a revised Greetland & Stainland ward. It stated that 'The major public transport link to Norland is via Greetland'.

97 Under the Lib Dem Group's proposals, Brighouse, Elland, Greetland & Stainland and Rastrick wards would have 1%, 5% and 3% fewer and equal to the borough average number of electors per councillor respectively (2%, 6%, 2% and 3% fewer by 2006).

98 The Conservative Group proposed combining the existing Brighouse ward, less the area transferred to a revised Hipperholme & Lightcliffe ward, as detailed later, with the area to the north of the River Calder (as proposed by the Lib Dem Group), from the existing Rastrick ward, to form a revised Brighouse ward. The remainder of the existing Rastrick ward would be combined with the area broadly to the east of Strangstry Wood and Booth Royd Lane, north of Lower Edge Road (from Booth Royd Lane to Nunnery Lane), west of Nunnery Lane and Sherburn Road (up to Burnsall Road), north of Burnsall Road and Malham Avenue, east of Highfield Road and then north of Lower Edge Road (following eastwards), from the existing Elland ward, to form a revised Rastrick ward. The remainder of the existing Elland ward would be combined with the area broadly to the east of Holywell Brook and east of Ravenstone Drive, Hullenedge Lane and Hullenedge Road, from the existing Greetland & Stainland ward, to form a revised Elland ward. It was argued that 'it should make Elland geographically and socially one ward area again'. The remainder of the existing Greetland & Stainland ward would be combined with part of the existing Ryburn ward, as detailed earlier, to form a revised Greetland & Stainland ward.

99 Under the Conservative Group's proposals, Brighouse, Elland, Greetland & Stainland and Rastrick wards would have 4%, 3%, 5% and 2% fewer electors per councillor than the borough average respectively (5%, 5%, 4% and 5% fewer by 2006).

100 We have carefully considered all the representations received regarding these wards. As detailed previously, we intend basing our draft recommendations on the Lib Dem Group's proposals, and we note that there are areas of consensus between the Lib Dem Group's scheme and the Labour and Conservative Groups' schemes. We therefore intend adopting the Lib Dem Group's proposals for Brighouse, Elland, Greetland & Stainland and Rastrick wards, subject to two boundary amendments and the retention of a ward name. We propose including the area around Shannon Road, south of Lower edge Road, in a revised Rastrick ward, as it is part of the settlement to the north and the area's main transport links are also to the north. This amendment would have a negligible effect on electoral equality. We also propose adopting the Labour and Conservative Groups' proposed boundary for the north-west of Elland ward as it provides for a more identifiable boundary. We also propose retaining the Greetland & Stainland ward name as we are of the view that it better reflects the area. We did attempt to retain the existing boundary between Elland and Rastrick wards in the south, in order to retain the area to the east of New Hey Road in the existing Rastrick ward, however, such a revised Elland ward would have 11% fewer electors per councillor than the borough average by 2006, which, in our view, is an unacceptable level of electoral equality. We note that a number of boundaries proposed by the Labour Group and the Conservative Group would divide communities, in particular, Norland Town and the Field Lane estate, providing for less identifiable boundaries and thus not providing an adequate reflection of the statutory criteria.

101 Under our draft recommendations, Brighouse, Elland, Greetland & Stainland and Rastrick wards would have 1%, 6% and 3% fewer and 1% more electors per councillor than the borough average respectively (2%, 7%, 2% and 2% fewer by 2006).

Hipperholme & Lightcliffe and Northowram & Shelf wards

102 The existing wards of Hipperholme & Lightcliffe and Northowram & Shelf are situated in the north-east of the borough and are unparished. Each ward is represented by three councillors. Under the current arrangements Hipperholme & Lightcliffe and Northowram & Shelf wards contain 2% fewer and 6% more electors per councillor than the borough average respectively (3% fewer and 7% more by 2006).

103 At Stage One, the Labour Group proposed retaining the existing Northowram & Shelf ward. It proposed combining the existing Hipperholme & Lightcliffe ward with the Hove Edge area, from the existing Brighouse ward, to form a revised Hipperholme & Lightcliffe ward. The amended boundary would follow Red Beck, Wet Shod Lane, leading onto Wood Bottom Lane and Mill Hill Lane, then continue northwards along Halifax Road, leading onto Finkil Street until it meets the existing boundary between Brighouse and Hipperholme & Lightcliffe wards.

104 Under the Labour Group's proposals, Hipperholme & Lightcliffe and Northowram & Shelf wards would both have equal to the borough average number of electors per councillor (equal to the average and 1% more than the average by 2006).

105 The Lib Dem Group proposed combining the existing Hipperholme & Lightcliffe ward with the area broadly to the south of the railway line (leading onto the northern boundary of Town ward) and to the north of Barrow Clough Lane and Dark Lane, from the existing Northowram & Shelf and Town wards, to form a revised Hipperholme & Lightcliffe ward. The Lib Dem Group proposed that the remainder of the existing Northowram & Shelf ward form a revised Northowram & Shelf ward, stating that 'it covers distinct communities and provides a close numerical fit'.

