

LOCAL  
GOVERNMENT  
COMMISSION  
FOR ENGLAND

FINAL  
RECOMMENDATIONS  
ON THE FUTURE  
ELECTORAL  
ARRANGEMENTS FOR  
BATH & NORTH EAST  
SOMERSET

*Report to the Secretary of State for the  
Environment, Transport and the Regions*

*March 1998*

# LOCAL GOVERNMENT COMMISSION FOR ENGLAND

This report sets out the Commission's final recommendations on the electoral arrangements for Bath & North East Somerset.

Members of the Commission are:

Professor Malcolm Grant (Chairman)

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Peter Brokenshire

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David Thomas OBE

Mike Bailey (Acting Chief Executive)

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## Local Government Commission for England

31 March 1998

Dear Secretary of State

On 3 June 1997 the Commission commenced a periodic electoral review of the district of Bath & North East Somerset under the Local Government Act 1992. We published our draft recommendations in December 1997 and undertook a nine-week period of consultation.

We have now prepared our final recommendations in the light of the consultation. We have for the most part confirmed our draft recommendations, although some modifications have been made in the light of further evidence (see paragraph 112). This report sets out our final recommendations for changes to electoral arrangements in Bath & North East Somerset.

We recommend that Bath & North East Somerset Council should continue to be served by 65 councillors, representing 37 wards, rather than the present 36, and that some changes should be made to ward boundaries in order to improve electoral equality, having regard to the statutory criteria. We recommend that the Council should continue to be elected together every four years.

I would like to thank members and officers of the Council and other local people who have contributed to the review. Their co-operation and assistance have been very much appreciated by Commissioners and staff.

Yours sincerely

PROFESSOR MALCOLM GRANT  
Chairman



# SUMMARY

The Commission began a review of Bath & North East Somerset on 3 June 1997. We published our draft recommendations for electoral arrangements on 2 December 1997, after which we undertook a nine-week period of consultation.

- **This report summarises the representations we received during consultation on our draft recommendations, and offers our final recommendations to the Secretary of State.**

We found that the existing electoral arrangements provide unequal representation of electors in Bath & North East Somerset because:

- **in 16 of the 36 wards, the number of electors represented by each councillor varies by more than 10 per cent from the average for the district; in seven wards, the number varies by more than 20 per cent;**
- **by 2002, electoral equality is not expected to improve significantly, with the number of electors per councillor forecast to vary by more than 10 per cent from the average in 15 wards and by more than 20 per cent in six wards.**

Our main final recommendations for future electoral arrangements (Figure 1 and paragraphs 112 - 113) are that:

- **Bath & North East Somerset Council should continue to be served by 65 councillors;**
- **there should be 37 wards, rather than the existing 36;**
- **the boundaries of 27 wards should be modified, while nine wards should retain their existing boundaries;**
- **elections should continue to take place every four years.**

These recommendations seek to ensure that the number of electors represented by each district councillor is as nearly as possible the same, having regard to local circumstances.

- **In 33 of the 37 wards the number of electors per councillor would vary by no more than 10 per cent from the district average.**
- **By 2002 the number of electors per councillor is projected to vary by no more than 10 per cent from the average in all but three wards.**

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

- **new warding arrangements for the towns of Keynsham and Norton-Radstock, and increases in the number of councillors for Keynsham Town Council and Englishcombe Parish Council.**

All further correspondence on these recommendations and the matters discussed in this report should be addressed to the Secretary of State for the Environment, Transport and the Regions, who will not make an order implementing the Commission's recommendations before 12 May 1998:

**The Secretary of State  
Department of the Environment,  
Transport and the Regions  
Local Government Review  
Eland House  
Bressenden Place  
London SW1E 5DU**

*Figure 1:  
The Commission's Final Recommendations: Summary*

<b>Ward name</b>	<b>Number of councillors</b>	<b>Constituent areas</b>	<b>Map reference</b>
1 Abbey (Bath)	2	Abbey ward (part); Bathwick ward (part)	Map 2 and large map
2 Bathavon North	3	Bathavon North ward (the parishes of Bathampton, Batheaston, Bathford, Charlcombe, Kelston, Northstoke, St Catherine and Swainswick); Bathavon South ward (part – the parish of Claverton)	Map 2
3 Bathavon South	1	Bathavon South ward (part – the parishes of Freshford, Hinton Charterhouse, Monkton Combe, Shoscombe, South Stoke and Wellow)	Map 2
4 Bathavon West	1	Bathavon South ward (part – the parishes of Camerton, Combe Hay, Dunkerton and Englishcombe); Newton St Loe ward (part – the parishes of Newton St Loe and Priston)	Map 2
5 Bathwick (Bath)	2	Bathwick ward (part)	Map 2 and large map
6 Chew Valley North	1	Chew Valley West ward (part – the parishes of Chew Magna, Chew Stoke and Norton Malreward)	Map 2
7 Chew Valley South	1	Chew Valley South ward (part – the parishes of Compton Martin and Stowey-Sutton); Chew Valley West ward (part – the parishes of Nempnett Thrubwell and Ubley)	Map 2
8 Clutton	1	Chew Valley North & Clutton ward (part – the parishes of Chelwood, Clutton and Stanton Drew)	Map 2
9 Combe Down (Bath)	2	Bathwick ward (part); Combe Down ward; Widcombe ward (part)	Map 2 and large map
10 Farmborough	1	Chew Valley North & Clutton ward (part – the parish of Compton Dando); Farmborough & High Littleton ward (part – the parish of Farmborough); Newton St Loe ward (part – the parishes of Corston and Marksbury)	Map 2
11 High Littleton	1	Cameley ward (part – the parish of Farrington Gurney); Farmborough & High Littleton ward (part – the parish of High Littleton)	Map 2



Figure 1 (continued):  
The Commission's Final Recommendations: Summary

Ward name	Number of councillors	Constituent areas	Map reference
12 Keynsham East	2	<i>Unchanged</i> (Keynsham East ward)	Map 2
13 Keynsham North	2	Keynsham North ward; Keynsham West ward (part)	Maps 2 and A2
14 Keynsham South	2	Keynsham South ward; Keynsham West ward (part)	Maps 2 and A2
15 Kingsmead (Bath)	2	<i>Unchanged</i> (Kingsmead ward)	Map 2 and large map
16 Lambridge (Bath)	2	Lambridge ward; Lansdown ward (part)	Map 2 and large map
17 Lansdown (Bath)	2	Abbey ward (part); Lansdown ward (part); Walcot ward (part); Weston ward (part)	Map 2 and large map
18 Lyncombe (Bath)	2	Lyncombe ward (part)	Map 2 and large map
19 Mendip	1	Cameley ward (part – the parishes of Cameley and Hinton Blewett); Chew Valley South ward (part – the parishes of East Harptree and West Harptree)	Map 2
20 Midsomer Norton North	2	<i>Unchanged</i> (Midsomer Norton North ward)	Map 2
21 Midsomer Norton Redfield	2	Midsomer Norton Redfield ward; Westfield ward (part)	Maps 2 and A3
22 Newbridge (Bath)	2	<i>Unchanged</i> (Newbridge ward)	Map 2 and large map
23 Odd Down (Bath)	2	Bloomfield ward (part)	Map 2 and large map
24 Oldfield (Bath)	2	Bloomfield ward (part); Oldfield ward (part); Westmoreland ward (part)	Map 2 and large map
25 Paulton	2	<i>Unchanged</i> (the parish of Paulton)	Map 2
26 Peasedown	2	<i>Unchanged</i> (the parish of Peasedown St John)	Map 2
27 Publow & Whitchurch	1	Chew Valley North & Clutton ward (part – the parishes of Publow and Whitchurch)	Map 2

*continued overleaf*

*Figure 1 (continued):  
The Commission's Final Recommendations: Summary*

	<b>Ward name</b>	<b>Number of councillors</b>	<b>Constituent areas</b>	<b>Map reference</b>
28	Radstock	2	<i>Unchanged</i> (Radstock ward)	Map 2
29	Saltford	2	<i>Unchanged</i> (the parish of Saltford)	Map 2
30	Southdown (Bath)	2	Bloomfield ward (part); Southdown ward (part)	Map 2 and large map
31	Timsbury	1	<i>Unchanged</i> (the parish of Timsbury)	Map 2
32	Twerton (Bath)	2	Twerton ward; Westmoreland ward (part)	Map 2 and large map
33	Walcot (Bath)	2	Bathwick ward (part); Lansdown ward (part); Walcot ward (part)	Map 2 and large map
34	Westfield	2	Westfield ward (part)	Maps 2 and A3
35	Westmoreland (Bath)	2	Oldfield ward (part); Southdown ward (part); Westmoreland ward (part)	Map 2 and large map
36	Weston (Bath)	2	Lansdown ward (part); Weston ward (part)	Map 2 and large map
37	Widcombe (Bath)	2	Bathwick ward (part); Lyncombe ward (part); Widcombe ward (part)	Map 2 and large map

*Note: The district is entirely parished, with the exception of the city of Bath.*

# 1. INTRODUCTION

1 This report contains our final recommendations on the electoral arrangements for the district of Bath & North East Somerset. We have now reviewed all the districts in the former county of Avon as part of our programme of periodic electoral reviews of all principal local authority areas in England.

2 In undertaking these reviews, we must have regard to:

- the statutory criteria contained in section 13(5) of the Local Government Act 1992;
- the *Rules to be Observed in Considering Electoral Arrangements* contained in Schedule 11 to the Local Government Act 1972.

3 We have also had regard to our *Guidance and Procedural Advice for Local Authorities and Other Interested Parties* (published in March 1996 and supplemented in September 1996), which sets out our approach to the reviews.

4 This review was in four stages. Stage One began on 3 June 1997, when we wrote to Bath & North East Somerset Council inviting proposals for future electoral arrangements. Our letter was copied to the Avon & Somerset Police Authority, the local authority associations, the Avon Local Councils' Association, parish and town councils in the district, Members of Parliament and Members of the European Parliament with constituency interests in the district, and the headquarters of the main political parties. At the start of the review and following publication of our draft recommendations, we published a notice in the local press, issued a press release and invited the Council to publicise the review more widely. The closing date for receipt of representations was 15 September 1997. At Stage Two we considered all the representations received during Stage One and prepared our draft recommendations.

5 Stage Three began on 2 December 1997 with the publication of our report, *Draft Recommendations on the Future Electoral Arrangements for Bath & North East Somerset*, and ended on 2 February 1998. Comments were sought on our preliminary conclusions. Finally, during Stage Four we reconsidered our draft recommendations in the light of the Stage Three consultation and now publish our final recommendations.



## 2. CURRENT ELECTORAL ARRANGEMENTS

<sup>6</sup> Bath & North East Somerset Council was established as a result of the Avon (Structural Change) Order 1995. At the end of our review of local government in the former county of Avon in 1993, we recommended that the districts of Bath and Wansdyke be combined to form a new unitary authority. The Secretary of State accepted our recommendation and the Council took up full responsibility for its area in April 1996.

