

Final recommendations

The
Local Government
Boundary Commission
for England



New electoral arrangements for Cheshire West & Chester Council

July 2010

Translations and other formats

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Summary

The Local Government Boundary Commission for England is an independent body which conducts electoral reviews of local authority areas. The broad purpose of an electoral review is to decide on the appropriate electoral arrangements – the number of councillors and the names, number and boundaries of wards or divisions – for a specific local authority. We are conducting an electoral review of Cheshire West & Chester to ensure that the authority has appropriate electoral arrangements that reflect its functions and political management structure.

The review aims to ensure that the number of voters represented by each councillor is approximately the same. The Boundary Committee for England commenced the review in 2009. However, on 1 April 2010 the Local Government Boundary Commission for England assumed the functions of the Boundary Committee and is now conducting the review. It therefore falls to us to complete the work of the Boundary Committee.

This review is being conducted as follows:

Stage	Stage starts	Description
Council size	24 February 2009	Submission of proposals to us and our analysis and deliberation on council size
One	12 May 2009	Submission of proposals to us on wider electoral arrangements
Two	3 August 2009	Our analysis and deliberation
Three	10 November 2009	Publication of draft recommendations and consultation on them
Four	2 February 2010	Analysis of submissions received and formulation of final recommendations

Draft recommendations

The Boundary Committee proposed a council size of 75 members and a mixed pattern of single-, two- and three-member wards. The proposals were partly based on Cheshire West & Chester Council's proposals, with modifications made where evidence of community identity was received. During Stage One the Boundary Committee received 128 submissions, although it did not receive any representations on some areas of the district.

Submissions received

During Stage Three the Boundary Committee received 203 representations on warding arrangements including authority-wide schemes from Cheshire West & Chester Council and the Cheshire West & Chester Liberal Democrats. The Labour Local Government Committee made a representation which commented on approximately two-thirds of the proposed wards. The Boundary Committee received localised evidence relating to community identity from parish and town councils and from local residents. All submissions can be viewed on our website: www.lgbce.org.uk.

Analysis and final recommendations

Electorate figures

The Council submitted electorate forecasts for December 2013, a period five years on from the December 2008 electoral register which is the basis for this review. The electorate forecasts projected an increase in the electorate of 1.5% over this period. The increases in electorate were concentrated in two large developments in Ellesmere Port and a number of smaller developments in the urban Chester area. As a result of discussions with officers at Cheshire West & Chester, we consider that the major development projects are likely to be occupied by 2013. Following recent changes in legislation, we also need to have regard to a five-year forecast from the date of the publication of our final recommendations. We therefore requested that the Council provide a forecast for 2015. Having considered these projected electoral forecasts, we are content that they provide the best estimate that can be made at this time.

General analysis

Throughout the review process, the primary consideration has been to achieve good electoral equality, while seeking to reflect community identities and securing effective and convenient local government. Having considered the submissions received during Stage Three, and taking account of the level of agreement between different groups, we have sought to reflect community identities and improve the levels of electoral fairness. The Boundary Committee's draft recommendations were based on proposals from the Council, the other authority-wide schemes and locally generated proposals. Our final recommendations take account of submissions received during Stage Three, and a number of changes have been made to reflect the evidence received.

Our final recommendations for Cheshire West & Chester are that the Council should have 75 members, with 22 single-member wards, 19 two-member wards and five three-member wards.

What happens next?

We have now completed our review of electoral arrangements for Cheshire West & Chester. The changes we have proposed must be approved by Parliament. A draft Order – the legal document which brings into force our recommendations – will be laid in Parliament. Parliament can either accept or reject our recommendations. If accepted, the new electoral arrangements will come into force at the next elections for Cheshire West & Chester Council, in 2011.

We are grateful to all those organisations and individuals who have contributed to the review through expressing their views and advice. The full report is available to download at www.lgbce.org.uk.

1 Introduction

1 The Electoral Commission directed the Boundary Committee for England to conduct a review of the electoral arrangements for Cheshire West & Chester. The review commenced on 24 February 2009. Subsequently, the Committee wrote to the principal local authorities in the Cheshire West and Chester area (the former county and district councils) together with other interested parties, inviting the submission of proposals on the most appropriate council size for the new council. Following its decision on council size, the Boundary Committee invited the submission of proposals on the warding arrangements for the new council. The submissions received during Stage One of this review informed the Boundary Committee's *New electoral arrangements for Cheshire West & Chester Council*, which was published on 10 November 2009. It then undertook a further 12-week period of consultation which ended on 2 February 2010.