106 Under the Lib Dem Group's proposals, Hipperholme & Lightcliffe and Northowram & Shelf wards would have 5% and 1% fewer electors per councillor than the borough average respectively (6% fewer and equal to the average by 2006).

107 The Conservative Group proposed combining the existing Hipperholme & Lightcliffe ward with the properties broadly to the east of Bradford Road, south of Thornhill Bridge Lane, north of Anvil Street, Old Lane and Woodvale Road and to the west of Clifton Beck, from the existing Brighouse ward, to form a revised Hipperholme & Lightcliffe ward. It further proposed to combine the existing Northowram & Shelf ward with the properties on Shibden Garth, Dove House and Shibden Hall Croft, from the existing Town ward, to form a revised Northowram & Shelf ward.

108 Under the Conservative Group's proposals, Hipperholme & Lightcliffe and Northowram & Shelf wards would have 4% fewer and 1% more electors per councillor than the borough average respectively (5% fewer and 2% more than the average by 2006).

109 We have carefully considered all the representations received regarding these wards. As detailed previously, we intend basing our draft recommendations on the Lib Dem Group's proposals, and we note that there are areas of consensus between the Lib Dem Group's scheme and the Labour Group and Conservative Group's schemes. We also note that the Lib Dem's proposed wards are also broadly similar to the CV Conservatives proposed wards for this area. We therefore intend adopting the Lib Dem Group's proposals for Hipperholme & Lightcliffe and Northowram & Shelf wards, subject to a minor amendment to tie a boundary to ground detail, which will result in part of the existing Hipperholme & Lightcliffe ward being included in the revised Northowram & Shelf ward. However, this amendment will not affect any electors. We note that all three schemes proposed to retain a majority of the existing boundaries and achieved good levels of electoral equality however, in our view, the boundary amendments proposed by the Labour Group and the Conservative Group would divide

communities and provide for less identifiable boundaries. Therefore, we believe that the Lib Dem Group's revised Hipperholme & Lightcliffe and Northowram & Shelf wards would provide the best balance between the statutory criteria in the area.

110 Under our draft recommendations, the proposed Hipperholme & Lightcliffe and Northowram & shelf wards would the same number of electors per councillor as under the Lib Dems scheme.

Electoral cycle

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

Conclusions

112 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 54 to 51;
- there should be 17 wards;
- the boundaries of all 18 existing wards should be modified, resulting in a net reduction one ward.

113 As already indicated, we have based our draft recommendations on the Liberal Democrat Group's proposals, but we propose to depart from them in the following areas, utilising aspects of proposals from the Labour Group and the Conservative Group:

- We propose amending the boundary between the revised Luddendenfoot and Sowerby Bridge wards.
- We propose amending the boundary between the revised Luddendenfoot and Ryburn wards.
- We propose amending the boundary between the revised Skircoat and proposed Southowram wards.
- We propose amending the boundary between the revised Elland and Rastrick wards.
- We propose naming the proposed Boothtown/Southowram ward as Southowram ward.
- We propose retaining the existing Calder Valley ward name for the proposed Upper Calder ward.
- We propose retaining the existing Greetland & Stainland ward name for the proposed Stainland ward.

114 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 Electorate	
	Current arrangements	Draft recommendations	Current arrangements	Draft recommendations
Number of councillors	54	51	54	51
Number of wards	18	17	18	17
Average number of electors per councillor	2,725	2,886	2,744	2,905
Number of wards with a variance more than 10 per cent from the average	5	0	6	0
Number of wards with a variance more than 20 per cent from the average	0	0	1	0

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

Draft recommendation

Calderdale Borough Council should comprise 51 councillors serving 17 wards, as detailed and named in Tables 1 and 2, and illustrated on Map 2 and in Appendix A and the large maps.

Parish and town council electoral arrangements

116 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 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 Hebden Royd and Todmorden to reflect the proposed borough wards.

117 The parish of Todmorden is currently served by 18 councillors representing six wards: Central, Cornholme, Langfield, Stansfield, Stoodly and Walsden (each returning three councillors). In light of our draft recommendations for borough wards in this area, as detailed earlier, we propose modifying the existing parish ward boundaries of Langfield and Stoodly parish wards, and retaining the existing boundaries of Central, Cornholme, Stansfield and Walsden. Having reviewed the electorate and current allocation of councillors in the parish, we also propose altering the allocation of parish councillors between the wards to provide for a better balance of representation. We propose that Central, Cornholme, Stansfield and Walsden parish wards return three councillors each, as existing, and Langfield and Stoodly parish wards return two and four councillors respectively.

Draft recommendation

Todmorden Town Council should comprise 18 councillors, as at present, representing six wards: Central, Cornholme, Stansfield and Walsden parish wards each returning three councillors, Langfield parish ward, returning two councillors, and Stoodly parish ward, returning four councillors. The boundary between the six 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 in Appendix A.

Map 2: Draft recommendations for Calderdale

5 What happens next?

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

119 Express your views by writing directly to us:

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

120 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 Calderdale: **Detailed mapping**

The following maps illustrate our proposed ward boundaries for the Calderdale 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 Calderdale.

Map A1: Draft recommendations for Calderdale: Key map

Appendix B

Code of practice on written consultation

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

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

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

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