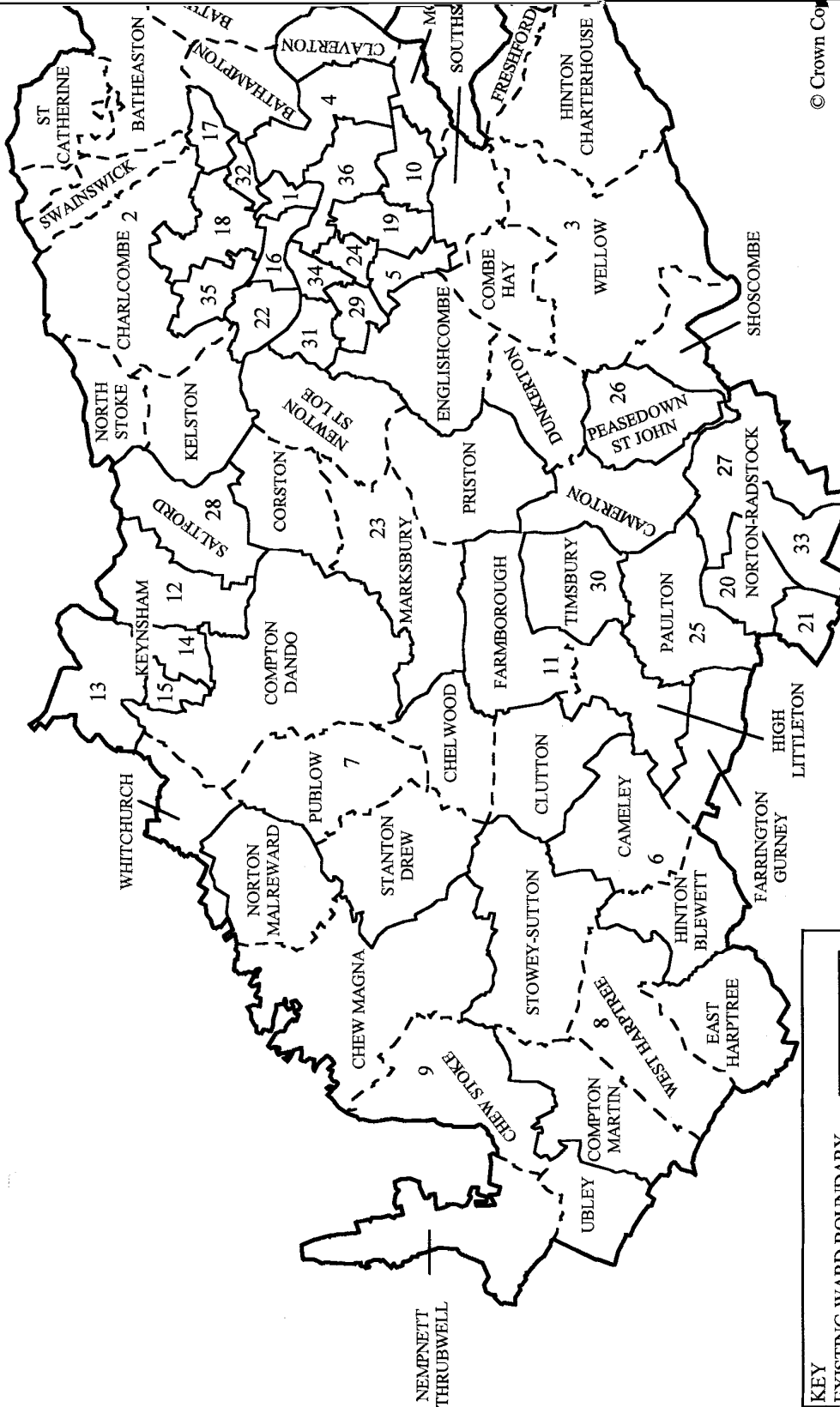
<sup>7</sup> The district covers an area of more than 35,000 hectares, with the majority of the electorate residing in the city of Bath and the towns of Keynsham and Norton-Radstock. Bath is split into 16 two-member wards, and Keynsham and Norton-Radstock comprise four wards each, these being a mixture of single- and multi-member wards. Charter Trustees were established on reorganisation in respect of the area of the former Bath City Council; all of the area outside the city is parished.

<sup>8</sup> The Council has 65 councillors elected from 36 wards (Map 1 and Figure 2). One ward is represented by three councillors, 27 wards elect two councillors each, while the remaining eight wards elect a single councillor each. The whole Council is elected together every four years, with the next elections due in May 1999. The electorate of the district is 130,100 (February 1997) and each councillor represents an average of 2,002 electors. The Council forecast that the electorate will increase by around 1 per cent to 131,903 by the year 2002, which would increase the average number of electors per councillor to 2,029 (Figure 2).

<sup>9</sup> To compare levels of electoral inequality between wards, the extent to which the number of electors per councillor in each ward (the councillor:elector ratio) varies from the average for the district in percentage terms, has been calculated. In the report, this calculation may also be described as 'electoral variance'.

<sup>10</sup> Since the last periodic electoral reviews of the former Bath City Council and Wansdyke District Council were completed in 1975 by our predecessor, the Local Government Boundary Commission (LGBC), changes in population and electorate have been unevenly spread across the district. As a result, in 16 of the 36 wards the number of electors per councillor varies by more than 10 per cent from the district average and in seven wards it varies by more than 20 per cent. The most significant electoral imbalance is in Keynsham North ward where the councillor represents 2,691 electors, 34 per cent more than the district average.

Map 1:  
Existing Wards in Bath & North East Somerset



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Figure 2:  
Existing Electoral Arrangements

Ward name	Number of councillors	Electorate (1997)	Number of electors per councillor	Variance from average %	Electorate (2002)	Number of electors per councillor	Variance from average %
1 Abbey (Bath)	2	4,546	2,273	14	4,669	2,335	15
2 Bathavon North	3	5,672	1,891	-6	5,679	1,893	-7
3 Bathavon South	2	3,536	1,768	-12	3,485	1,743	-14
4 Bathwick (Bath)	2	5,237	2,619	31	5,493	2,747	35
5 Bloomfield (Bath)	2	4,097	2,049	2	4,739	2,370	17
6 Cameley	1	1,765	1,765	-12	1,787	1,787	-12
7 Chew Valley North & Clutton	2	4,225	2,113	6	4,242	2,121	5
8 Chew Valley South	1	2,169	2,169	8	2,179	2,179	7
9 Chew Valley West	1	2,242	2,242	12	2,252	2,252	11
10 Combe Down (Bath)	2	3,841	1,921	-4	3,821	1,911	-6
11 Farmborough & High Littleton	1	2,422	2,422	21	2,434	2,434	20
12 Keynsham East	2	4,552	2,276	14	4,574	2,287	13
13 Keynsham North	1	2,691	2,691	34	2,711	2,711	34
14 Keynsham South	2	3,229	1,615	-19	3,273	1,637	-19
15 Keynsham West	1	2,227	2,227	11	2,241	2,241	10
16 Kingsmead (Bath)	2	4,156	2,078	4	4,242	2,121	5
17 Lambridge (Bath)	2	2,934	1,467	-27	2,907	1,454	-28
18 Lansdown (Bath)	2	3,982	1,991	-1	3,919	1,960	-3
19 Lyncombe (Bath)	2	4,145	2,073	4	4,191	2,096	3
20 Midsomer Norton North	2	3,738	1,869	-7	3,791	1,896	-7
21 Midsomer Norton Redfield	2	3,085	1,543	-23	3,093	1,547	-24
22 Newbridge (Bath)	2	4,327	2,164	8	4,324	2,162	7

*continued overleaf*

Figure 2 (continued):  
Existing Electoral Arrangements

Ward name	Number of councillors	Electorate (1997)	Number of electors per councillor	Variance from average %	Electorate (2002)	Number of electors per councillor	Variance from average %
23 Newton St Loe	1	1,420	1,420	-29	1,510	1,510	-26
24 Oldfield (Bath)	2	4,001	2,001	0	3,972	1,986	-2
25 Paulton	2	3,709	1,855	-7	3,758	1,879	-7
26 Peasedown	2	3,775	1,888	-6	4,011	2,006	-1
27 Radstock	2	3,801	1,901	-5	3,850	1,925	-5
28 Saltford	2	3,464	1,732	-13	3,511	1,756	-13
29 Southdown (Bath)	2	4,109	2,055	3	4,121	2,061	2
30 Timsbury	1	2,032	2,032	2	2,050	2,050	1
31 Twerton (Bath)	2	3,521	1,761	-12	3,775	1,888	-7
32 Walcot (Bath)	2	3,869	1,935	-3	3,876	1,938	-4
33 Westfield	2	5,089	2,545	27	5,139	2,570	27
34 Westmoreland (Bath)	2	4,136	2,068	3	4,122	2,061	2
35 Weston (Bath)	2	4,101	2,051	2	3,963	1,982	-2
36 Widcombe (Bath)	2	4,255	2,128	6	4,199	2,100	3
<b>Totals</b>	<b>65</b>	<b>130,100</b>	—	—	<b>131,903</b>	—	—
<b>Averages</b>	—	—	<b>2,002</b>	—	—	<b>2,029</b>	—

Source: Electorate figures are based on Bath & North East Somerset 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. For example, in 1997, electors in Newton St Loe ward were relatively over-represented by 29 per cent, while electors in Keynsham North ward were relatively under-represented by 34 per cent. Figures have been rounded to the nearest whole number.



### 3. DRAFT RECOMMENDATIONS

<sup>11</sup> During Stage One we received representations from Bath & North East Somerset Council, the Conservative, Labour and Liberal Democrat Groups on the Council, Bath Conservative Association and Wansdyke Conservative Association, Bath Constituency Liberal Democrat Party, the Charter Trustees of Bath and the Bathwick Estate Residents' Association. We also received representations from two town councils and 12 parish councils. In the light of these representations and the evidence available to us, we reached preliminary conclusions which were set out in our report, *Draft Recommendations on the Future Electoral Arrangements for Bath & North East Somerset*. We proposed:

- (a) that Bath & North East Somerset Council should continue to be served by 65 councillors, representing 37 wards rather than the present 36; and
- (b) that the boundaries of 29 wards should be modified, including 14 of the 16 wards in the city of Bath.

#### **Draft Recommendation**

Bath & North East Somerset Council should comprise 65 councillors, serving 37 wards. The whole Council should continue to be elected together every four years.

<sup>12</sup> Our proposals reflected the Council's Stage One proposals in the parished area, and the Liberal Democrat Group's proposals in Bath. They would have resulted in a significant improvement to electoral equality, with the number of electors per councillor in 35 of the 37 wards varying by no more than 10 per cent from the district average. This level of electoral equality was expected to improve further during the period to 2002, by which time only one ward was expected to vary by more than 10 per cent.



## 4. RESPONSES TO CONSULTATION

13 During the consultation on our draft recommendations report, 46 representations were received. A list of all respondents is available on request from the Commission.

### **Bath & North East Somerset Council**

14 The Bath & North East Somerset Council supported the majority of our draft recommendations but proposed some modifications. In the Bath city area, it proposed alterations to our proposed Abbey, Bathwick, Combe Down, Lambridge, Lansdown, Walcot and Widcombe wards. In the parished area, it proposed that our Bathavon East ward be renamed Bathavon South.

15 Under its proposals for Bath, two new single-member wards would be created: Abbey and a new Claverton Down ward, the latter of which would include the University site. The remainder of the city would be served by 15 two-member wards. The Council stated that it did not consider there to be a need for a uniform pattern of two-member wards in the city.

### **Bath & North East Somerset Council Liberal Democrat Group**

16 The Liberal Democrat Group on the Council supported our draft proposals, particularly in relation to the city of Bath. It also proposed that our recommended Bathavon East ward should be renamed Bathavon South. The Group opposed the Council's suggestion that two new single-member wards should be created within Bath.

### **Bath Conservative Association**

17 The Bath Conservative Association supported the Council's proposals for the city, in particular the

proposal to unite the community of Bathwick within one ward.