2 On 1 April 2010, the Local Government Boundary Commission for England assumed the functions of the Boundary Committee. We have now reconsidered the draft recommendations in the light of the further evidence received and whether to modify them.

What is an electoral review?

3 The main aim of an electoral review is to try to ensure 'electoral equality', which means that all councillors in a single authority represent approximately the same number of electors. Our objective is to make recommendations that will improve electoral equality, while also trying to reflect communities in the area and provide for effective and convenient local government.

4 Our three main considerations – equalising the number of electors each councillor represents; reflecting community identities and interests; and providing for effective and convenient local government – are set out in legislation¹ and our task is to strike the best balance between them when making our recommendations.

5 Our powers, as well as the guidance we have provided for electoral reviews and further information on the review process, can be found on our website at www.lgbce.org.uk.

Why are we conducting a review in Cheshire West & Chester?

6 A Statutory Instrument was approved by Parliament on 25 February 2008, establishing a new Cheshire West & Chester unitary authority from 1 April 2009. The Cheshire West & Chester (Structural Change) Order was signed on 4 March 2008. The Order provided for a shadow authority for Cheshire West & Chester based on the area of the districts of Chester, Ellesmere Port & Neston, and Vale Royal. On 1 April 2009, Cheshire West & Chester Council was formally established and took over its responsibilities from the former county and district councils. On 1 May 2008, elections to the shadow unitary authority were held on the basis of the 24 former county divisions for the area, each returning three members.

¹ Schedule 2 to the Local Democracy, Economic Development and Construction Act 2009.

7 The Electoral Commission was obliged, by law, to consider whether an electoral review was needed, following such a change in local government. Its view was that an electoral review of Cheshire West & Chester should be undertaken at the earliest opportunity. Following the Local Government Boundary Commission for England (LGBCE) assuming the functions of the Boundary Committee, the LGBCE is now conducting the review. It therefore falls to us to complete the work of the Boundary Committee.

How will our recommendations affect you?

8 Our recommendations will determine how many councillors will serve on the council. They will also determine which ward you vote in, which other communities are in that ward and, in some instances, which parish or town council wards you vote in. Your ward name may change, as may the names of parish or town council wards in the area. If you live in a parish, the name or boundaries of that parish will not change.

What is the Local Government Boundary Commission for England?

9 The Local Government Boundary Commission for England is an independent body set up by Parliament under the Local Democracy, Economic Development and Construction Act 2009. It is responsible for conducting reviews.

Members of the Commission are:

Max Caller CBE (Chair)
Dr Peter Knight CBE DL (Deputy Chair)
Jane Earl
Joan Jones CBE
Professor Colin Mellors

Chief Executive: Alan Cogbill
Director of Reviews: Archie Gall

2 Analysis and draft recommendations

10 We have now finalised our recommendations on the new electoral arrangements for the new unitary authority of Cheshire West & Chester.

11 As described earlier, our prime aim when recommending new electoral arrangements for Cheshire West & Chester is to achieve a level of electoral fairness – that is, each elector’s vote being worth the same as another’s. In doing so we must have regard to the Local Democracy, Economic Development and Construction Act 2009² with the need to:

- secure effective and convenient local government
- provide for equality of representation
- reflect the identities and interests of local communities, in particular
 - the desirability of arriving at boundaries that easily identifiable
 - the desirability of fixing boundaries so as not to break any local ties

12 Legislation also requires that our recommendations are not based solely on the existing number of electors in an area, but reflect estimated changes in the number and distribution of electors likely to take place over a five-year period from the end of the review. We must also try to recommend strong, clearly identifiable boundaries for the wards we put forward.

13 The achievement of absolute electoral fairness is unlikely to be attainable and there must be a degree of flexibility. However, our approach is to keep variances in the number of electors each councillor represents to a minimum. We therefore recommend strongly that, in formulating proposals for us to consider, local authorities and other interested parties should also try to keep variances to a minimum, making adjustments to reflect relevant factors such as community identity and interests. We aim to recommend a scheme which provides improved electoral fairness over a five-year period.