### **Bath Constituency Labour Party**

18 The Bathavon (North and South) Branch of the Bath Constituency Labour Party opposed the draft recommendations relating to our proposed wards of Bathavon North and Bathavon East. Instead, it proposed two alternative options, both of which would enable the village of Batheaston to comprise a new single-member ward. The Widcombe (Bath) Branch of the Labour Party expressed its support for the Council's proposed modifications to our draft proposals within the city of Bath, a view also expressed by the Bath North-East Branch of the Labour Party.

### **Bath Liberal Democrats and Wansdyke Liberal Democrats**

19 The Bath Liberal Democrats supported our draft proposals and opposed the revisions proposed by the Council. The Wansdyke Liberal Democrats "generally supported" our draft proposals, although they disagreed with our proposal for a new parish ward (Broadmead) to be created in Keynsham town. They argued that this part of Keynsham does not share any link with the neighbouring community of Saltford and stated that it should remain with the rest of Keynsham for district and town warding arrangements. They suggested that an additional town councillor be allocated to Keynsham East ward as it "is the nearest community which the residents would recognise as their own".

### **Charter Trustees of the City of Bath**

20 The Charter Trustees "firmly endorsed" our draft proposals in relation to the city of Bath.

## **Liberal Democrat Party – Keynsham and Saltford Branch**

21 The Keynsham and Saltford Branch of the Liberal Democrat Party supported our draft recommendations, with the exception of our proposed new parish ward of Keynsham Broadmead. The Branch Party instead proposed that the area be retained in Keynsham East ward.

## **North East Somerset Local Government Labour Party**

22 The Local Government Labour Party supported the Bath & North East Somerset Council's modifications to our draft proposals, as did the Keynsham and Saltford Branch of the Labour Party .

## **Parish and Town Councils**

23 We received representations from two town councils and 12 parish councils. Keynsham Town Council opposed our proposal to combine a new Keynsham Broadmead parish ward with the neighbouring Saltford district ward. The Council stated that they are “two distinct communities with centuries of separate evolution”. Norton-Radstock Town Council supported the four Norton-Radstock district councillors’ proposal (outlined below) to modify our proposed boundary between Midsomer Norton Redfield and Westfield wards.

24 The parish councils of Bathampton, Camerton, Charlcombe, Englishcombe, Norton Malreward, Peasedown St John and South Stoke all supported our draft proposals. South Stoke Parish Council, however, suggested that our proposed Bathavon East ward be renamed Bathavon South. Batheaston Parish Council reiterated its preference for the parish to form a single-member ward on its own, acknowledging that it would leave neighbouring parishes in “some difficulties”. Claverton Parish Council stated that the parish forms part of the Limpley Stoke Valley and as such shares closer links with the parishes comprising the proposed Bathavon East ward than those parishes which comprise the proposed Bathavon North ward.

25 Ubley Parish Council opposed our proposal

that it be included in a new Chew Valley South ward, preferring instead for its existing ward to remain unchanged. West Harptree Parish Council opposed our proposal to include the parish in a district ward with Cameley and East Harptree, preferring instead to be included in a ward with Compton Martin and Ubley parishes. Saltford Parish Council stated that it had “no further comment” on our draft proposals.

## **Other Representations**

26 We received 20 other representations. The Avon Local Councils’ Association wrote in general terms and made no specific comments on the Bath & North East Somerset review, stating that community ties should not be “ignored” in favour of electoral equality. Councillors Carruthers, Herod, Perry and Reakes, who represent the Midsomer Norton Redfield and Westfield wards, proposed a minor modification to our proposed boundary between those two wards. Councillor Delaney, one of the two councillors serving the present Bathwick ward, opposed our proposal to transfer part of that ward into Walcot ward, and instead supported the Conservative Group’s Stage One proposal to transfer part of Abbey ward into Bathwick ward.

27 Councillor Melling, one of the two councillors serving the existing Abbey ward, opposed the Council’s proposal that the representation of Abbey ward should be reduced from two to one. Councillor Symonds supported our draft proposals, with the exception of proposing a minor modification to the boundary between Combe Down and Widcombe wards.

28 The Bathwick Estate Residents’ Association opposed our proposal to transfer part of the present Bathwick ward into a revised Walcot ward, arguing that the Cleveland and Grosvenor bridges do not create “any genuine community linkage” between the areas. The Camden Road Residents’ Association opposed our proposal to include part of the present Walcot ward in a revised Lansdown ward and also argued that the part of Bathwick ward proposed to be included in Walcot ward had “nothing in common” with it. The Bath Society supported the principle of 16 two-member wards for the city area, but opposed our proposal that part of Bathwick ward be transferred into Walcot ward.

29 Twelve local residents wrote to us during Stage

Three; including five who opposed the Council's proposal to reduce the number of councillors serving Abbey ward from two to one, and one who supported our proposal to transfer part of Bathwick ward into Abbey ward. Five local residents opposed our proposal to transfer part of Bathwick ward into Walcot ward and one supported the Council's modifications to our proposed wards.



## 5. ANALYSIS AND FINAL RECOMMENDATIONS

30 As indicated previously, our prime objective in considering the most appropriate electoral arrangements for Bath & North East Somerset is to achieve electoral equality, having regard to the statutory criteria set out in the Local Government Act 1992 and Schedule 11 to the Local Government Act 1972, which refers to the ratio of electors to councillors being “as nearly as may be, the same in every ward of the district or borough”.

31 However, our function is not merely arithmetical. First, our recommendations are not intended to be based solely on existing electorate figures, but also on assumptions as to changes in the number and distribution of local government electors likely to take place within the ensuing five years. Second, we must have regard to the desirability of fixing identifiable boundaries, and to maintaining local ties which might otherwise be broken. Third, we must consider the need to secure effective and convenient local government, and reflect the interests and identities of local communities.

32 It is therefore impractical to design an electoral scheme which provides for 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 In our March 1996 *Guidance*, we expressed the view that “proposals for changes in electoral arrangements should therefore be based on variations in each ward of no more than plus or minus 10 per cent from the average councillor:elector ratio for the authority, having regard to five-year forecasts of changes in electorates. Imbalances in excess of plus or minus 20 per cent may be acceptable, but only in highly exceptional circumstances ... and will have to be justified in full”. However, as emphasised in our September 1996 supplement to the *Guidance*, while we accept that absolute equality of representation is likely to be unattainable, we consider that, if electoral imbalances are to be kept

to the minimum, such equality should be the starting point in any electoral review.

### Electorate Forecasts

34 During Stage One, the Council submitted electorate forecasts for the period 1997 to 2002, projecting an increase in the electorate of around 1 per cent over the five-year period, from 130,100 to 131,903. 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. In our draft recommendations report we accepted that this is an inexact science and, having given consideration to projected electorates, were content that they represented the best estimates that could reasonably be made at the time.

35 We received no comments on the Council's electorate projections during Stage Three, and remain satisfied that they provide the best estimates presently available.

### Council Size

36 Our March 1996 *Guidance* indicated that we would normally expect the number of councillors serving a unitary authority to be in the range of 40 to 80.

37 Bath & North East Somerset Council is at present served by 65 councillors. The Council proposed no change to the council size during Stage One. In our draft recommendations report we considered the size and distribution of the electorate, the geography and other characteristics of the area, together with the representations received. We concluded that the statutory criteria and the achievement of electoral equality would best be met by retaining a council size of 65 members. In its Stage Three submission, the Bath & North East Somerset Council reiterated its support for a 65-member council, and we remain of the view that such a council-size is the most favourable for the district.

## Electoral Arrangements in the city of Bath

38 During Stage One of the review, we received three electoral schemes relating to the city of Bath, one from each of the main political parties. All three schemes proposed retaining the present number of councillors for the city (32) and each would significantly improve the present level of electoral equality. We considered carefully the three schemes and concluded that each had its merits.

39 The Labour Group's proposals, which would have retained the existing pattern of 16 two-member wards in Bath, was the only one of the three schemes which contained a ward (its proposed Bathwick ward) in which the number of electors per councillor would exceed 10 per cent from the district average by 2002, at 13 per cent above the district average. Additionally, the northern part of the Claverton Down area of the city appeared to be split between three different wards under its scheme.

40 The Conservative Group's proposals would have produced a good level of electoral equality in the city by 2002. The number of electors per councillor in all except one of its proposed wards was forecast to vary by only 5 per cent or less from the district average by 2002. The scheme differed from those of the other two political parties, as well as the current electoral arrangements, in that it would have included a single-member ward (Abbey) and a three-member ward (Bathwick) in addition to 14 two-member wards for the city.

41 The Conservative Group, in its Stage One submission, stated that the Forester Road area, perceived by local residents to be part of Bathwick, has community ties which, in its view, are stronger than the need to secure uniform ward sizes. We received support for this view from a number of respondents during Stage One, including the Bathwick Estate Residents' Association. The Conservative Group also argued that its proposed three-member ward would be sufficiently large to prevent the electors at the University from "dominating" it. Like the Labour Group scheme, the Conservative scheme appeared to split the northern part of the Claverton Down area.

42 The Liberal Democrat Group proposed a scheme for the city which would retain the present

pattern of 16 two-member wards. Its proposals would produce a good level of electoral equality, having regard to the five-year electorate forecast, with none of the wards having an electoral variance above 7 per cent by 2002.

43 Our task in choosing between the competing schemes for the city of Bath during Stage Two of the review was difficult. However, we put forward as our draft recommendations the Liberal Democrat Group's scheme because it appeared to us to be marginally the more appropriate. It would retain the present structure of two-member wards throughout the city (unlike the Conservative scheme), the number of electors per councillor in all wards would vary by less than 10 per cent from the average by 2002 (unlike the Labour scheme), and it would retain the northern part of the Claverton Down area within one ward (unlike either of the other two schemes).

44 While there may not be a perfect warding arrangement in an urban area, the Liberal Democrat Group's proposals for the city of Bath, in our view, struck the best balance between the criteria guiding our work.

45 During Stage Three, the Council submitted a representation which proposed 15 two-member wards and two single-member wards. The wards in southern and western Bath would be the same as under our draft proposals, but changes were put forward regarding the north and east of the city. It argued that new single-member wards of Abbey and Claverton Down should be formed and that there was no need for there to be a uniform pattern of two-member wards across Bath. The level of electoral equality attained under the Council's scheme would, like our own draft proposals, be reasonably good – no ward would vary from the average number of electors per councillor by more than 10 per cent.

46 The Council argued that its proposals would improve on our draft recommendations in terms of community identity. It particularly opposed our proposals in the east of the city, arguing that the river Avon formed a natural barrier between the present Walcot and Bathwick wards. However the Liberal Democrat Group on the Council supported our draft recommendations for Bath, arguing that the Council's proposals were "less acceptable" than those contained in our draft recommendations



and that our recommendations would have “a number of advantages”. Some individual respondents who wrote to us agreed with this; others did not. Local Labour and Conservative parties generally supported the Council’s submission; local Liberal Democrat Groups generally supported the draft proposals.

47 We have carefully considered the Council’s proposals, comparing them with our draft proposals, and have also taken into account other representations received. While to some extent we accept the Council’s assertion that there does not have to be a uniform pattern of wards in the city, be they two-member or otherwise, we recognise the view of some respondents that a uniform system would be desirable if other factors are equal. With regard to electoral equality, the Council’s proposals are neither significantly better nor worse than our draft proposals. In terms of community identity, the Council’s proposals may have some advantage over the draft recommendations, but some respondents have argued that this is not the case and there appears to be little local agreement on the issue.

48 Taking into account all the above points, we have concluded that our draft proposals would provide a more appropriate electoral scheme for the city of Bath than the Council’s alternative, while acknowledging that some of the community identity arguments put forward by the Council and others are valid. We remain of the view that 16 two-member wards is the appropriate warding structure for the city. The following areas, based on existing wards, are considered in turn:

- (a) Abbey, Bathwick and Widcombe wards;
- (b) Bloomfield, Combe Down, Lyncombe and Oldfield wards;
- (c) Southdown, Twerton and Westmoreland wards;
- (d) Kingsmead, Newbridge and Weston wards; and
- (e) Lambridge, Lansdown and Walcot wards.

### **Abbey, Bathwick and Widcombe wards**

49 This area of the city is substantially under-represented at present. The number of electors per councillor in Abbey, Bathwick and Widcombe wards is 14 per cent above, 31 per cent above and 6 per cent above the district average respectively (15 per cent, 35 per cent and 3 per cent by 2002).

50 For our draft recommendations, we proposed that: 793 electors be transferred from Abbey ward into Lansdown ward; 400 electors be transferred from Bathwick ward into Abbey ward; 138 electors be transferred from Bathwick ward into Combe Down ward; 783 electors be transferred from Bathwick ward into Walcot ward; 128 electors be transferred from Bathwick ward into Widcombe ward; and 7 electors be transferred into Widcombe ward from Lyncombe ward.

51 Under our proposals, the number of electors per councillor in the modified Abbey, Bathwick and Widcombe wards would be 4 per cent above, 5 per cent below and 10 per cent above the district average respectively (5 per cent, equal to the average and 7 per cent by 2002).

52 During Stage Three, the Liberal Democrat Group on the Council, the Bath Liberal Democrats, the Charter Trustees of Bath and Councillors Melling and Symonds supported our proposals for these three wards, while one resident specifically supported our proposal to transfer the area around the Recreation Ground from Bathwick ward into Abbey ward. However, Bath & North East Somerset Council, the Bath Conservative Association, the Bath North-East Labour Party, the North East Somerset Local Government Labour Party, the Widcombe (Bath) Branch of the Labour Party and Councillor Delaney opposed our proposals in this area, with the exception of our proposal to transfer 7 electors into Widcombe ward from Lyncombe ward. The Bath Society supported the principle of 16 two-member wards for the city, although it opposed our proposal to transfer part of Bathwick ward into Walcot ward. We also received opposition to this proposal from the Bathwick Estate Residents’ Association, the Camden Road Residents’ Association and five local residents.

53 The respondents opposing each of our proposals for Abbey, Bathwick and Widcombe wards, including the Council, detailed a set of proposals which had further implications for Combe Down, Lansdown, Lambridge and Walcot wards. Under the Council’s proposals, Abbey ward would return a single councillor, a new Claverton Down single-member ward would be created, and revised Bathwick and Widcombe wards would continue to return two councillors each. The Council stated that its proposals would “better maintain and reflect community identity” in each of the three wards.

Under its proposals, the number of electors per councillor in single-member Abbey and Claverton Down wards, and revised two-member Bathwick and Widcombe wards would be 8 per cent below, 4 per cent below, 1 per cent below and 10 per cent above the district average respectively (equal to the average, 3 per cent, 3 per cent and 4 per cent by 2002). We received representations from five local residents opposing the Council's proposal for a single-member Abbey ward.

54 We have carefully considered the Council's proposals, as well as the other representations we have received. As argued above, although the Council's proposals provide reasonably good levels of electoral equality in all four wards both initially and by 2002, we do not regard them as being overall more reflective of community interests in comparison with our own proposals. In addition, its single-member Claverton Down ward would not contain all of the Claverton Down area itself in one ward, the upper and lower sections of Claverton Down Road would be split between the new Claverton Down ward and the revised Combe Down ward.

55 The Council argued that "the principal natural and historic community boundary in the city centre is the river Avon. The existing bridges are totally inadequate as communications between areas ...". Given this and other representations received, specifically in relation to our proposal to transfer part of Bathwick ward into Walcot ward, we visited the area and recognised that there is indeed only a muddy, unlit path which links the Grosvenor footbridge with Hampton Road and the Forester Road area. However, we regard the Cleveland Bridge (nearer the city centre) as providing a reasonable link between Bathwick ward and Walcot ward. Although the footpath near Horton House is relatively steep, it provides easy access onto the bridge which in turn leads directly onto London Road, which acts as one of the major spine routes of Walcot ward. Additionally, to maintain this area in Bathwick ward as many residents have argued for, would provide electoral variances in Bathwick ward and Walcot ward of 14 per cent above and 17 per cent below the district average respectively (19 per cent and 18 per cent by 2002). This is a serious degree of electoral imbalance which we are not prepared to recommend. We are not therefore proposing any change to our draft recommendations in this area.

56 We propose to modify our draft recommendation slightly in respect of one house which appears to share closer ties with Combe Down ward, rather than with Widcombe ward where it is currently placed (see later paragraphs).

57 We have therefore decided, on balance, to confirm as final our draft recommendations for these three wards, with the exception of the minor boundary modification between Combe Down ward and Widcombe ward. Our proposals provide for good levels of electoral equality, in a city-wide structure of two-member wards. Details of our proposed boundaries for these three wards are illustrated on the large map inserted at the back of this report.

### **Bloomfield, Combe Down, Lyncombe and Oldfield wards**

58 Currently the number of electors per councillor in Bloomfield, Combe Down, Lyncombe and Oldfield wards is 2 per cent above, 4 per cent below, 4 per cent above and equal to the district average respectively (17 per cent, 6 per cent, 3 per cent and 2 per cent by 2002).

59 As part of our draft recommendations, we proposed that: 252 electors be transferred from Bloomfield ward into Oldfield ward; 296 electors be transferred from Bloomfield ward into Southdown ward; 138 electors be transferred into Combe Down ward from Bathwick ward (as discussed earlier); 7 electors be transferred from Lyncombe ward into Widcombe ward (as discussed earlier); and a net total of 151 electors be transferred from Oldfield ward into Westmoreland ward. We also proposed that Bloomfield ward be renamed 'Odd Down'.

60 Under our draft recommendations, the number of electors per councillor in our proposed Combe Down, Lyncombe, Odd Down and Oldfield wards would be 1 per cent below, 3 per cent above, 11 per cent below and 2 per cent above the district average respectively (2 per cent, 3 per cent, 3 per cent and equal to the average by 2002).

61 During Stage Three, we received support for our proposed four wards from the Liberal Democrat Group on the Council, the Bath Liberal Democrats, the Charter Trustees of Bath, the Keynsham and Salford Branch of the Liberal Democrat Party, Councillor Symonds and two local

residents. The Bath Society supported the principle of 16 two-member wards in the city.

62 With regard to our proposals specifically for Lyncombe, Odd Down and Oldfield wards, Bath & North East Somerset Council supported our proposals, although it opposed those for Combe Down ward. We also received opposition to this proposal from the Bath Conservative Association, the Bath North-East Labour Party, the North-East Somerset Local Government Labour Party, the Widcombe (Bath) Branch of the Labour Party and Councillor Delaney. Each proposed instead that a further 255 electors should be transferred into Combe Down ward from Bathwick ward, taking the boundary to follow Copseland, Oakley and Claverton Down Road. This proposal forms part of the Council's series of modifications to this and six other wards in the city.

63 As stated above, we do not regard the Council's proposed modifications to our draft proposals in the city as providing as good a balance of the statutory criteria compared to our draft recommendations and we therefore reject its proposal to modify our proposed Combe Down ward.

64 Councillor Symonds proposed that an existing boundary anomaly be addressed between Combe Down and Widcombe wards (as outlined in paragraph 56). He highlighted that there is a house at the junction between Ralph Allen Drive and North Road, containing one elector, which shares a closer identity with Combe Down ward yet is located within Widcombe ward. We concur with Councillor Symonds in this regard and have decided to adjust the boundary so that the property is placed within Combe Down ward.

65 We therefore confirm as final our draft proposals for the existing Bloomfield, Combe Down, Lyncombe and Oldfield wards, with the exception of the minor boundary modification between Combe Down and Widcombe wards. Details of our proposed boundaries are illustrated on the large map inserted at the back of this report.

### **Southdown, Twerton and Westmoreland wards**

66 Currently the number of electors per councillor in Southdown, Twerton and Westmoreland wards

is 3 per cent above, 12 per cent below and 3 per cent above the district average respectively (2 per cent, 7 per cent and 2 per cent by 2002).

67 As part of our draft recommendations, we proposed that: 296 electors be transferred into Southdown ward from Bloomfield ward (as discussed earlier); 91 electors be transferred from Southdown ward into Westmoreland ward; 254 electors be transferred from Westmoreland ward into Twerton ward; and a net total of 151 electors be transferred into Westmoreland ward from Oldfield ward (as discussed earlier). Under our draft proposals, the number of electors per councillor in the modified Southdown, Twerton and Westmoreland wards would be 8 per cent above, 6 per cent below and 3 per cent above the district average respectively (7 per cent, 1 per cent and 1 per cent by 2002).

68 During Stage Three, Bath & North East Somerset Council supported our draft proposals, as did the Liberal Democrat Group on the Council, the Bath Liberal Democrats, the Charter Trustees of Bath, the Keynsham and Salford Branch of the Liberal Democrat Party and Councillor Symonds, while the Bath Society supported the principle of 16 two-member wards in the city.

69 Given the reasonable levels of electoral equality which our draft proposals provide, and in the light of the representations received, we have decided to confirm them as final. Details of our proposed boundaries for these three wards are illustrated on the large map inserted at the back of this report.

### **Kingsmead, Newbridge and Weston wards**

70 Currently the number of electors per councillor in Kingsmead, Newbridge and Weston wards is 4 per cent above, 8 per cent above and 2 per cent above the district average respectively (5 per cent, 7 per cent and 2 per cent by 2002).

71 As part of our draft recommendations, we proposed no change to Kingsmead and Newbridge wards, and that a net total of 99 electors be transferred into Weston ward from Lansdown ward. Under our proposals, Kingsmead and Newbridge wards would retain their existing levels of electoral equality, while the number of electors per councillor in a modified Weston ward would be



## Electoral Arrangements in the Parished Area

<sup>80</sup> As previously noted, during Stage One of the review we received a representation from Bath & North East Somerset Council. All three political parties on the Council reached a consensus on a set of proposals for the parished area of the district, and submitted a scheme which modified 15 of the 20 wards. It provided reasonably good levels of electoral equality in the majority of wards and we adopted the Council's proposals for the parished area in their entirety.

<sup>81</sup> Bath & North East Somerset Council supported all our draft recommendations in respect of the parished area. Having considered all the representations received during Stage Three of the review, we have re-examined our draft recommendations and the following areas, based on existing wards, are considered in turn:

- (a) Keynsham (four wards) and Saltford ward;
- (b) Norton-Radstock (four wards);
- (c) Bathavon North, Bathavon South and Peasedown wards;
- (d) Cameley, Farmborough & High Littleton, Newton St Loe, Paulton and Timsbury wards; and
- (e) Chew Valley North & Clutton, Chew Valley South and Chew Valley West wards.

### Keynsham (four wards) and Saltford ward

<sup>82</sup> Currently, Keynsham town is served by six councillors returned from four wards. Keynsham East and Keynsham South wards each return two district councillors, while Keynsham North and Keynsham West wards each return a single councillor. The number of electors per councillor in each of the four wards is 14 per cent above, 19 per cent below, 34 per cent above and 11 per cent above the district average respectively (13 per cent, 19 per cent, 34 per cent and 10 per cent by 2002). The two-member Saltford ward comprises solely the parish of the same name, with the number of electors per councillor being 13 per cent below the district average both in 1997 and by 2002.

<sup>83</sup> As part of our draft proposals, we proposed that Keynsham should continue to be served by six district councillors but instead be returned from three two-member wards. Keynsham West ward would be disbanded, with 1,536 of the ward's 2,227 electorate being transferred into a revised two-member Keynsham North ward and the remaining 691 electors being transferred into a revised Keynsham South ward. Additionally, we proposed that a new Keynsham Broadmead parish ward, containing 181 electors, be created in the east of the town and included in the neighbouring Saltford ward for district council electoral purposes. The residual Keynsham East ward would remain two-member.

<sup>84</sup> Under our draft recommendations, the number of electors per councillor in our proposed Keynsham East, Keynsham North and Keynsham South wards would be 9 per cent above, 6 per cent above and 2 per cent below the district average respectively (8 per cent, 5 per cent and 2 per cent by 2002). The revised Saltford ward would be 9 per cent from the average both initially and by 2002.

<sup>85</sup> During Stage Three, Bath & North East Somerset Council, the Liberal Democrat Group on the Council and the Keynsham and Saltford Branch of the Labour Party all supported our draft proposals for this area, while Saltford Parish Council "decided to make no further comment on the proposed alteration". The Wansdyke Liberal Democrats, the Keynsham and Saltford Branch of the Liberal Democrat Party and Keynsham Town Council, while supporting our proposals in the west of the town, each opposed our draft proposal to include a new Keynsham Broadmead parish ward in Saltford (district) ward. Additionally, the Wansdyke Liberal Democrats proposed that an extra seat be added to Keynsham East ward in order to improve representation for the residents in this area.

<sup>86</sup> Those respondents opposing our proposal for a Keynsham Broadmead parish ward being included in Saltford ward stated that Keynsham and Saltford are two distinct communities and that the electors have relatively few links with each other. In the light of these representations, it is now more apparent that the electors who would comprise the new Keynsham Broadmead parish ward are separated by a distinct divide from Saltford and that to include them in Saltford district ward may have an adverse effect on local identities.

87 Should we modify our draft proposal for Keynsham East and Saltford wards so that the Broadmead area remained within Keynsham East ward, the number of electors per councillor would be 14 per cent above and 13 per cent below the district average respectively (13 per cent and 13 per cent by 2002). However, while conducting our review, we are required to strike a satisfactory balance between the need for electoral equality and the statutory criteria, including community interests. Having examined our draft proposals for this area, we have on balance decided to modify our draft recommendation for these two wards.

88 We now propose no change to the current Keynsham East and Saltford wards, despite this providing levels of electoral equality which are not ideal. We are conscious that the number of electors per councillor in both wards would exceed 10 per cent from the district average both in 1997 and by 2002. However we regard such imbalances as being appropriate in this case in order that we can better reflect community identities in the area. Details of our proposed boundary changes for Keynsham (in the west of the town) are illustrated on Map A2 at Appendix A.

### **Norton-Radstock (four wards)**

89 Norton-Radstock comprises Midsomer Norton North, Midsomer Norton Redfield, Radstock and Westfield wards, with each ward returning two councillors. The number of electors per councillor in the four wards is 7 per cent below, 23 per cent below, 5 per cent below and 27 per cent above the district average respectively (7 per cent, 24 per cent, 5 per cent and 27 per cent by 2002).

90 As part of our draft recommendations, we proposed that 1,062 electors be transferred from Westfield ward into Midsomer Norton Redfield ward, and that there should be no change to Midsomer Norton North and Radstock wards. Under our proposals, the number of electors per councillor in the revised Midsomer Norton Redfield and Westfield wards would be 4 per cent above and 1 per cent above the district average respectively (2 per cent and equal to the average by 2002). The number of electors per councillor in

unchanged Midsomer Norton North and Radstock wards would remain as at present.

91 As part of its Stage Three submission, Bath & North East Somerset Council supported our draft proposals for the four wards in Norton-Radstock, as did the Liberal Democrat Group on the Council, the Wansdyke Liberal Democrats and the Keynsham and Saltford Branch of the Liberal Democrat Party. However, a joint submission from Councillors Carruthers, Herod, Perry and Reakes, the four district councillors serving the existing Midsomer Norton Redfield and Westfield wards, proposed a slight modification to our proposed boundary between the two wards they represent. The councillors' proposal was endorsed by Norton-Radstock Town Council and would retain the electors in streets to the north of Charlton Road in Westfield ward.

92 Under the councillors' proposal, the number of electors per councillor in the revised Midsomer Norton Redfield and Westfield wards would be 1 per cent above and 4 per cent above the district average respectively (1 per cent and 3 per cent by 2002).

93 We acknowledge the consensus which has been reached by the four councillors serving the two wards which has, in turn, been supported by the Town Council. We also recognise that the Councillors' proposed boundary would retain a number of electors in streets to the north of Charlton Road in Westfield ward, where they appear to share closer ties than with Midsomer Norton Redfield ward. The councillors' proposal provides reasonable levels of electoral equality in the two revised wards compared to our draft proposals. We have therefore decided to modify our draft proposals to reflect the four councillors' submission, and details of our proposed boundary are illustrated on Map A3 at Appendix A.

### **Bathavon North, Bathavon South and Peasedown wards**

94 The constituent parishes and electoral variances in Bathavon North, Bathavon South and Peasedown wards are detailed in Figure 3 (opposite).

Figure 3:  
Bathavon North, Bathavon South and Peasedown Wards

Present ward	Number of councillors	Constituent parishes	Electoral variance (%)	
			1997	2002
Bathavon North	3	Bathampton, Batheaston, Bathford, Charlcombe, Kelston, Northstoke, St Catherine and Swainswick	-6	-7
Bathavon South	2	Camerton, Claverton, Combe Hay, Dunkerton, Englishcombe, Freshford, Hinton Charterhouse, Monkton Combe, Shoscombe, South Stoke and Wellow	-12	-14
Peasedown	2	Peasedown St John	-6	-1

95 As part of our draft proposals, we proposed modifications to the two Bathavon wards and no change to Peasedown ward. Under our proposals, Bathavon South ward would be split between Bathavon North ward and new Bathavon East and Bathavon West wards. In addition, Newton St Loe and Priston parishes would be transferred from the neighbouring Newton St Loe ward into a new Bathavon West ward. Our proposed wards were as follows:

- a new single-member Bathavon East ward comprising the parishes of Freshford, Hinton Charterhouse, Monkton Combe, Shoscombe, South Stoke and Wellow, with an electoral variance of 8 per cent (5 per cent by 2002);
- a revised three-member Bathavon North ward comprising the parishes of Bathampton, Batheaston, Bathford, Charlcombe, Claverton, Kelston, Northstoke, St Catherine and Swainswick, with an electoral variance of 4 per cent (5 per cent by 2002);
- a new single-member Bathavon West ward comprising the parishes of Camerton, Combe Hay, Dunkerton, Englishcombe, Newton St Loe and Priston, with an electoral variance of 2 per cent (1 per cent by 2002); and
- the number of electors per councillor in an unchanged Peasedown ward would remain at 6 per cent below the district average (1 per cent by 2002).

96 In our draft recommendations report, we recognised that we were retaining the one three-member ward in the district. However, we regarded the geographical configuration of parishes in the ward as being a hindrance to good electoral equality, and additionally that the area is further constrained by the city boundary to its west and south, and South Gloucestershire and Wiltshire boundaries to its north and east respectively.

97 During Stage Three, we received support for our proposed boundaries for these three wards from Bath & North East Somerset Council, the Liberal Democrat Group on the Council, the Wansdyke Liberal Democrats, the Keynsham and Salford Branch of the Liberal Democrat Party and the parish councils of Bathampton, Camerton, Charlcombe, Englishcombe, Peasedown St John and South Stoke. Additionally, Bath & North East Somerset Council, the Liberal Democrat Group on the Council and South Stoke Parish Council suggested that our proposed Bathavon East ward be renamed Bathavon South to reflect its geographical location, and also that the proposed ward comprises the majority of the existing Bathavon South ward.

98 However, the Bathavon (North and South) Branch of the Bath Constituency Labour Party, Batheaston Parish Council and Claverton Parish Council opposed our proposals. The Bath Constituency Labour Party proposed two alternative

options for the parishes comprising the existing Bathavon North and Bathavon South wards. Both options appeared to provide reasonable levels of electoral equality but involved Batheaston parish being warded for the first time and part of Lambridge ward (in Bath) being transferred into one of the rural wards. Batheaston Parish Council reiterated its preference to be the sole parish in a single-member ward, acknowledging that this would leave its surrounding parishes “in some difficulties”. Claverton Parish Council stated that, as it forms part of the Limpley Stoke Valley, it should be included in the same district ward as Freshford, Hinton Charterhouse, Monkton Combe, South Stoke and Wellow parishes.

99 Despite the degree of opposition which we have received for our draft proposals, we have not been persuaded to modify them for the two Bathavon wards. The Bathavon Constituency Labour Party’s proposals would, in our view, have an adverse effect on community ties in both the Bathavon area and in part of Lambridge ward which it proposes should be included in a rural ward. With regard to Batheaston Parish Council’s preference to form a single-member ward on its own boundaries, as detailed earlier the nature of the area constrains a pattern of single-member wards, whilst taking into consideration the wider implications for wards in the rest of the district. Furthermore, although Claverton Parish Council preferred to be placed in the same district ward as the parishes to the south of the city, this would result in a revised Bathavon East ward with an electoral variance of 13 per cent and we would be

reluctant to propose such an electoral imbalance in this area.

100 We have therefore decided to confirm as final our draft proposals for this area, with the exception of renaming our proposed Bathavon East ward to Bathavon South.

**Cameley, Farmborough & High Littleton, Newton St Loe, Paulton and Timsbury wards**

101 The constituent parishes and electoral variances in Cameley, Farmborough & High Littleton, Newton St Loe, Paulton and Timsbury wards are detailed in Figure 4.

102 In our draft recommendations, we proposed no change to Paulton and Timsbury wards, however we proposed modifications to the other three wards. Our proposals were as follows: Newton St Loe and Priston parishes transferred from Newton St Loe ward into a new Bathavon West ward (as detailed earlier); Compton Dando parish transferred from Chew Valley North & Clutton ward into a new Farmborough ward, as well as Corston and Marksbury parishes from Newton St Loe ward, and Farmborough parish from Farmborough & High Littleton ward. A new High Littleton ward would comprise the parish of that name and also Farrington Gurney parish (from Cameley ward). The parishes of Cameley and Hinton Blewett would be transferred from Cameley ward into a new Mendip ward (see below).

*Figure 4:  
Cameley, Farmborough & High Littleton, Newton St Loe, Paulton and Timsbury Wards*

Present ward	Number of councillors	Constituent parishes	Electoral variance (%)	
			1997	2002
Cameley	1	Cameley, Farrington Gurney and Hinton Blewett	-12	-12
Farmborough & High Littleton	1	Farmborough and High Littleton	21	20
Newton St Loe	1	Corston, Marksbury, Newton St Loe and Priston	-29	-26
Paulton	2	Paulton	-7	-7
Timsbury	1	Timsbury	2	1



103 Under our draft proposals, the number of electors per councillor in the new single-member Farmborough ward would be 3 per cent above the district average (5 per cent by 2002), while the new single-member High Littleton ward would be 8 per cent above the district average (7 per cent by 2002). The number of electors per councillor in the unchanged Paulton and Timsbury wards would remain as at present.

104 During Stage Three, Bath & North East Somerset Council, the Liberal Democrat Group on the Council, the Wansdyke Liberal Democrats and the Keynsham and Saltford Branch of the Liberal Democrat Party supported our draft proposals for these five wards. However, West Harptree Parish Council opposed our proposal for it to be included in the same district ward as Cameley parish, stating that "Cameley is too remote from West and East Harptree to have any commonality of interest".

105 Given the need to secure reasonable levels of electoral equality across the district and the level of local support which they have received, we regard our draft proposals as providing a satisfactory balance of our statutory criteria, despite the misgivings of West Harptree Parish Council. We have therefore decided to confirm as final our draft proposals for these five wards.

### **Chew Valley North & Clutton, Chew Valley South and Chew Valley West wards**

106 The constituent parishes and electoral variances in Chew Valley North & Clutton, Chew Valley South and Chew Valley West wards are detailed in Figure 5.

107 As part of our draft recommendations, we proposed modifications to establish a pattern of single-member wards in the area. Under our draft proposals, Compton Dando parish would be transferred from Chew Valley North & Clutton ward into a new Farmborough ward (as detailed earlier), and Cameley and Hinton Blewett parishes would be transferred from Cameley ward into a new Mendip ward (as mentioned earlier). The constituent parishes and electoral variances of our proposed wards would be as follows:

- a new single-member Chew Valley North ward comprising the parishes of Chew Magna, Chew Stoke and Norton Malreward, with an electoral variance of 9 per cent (10 per cent by 2002);
- a new single-member Chew Valley South ward comprising the parishes of Compton Martin, Nempnett Thrubwell, Stowey-Sutton and Ubley, with an electoral variance of 13 per cent (14 per cent by 2002);
- a new single-member Clutton ward comprising the parishes of Chelwood, Clutton and Stanton Drew, with an electoral variance of 4 per cent (5 per cent by 2002);
- a new single-member Mendip ward comprising the parishes of Cameley, East Harptree, Hinton Blewett and West Harptree, with an electoral variance which equals the average (1 per cent by 2002); and
- a new single-member Publow & Whitchurch ward comprising the parishes of those names, with an electoral variance of 8 per cent (9 per cent by 2002).

*Figure 5:  
Chew Valley North & Clutton, Chew Valley South and Chew Valley West Wards*

Present ward	Number of councillors	Constituent parishes	Electoral variance (%)	
			1997	2002
Chew Valley North & Clutton	2	Chelwood, Clutton, Compton Dando, Publow, Stanton Drew and Whitchurch	6	5
Chew Valley South	1	Compton Martin, East Harptree, Stowey-Sutton and West Harptree	8	7
Chew Valley West	1	Chew Magna, Chew Stoke, Nempnett Thrubwell, Norton Malreward and Ubley	12	11

108 In our draft recommendations report, we acknowledged that our proposed Chew Valley South ward would have an electoral variance which is not ideal. However, we regarded such an imbalance as being acceptable in order to provide reasonable levels of electoral equality throughout the rest of the district.

109 As part of its Stage Three submission, Bath & North East Somerset Council supported our draft proposals for these three wards. We also received support for our proposals from the Liberal Democrat Group on the Council, the Wansdyke Liberal Democrats, the Keynsham and Saltford Branch of the Liberal Democrat Party and Norton Malreward Parish Council. However, Ubley Parish Council opposed our proposal, stating that our proposed ward provides for a worse level of electoral equality compared to the existing arrangements and that it would prefer its existing arrangements to be retained. West Harptree Parish Council, as mentioned earlier, opposed our proposal to include the parish in a district ward with Cameley which, it stated, is “too remote from West and East Harptree” to have ties with either parish. The Parish Council preferred instead to be in a district ward with Compton Martin and Ubley parishes, stating that “such a grouping is historical and has worked well in the past”.

110 Maintaining the present electoral arrangements in this part of the district would have detrimental effects on levels of electoral equality in other parts, and to include West Harptree parish with Compton Martin and Ubley parishes would have a similar knock-on effect throughout the rest of the district. We have therefore decided to confirm as final our draft proposals for these three wards.

## Electoral Cycle

111 In our draft recommendations report, we proposed that the present system of whole-council elections in Bath & North East Somerset be retained. At Stage Three, Bath & North East Somerset Council did not express any opposition to this proposal, however the Bath Society expressed a preference for a system of elections by thirds in Bath, once the city had been formed into its own separate authority. We are unable to recommend structural changes as part of this review, and have therefore decided to confirm our draft recommendation as final.

## Conclusions

112 Having considered carefully all the evidence and representations we have received in response to our consultation report, we have decided to endorse our draft recommendations, subject to the following boundary modifications in Bath, Keynsham, Norton-Radstock, a change to one proposed district ward name and a modification to the number of town councillors returned from one of the proposed town wards in Keynsham (see also later paragraphs):

- (a) the boundary between Combe Down and Widcombe wards in Bath should be modified;
- (b) the boundary between Keynsham East and Saltford wards should be modified;
- (c) the boundary between Midsomer Norton Redfield and Westfield wards should be modified;
- (d) Bathavon East ward should be renamed Bathavon South;
- (e) the number of town councillors returned from the proposed town wards in Keynsham should be modified.

113 We have concluded that the present council size of 65 members should be retained; that there should be 37 wards; that the boundaries of 27 of the existing wards should be modified; and that whole-council elections should continue to be held every four years.

114 Figure 6 shows the impact of our final recommendations on electoral equality, comparing them with the current arrangements, based on 1997 and 2002 electorate figures.

115 As Figure 6 shows, our recommendations would result in a significant reduction in the number of wards where the number of electors per councillor varies by more than 10 per cent from the district average from 16 to four, and a further reduction to three by 2002. Under these proposals, the average number of electors per councillor would remain the same as under the current arrangements, at 2,002 initially and 2,029 by 2002. We conclude that our recommendations would best meet the need for electoral equality, having regard to the statutory criteria.

Figure 6:  
Comparison of Current and Recommended Electoral Arrangements

	1997 electorate		2002 projected electorate	
	Current arrangements	Final recommendations	Current arrangements	Final recommendations
Number of councillors	65	65	65	65
Number of wards	36	37	36	37
Average number of electors per councillor	2,002	2,002	2,029	2,029
Number of wards with a variance more than 10 per cent from the average	16	4	15	3
Number of wards with a variance more than 20 per cent from the average	7	0	6	0

### Final Recommendation

Bath & North East Somerset Council should comprise 65 councillors serving 37 wards, as detailed and named in Figures 1 and 7 and illustrated in Map 2, Appendix A and the large map inserted at the back of this report. The Council should continue to be elected together every four years.

## Parish and Town Council Electoral Arrangements

<sup>116</sup> In undertaking reviews of electoral arrangements, we are required to comply as far as is reasonably practicable with the provisions 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 a number of consequential parish ward changes.

<sup>117</sup> At draft stage we proposed the creation of four town wards in Keynsham, reflecting the proposals

submitted by Bath & North East Somerset Council. In addition, we proposed that the town be served by two additional town councillors, bringing the total number to 16, with Keynsham East, Keynsham North and Keynsham South wards returning five town councillors and Keynsham Broadmead ward returning one town councillor.

<sup>118</sup> During Stage Three, the Council did not make any specific comments on the electoral arrangements of the Town Council, although the Liberal Democrat Group on the Council and the Keynsham and Salford Branch of the Labour Party supported our draft proposals. However, the Keynsham and Salford Branch of the Liberal Democrats, the Wansdyke Liberal Democrats and Keynsham Town Council opposed our proposal to establish a new Keynsham Broadmead ward. The Town Council also proposed that Keynsham East ward return six councillors, and Keynsham North and Keynsham South wards return five councillors.

<sup>119</sup> We have examined the representations received and have modified our proposed boundary between Keynsham East and Salford wards. We have also modified the number of town councillors returned from the Town Council to reflect the electorates in each of the three wards.

### **Final Recommendation**

Keynsham Town Council should be served by 15 town councillors, representing three wards, with Keynsham East, Keynsham North and Keynsham South wards each returning five town councillors. Each of the three wards should be coterminous with the proposed district wards, with the revised wards illustrated in Map A2 at Appendix A.

<sup>120</sup> At draft stage we proposed that the town of Norton-Radstock should continue to be served by 14 town councillors. Radstock and Westfield wards should each return four town councillors, while Midsomer Norton North and Midsomer Norton Redfield wards should each return three town councillors. During Stage Three, Bath & North East Somerset Council did not specifically comment on the proposed wards in Norton-Radstock. However, the four district councillors serving the existing Midsomer Norton Redfield and Westfield wards, and Norton-Radstock Town Council, proposed a slight modification to our proposed boundary between Midsomer Norton Redfield and Westfield wards, without commenting on the number of town councillors returned from each ward. As discussed earlier, we have modified our draft proposal to reflect the Councillors' and the Town Council's submission.

### **Final Recommendation**

Norton-Radstock Town Council should be served by 14 town councillors, representing four wards. Radstock and Westfield wards should each be represented by four town councillors and Midsomer Norton North and Midsomer Norton Redfield wards should each be served by three town councillors. Each of the four wards should be coterminous with the proposed district wards, with the revised wards illustrated in Map A3 at Appendix A.

<sup>121</sup> At draft stage, following a proposal by the parish council, we proposed that Englishcombe parish be represented by two additional parish councillors, bringing its total to seven. During

Stage Three, the only submission we received on this proposal was from Englishcombe Parish Council, who expressed its support for the increase in its size. We have therefore decided to confirm our draft proposal.

### **Final Recommendation**

Englishcombe Parish Council should be served by seven parish councillors, two more than at present.

<sup>122</sup> In our draft recommendations report we also proposed that there should be no change to the electoral cycle of parish and town councils in the district. We have not received any evidence to consider moving away from this proposal, and therefore confirm it as final.

### **Final Recommendation**

For parish and town councils, whole-council elections should continue to take place every four years, on the same cycle as that for Bath & North East Somerset Council.

Map 2:

The Commission's Final Recommendations for Bath & North East Somerset

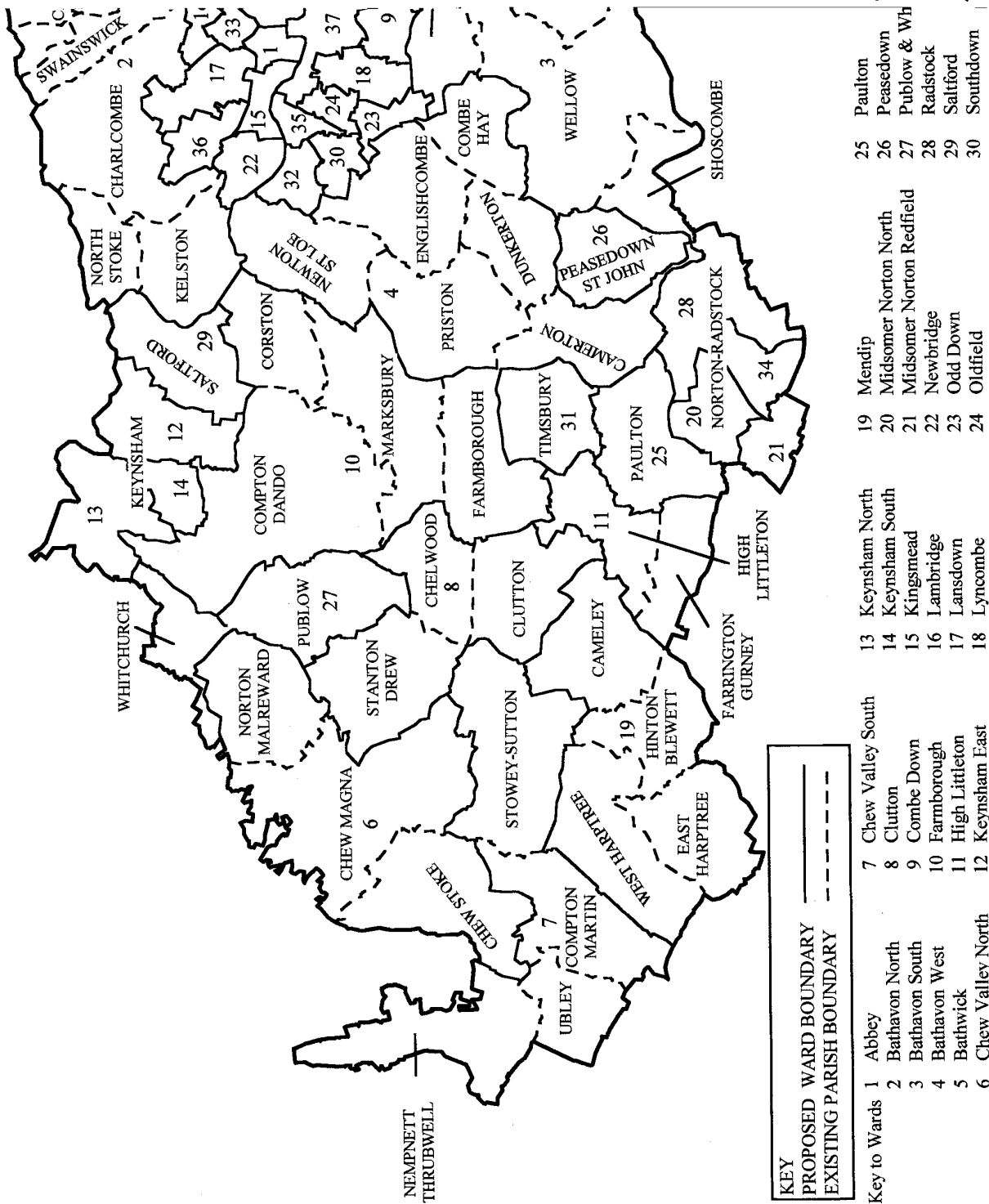


Figure 7:  
The Commission's Final Recommendations for Bath & North East Somerset

Ward name	Number of councillors	Electorate (1997)	Number of electors per councillor	Variance from average %	Electorate (2002)	Number of electors per councillor	Variance from average %
1 Abbey (Bath)	2	4,153	2,077	4	4,276	2,138	5
2 Bathavon North	3	5,777	1,926	-4	5,784	1,928	-5
3 Bathavon South	1	2,162	2,162	8	2,121	2,121	5
4 Bathavon West	1	1,971	1,971	-2	2,006	2,006	-1
5 Bathwick (Bath)	2	3,788	1,894	-5	4,044	2,022	0
6 Chew Valley North	1	1,828	1,828	-9	1,836	1,836	-10
7 Chew Valley South	1	1,739	1,739	-13	1,747	1,747	-14
8 Clutton	1	1,913	1,913	-4	1,920	1,920	-5
9 Combe Down (Bath)	2	3,980	1,990	-1	3,960	1,980	-2
10 Farmborough	1	2,068	2,068	3	2,122	2,122	5
11 High Littleton	1	2,161	2,161	8	2,177	2,177	7
12 Keynsham East	2	4,552	2,276	14	4,574	2,287	13
13 Keynsham North	2	4,227	2,114	6	4,257	2,129	5
14 Keynsham South	2	3,920	1,960	-2	3,968	1,984	-2
15 Kingsmead (Bath)	2	4,156	2,078	4	4,242	2,121	5
16 Lambridge (Bath)	2	4,120	2,060	3	4,093	2,047	1
17 Lansdown (Bath)	2	4,024	2,012	1	3,961	1,981	-2
18 Lyncombe (Bath)	2	4,138	2,069	3	4,184	2,092	3
19 Mendip	1	1,992	1,992	0	2,010	2,010	-1
20 Midsomer Norton North	2	3,738	1,869	-7	3,791	1,896	-7
21 Midsomer Norton Redfield	2	4,025	2,013	1	4,033	2,017	-1
22 Newbridge (Bath)	2	4,327	2,164	8	4,324	2,162	7

Figure 7 (continued):

*The Commission's Final Recommendations for Bath & North East Somerset*

Ward name	Number of councillors	Electorate (1997)	Number of electors per councillor	Variance from average %	Electorate (2002)	Number of electors per councillor	Variance from average %
23 Odd Down (Bath)	2	3,549	1,775	-11	4,191	2,096	3
24 Oldfield (Bath)	2	4,102	2,051	2	4,073	2,037	0
25 Paulton	2	3,709	1,855	-7	3,758	1,879	-7
26 Peasedown	2	3,775	1,888	-6	4,011	2,006	-1
27 Publow & Whitchurch	1	1,840	1,840	-8	1,845	1,845	-9
28 Radstock	2	3,801	1,901	-5	3,850	1,925	-5
29 Saltford	2	3,464	1,732	-13	3,511	1,756	-13
30 Southdown (Bath)	2	4,314	2,157	8	4,326	2,163	7
31 Timsbury	1	2,032	2,032	2	2,050	2,050	1
32 Twerton (Bath)	2	3,775	1,888	-6	4,029	2,015	-1
33 Walcot (Bath)	2	4,118	2,059	3	4,125	2,063	2
34 Westfield	2	4,149	2,075	4	4,199	2,100	3
35 Westmoreland (Bath)	2	4,124	2,062	3	4,110	2,055	1
36 Weston (Bath)	2	4,200	2,100	5	4,062	2,031	0
37 Widcombe (Bath)	2	4,389	2,195	10	4,333	2,167	7
<b>Totals</b>	<b>65</b>	<b>130,100</b>	—	—	<b>131,903</b>	—	—
<b>Averages</b>	—	—	<b>2,002</b>	—	—	<b>2,029</b>	—

Source: Electorate figures are based on Bath & North East Somerset 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.





## 6. NEXT STEPS

<sup>123</sup> Having completed our review of electoral arrangements in Bath & North East Somerset and submitted our final recommendations to the Secretary of State, we have fulfilled our statutory obligation under the Local Government Act 1992.

<sup>124</sup> It now falls to the Secretary of State to decide whether to give effect to our recommendations, with or without modification, and to implement them by means of an order. Such an order will not be made earlier than six weeks from the date that our recommendations are submitted to the Secretary of State.

<sup>125</sup> All further correspondence concerning our recommendations and the matters discussed in this report should be addressed to:

The Secretary of State  
Department of the Environment,  
Transport and the Regions  
Local Government Review  
Eland House  
Bressenden Place  
London SW1E 5DU



# APPENDIX A

## Final Recommendations for Bath & North East Somerset: Detailed Mapping

The following maps illustrate the Commission's proposed ward boundaries for the Bath & North East Somerset area.

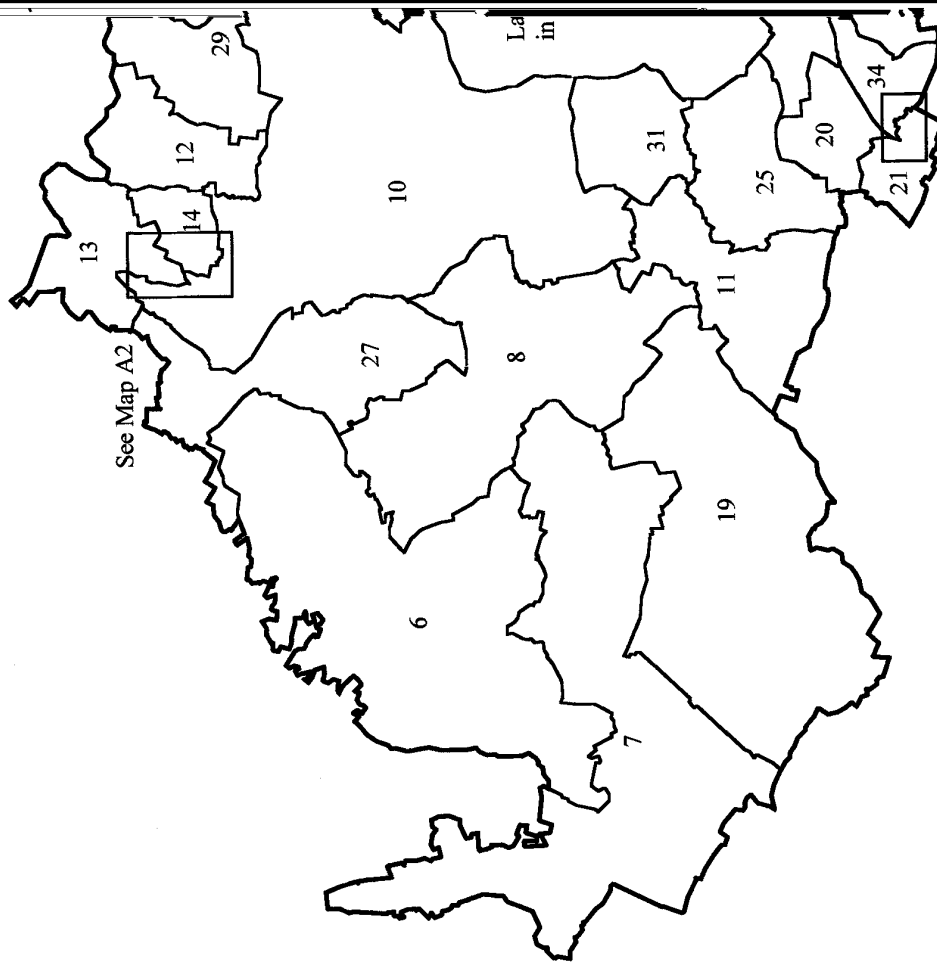
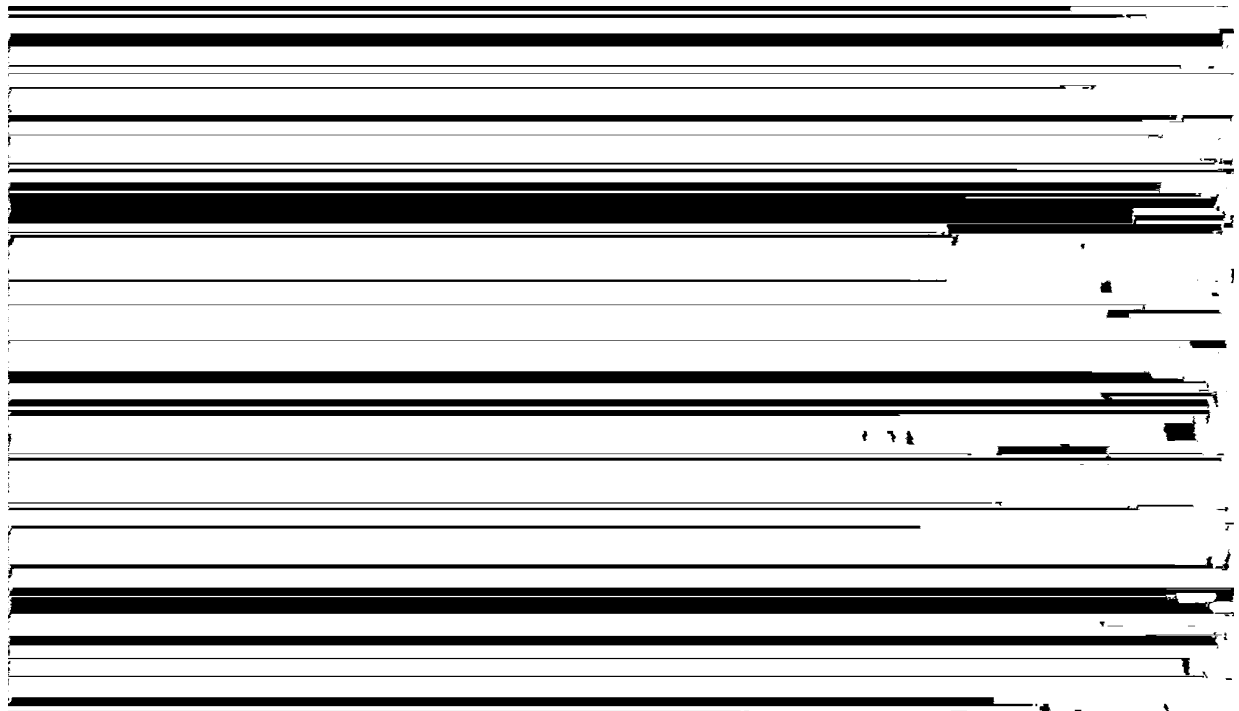
**Map A1** illustrates, in outline form, the proposed ward boundaries within the district and indicates the areas which are shown in more detail in Maps A2, A3 and the large map inserted in the back of the report.

**Map A2** illustrates the proposed ward boundary in Keynsham town.

**Map A3** illustrates the proposed ward boundary between Midsomer Norton Redfield and Westfield wards.

The **large map** inserted in the back of this report illustrates the Commission's proposed ward boundaries for the city of Bath.

Map A1:  
 Final Recommendations for Bath & North East Somerset: Key Map



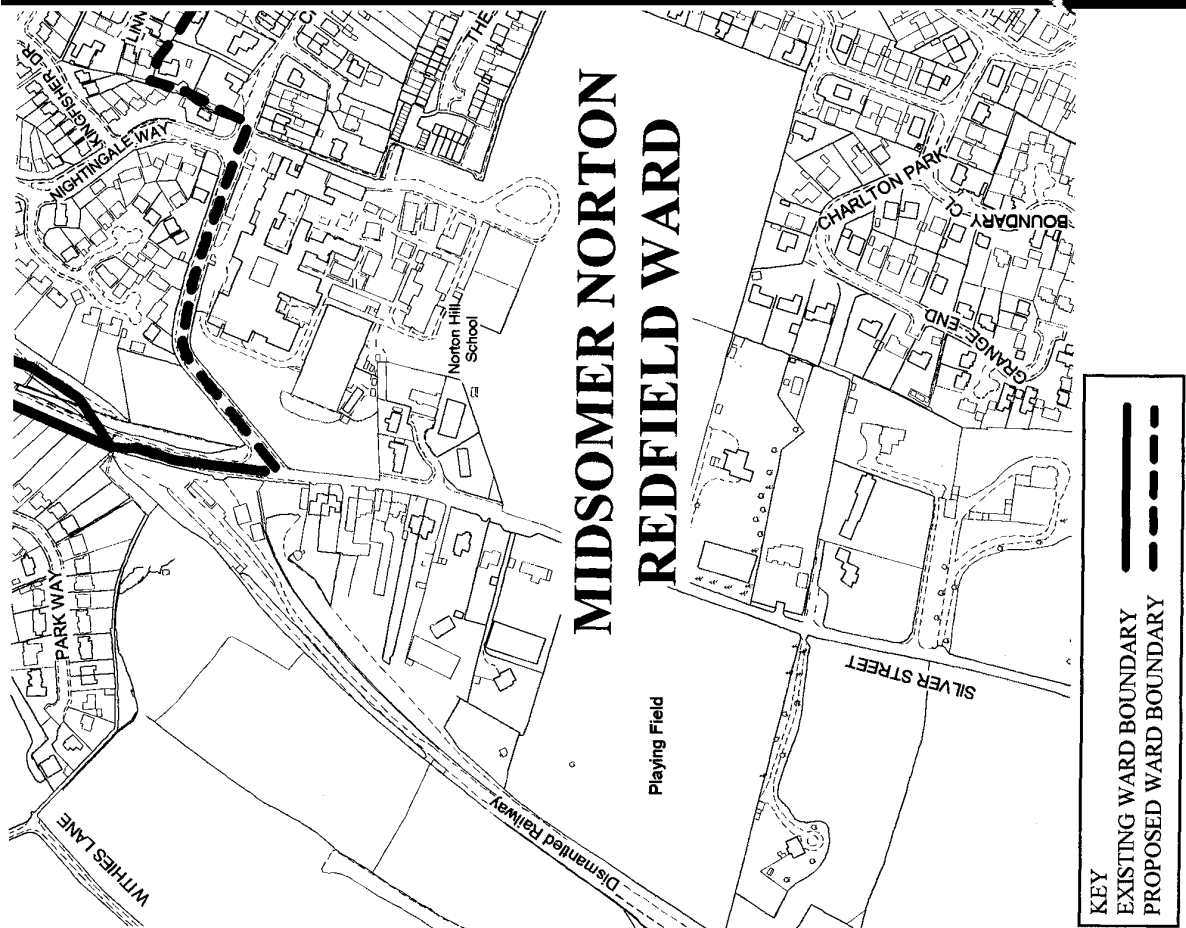
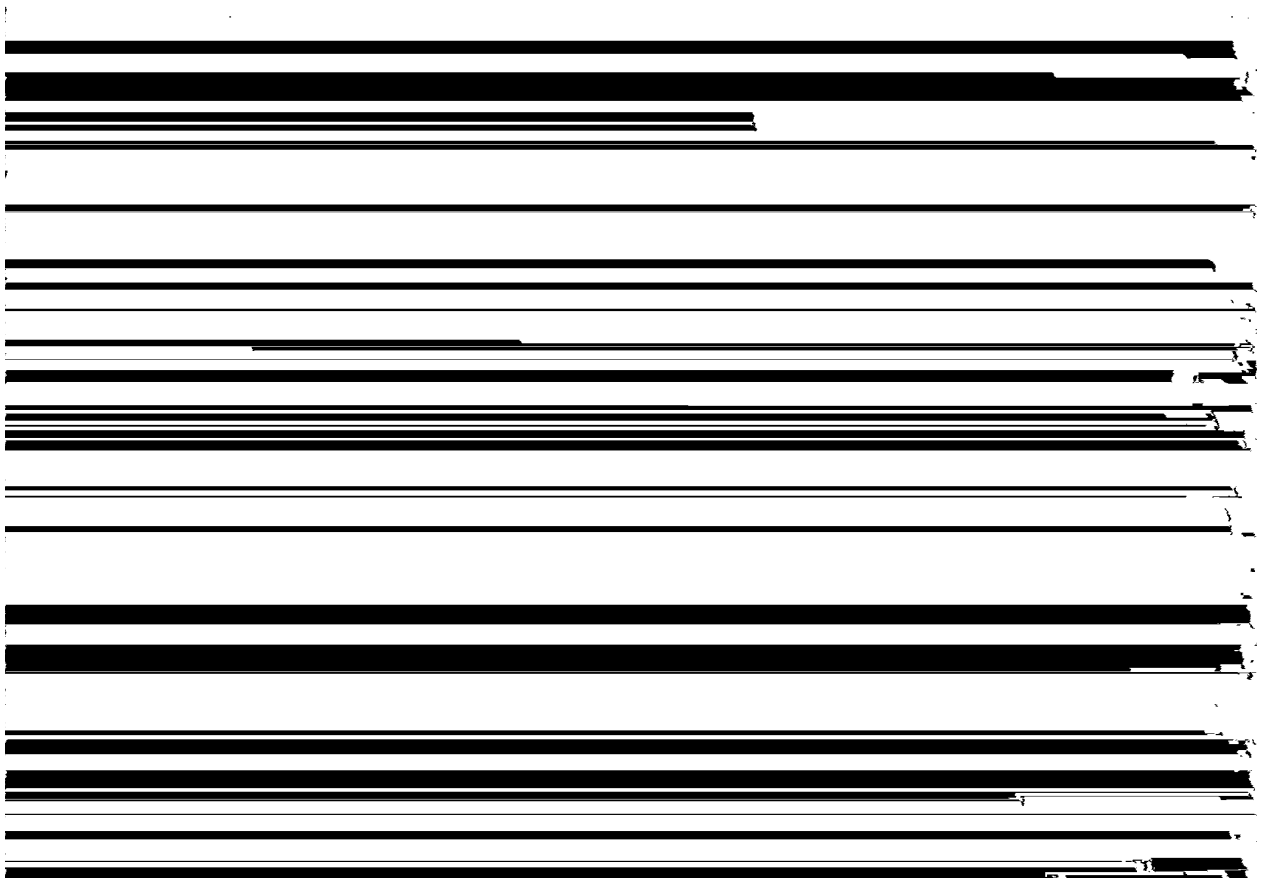
- Key to Wards
- 1 Abbey
  - 2 Bathavon North
  - 3 Bathavon South
  - 4 Bathavon West
  - 5 Bathwick
  - 6 Chew Valley North
  - 7 Chew Valley South
  - 8 Clutton
  - 9 Combe Down
  - 10 Farmborough
  - 11 High Littleton
  - 12 Keynsham East
  - 13 Keynsham North
  - 14 Keynsham South
  - 15 Kingsmead
  - 16 Lambriidge
  - 17 Lansdown
  - 18 Lyncombe
  - 19 Mendip
  - 20 Midsomer
  - 21 Midsomer
  - 22 Newbridge
  - 23 Odd Down
  - 24 Oldfield

Map A2:  
Proposed Ward Boundary in Keynsham Town



Map A3:

*Proposed Parish Ward Boundary Between Midsomer Norton Redfield and Westfield Wards*



# APPENDIX B

## Draft Recommendations for Bath & North East Somerset:

Our final recommendations, detailed in Figures 1 and 7, differ from those we put forward as draft recommendations only in respect of the wards as detailed below.

*Figure B1:*

*The Commission's Draft Recommendations: Constituent Areas*

<b>Present ward</b>	<b>Number of councillors</b>	<b>Constituent parishes</b>
Bathavon East	1	Bathavon South ward (part – the parishes of Freshford, Hinton Charterhouse, Monkton Combe, Shoscombe, South Stoke and Wellow)
Combe Down (Bath)	2	Bathwick ward (part); Combe Down ward
Keynsham East	2	Keynsham East ward (part)
Midsomer Norton Redfield	2	Midsomer Norton Redfield ward; Westfield ward (part)
Saltford	2	Keynsham East ward (part); Saltford ward (the parish of Saltford)
Westfield	2	Westfield ward (part)
Widcombe (Bath)	2	Bathwick ward (part); Lyncombe ward (part); Widcombe ward

*Figure B2:  
The Commission's Draft Recommendations: The Number of Electors per Councillor*

<b>Ward name</b>	<b>Number of councillors</b>	<b>Electorate (1997)</b>	<b>Number of electors per councillor</b>	<b>Variance from average %</b>	<b>Electorate (2002)</b>	<b>Number of electors per councillor</b>	<b>Variance from average %</b>
Bathavon East	1	2,162	2,162	8	2,121	2,121	5
Combe Down (Bath)	2	3,979	1,990	-1	3,959	1,980	-2
Keynsham East	2	4,371	2,186	9	4,393	2,197	8
Midsomer Norton Redfield	2	4,147	2,074	4	4,155	2,078	2
Saltford	2	3,645	1,823	-9	3,692	1,846	-9
Westfield	2	4,027	2,014	1	4,077	2,039	0
Widcombe (Bath)	2	4,390	2,195	10	4,334	2,167	7