14 Our recommendations cannot affect the external boundaries of Cheshire West & Chester Council or the external boundaries or names of parish or town councils, or result in changes to postcodes. Nor is there any evidence that our recommendations will have an adverse effect on local taxes, house prices, or car and house insurance premiums. Our proposals do not take account of parliamentary constituency boundaries and we are not, therefore, able to take into account any representations which are based on these issues.

Submissions received

15 Prior to and during the initial stages of the review, members and officers of the Boundary Committee visited Cheshire and met with officers, members and parish and town councils. We are grateful to all concerned for their co-operation and assistance.

16 The Committee received 25 submissions during its initial consultation on council size for the new authority, 128 representations during Stage One, and 203

² Schedule 2 to the Local Democracy, Economic Development and Construction Act 2009.

representations during Stage Three, all of which may be inspected at both our offices and those of the Cheshire West & Chester Council.

17 Many of the submissions received during Stage Three of the review related to specific areas, particularly in the west of the authority. There was also a new proposal for the area covered by the proposed wards of Elton, Little Neston & Burton and Saughall & Mollington. As this suggestion had not been considered during the previous consultation, limited further consultation was undertaken in these areas.

18 All representations received can be viewed on our website at www.lgbce.org.uk.

Electorate figures

19 As part of this review the Council submitted electorate forecasts for the year 2013, projecting an increase in the electorate of approximately 1.5% over the five-year period from 2008 to 2013. The increases in electorate were concentrated in two large developments in Ellesmere Port and a number of smaller developments in the centre of Chester.

20 Officers at Cheshire West & Chester provided a breakdown of all planned developments, including precise locations, the number of houses or flats to be built, and their assessment of the likelihood of completion. We also understand that officers at Cheshire West & Chester have considered the impact of student registration within Chester.

21 During Stage One a comment was received from a local resident querying proposed development in Chester. We have spoken directly to officers at Cheshire West & Chester regarding progress on these large developments, as any new houses or flats which are not completed or occupied could have a significant impact on future electorate figures. We understand that a number of the new developments have already been completed. As a result of these discussions, we consider that the major development projects are likely to be occupied by 2013.

22 During Stage Three a query was raised regarding the electorate in the University area, in the Boundary Committee's proposed Newton and Garden Quarter wards. On closer inspection we discovered the draft recommendations placed the University campus into the Newton ward but kept the projected increase of student electorate in the Garden Quarter ward. This has been rectified with a minor boundary change which transfers the University campus into Garden Quarter ward. No other queries regarding electorate projections were received during Stage Three.

23 Following recent changes in legislation, we are required to have regard to a five-year forecast from the date of the publication of our final recommendations. We therefore requested that the Council provide a further electorate forecast for 2015. Having considered these projected electoral forecasts, we remain satisfied that our final recommendations will provide for good electoral equality, strong boundaries and reflect community identities. We have therefore used them as the basis of our final recommendations.

Council size

24 The Cheshire (Structural Changes) Order ('the Order') provided electoral arrangements for the new Cheshire West & Chester unitary authority. The authority is currently operating with a council size (the term we use to describe the total number of councillors elected to any authority) of 72 members.

25 As the authority is a new council, which combines responsibilities of the former county and district councils, it is necessary to consider the number of members required to provide for effective and convenient local government. Furthermore, it is important to consider this without being bound by the former number of county and district councillors in the area and to consider how the new authority is managed and how it intends to engage with and empower its local communities.

26 At the beginning of the electoral review, the Boundary Committee consulted locally on the most appropriate council size for the authority and received 25 submissions. Cheshire West & Chester Council proposed a council size of 75. This council size was supported by the Cheshire West & Chester Labour Local Government Committee, Tarporley Parish Council, Northwich Town Council, Tarvin Parish Council and Guilden Sutton Parish Council.

27 The Committee also received proposals for a range of council sizes from 24 to 81. The Council provided details of the proposed political management structure, and outlined the responsibilities of the current executive group. The Council also provided evidence of the workloads of non-executive councillors.

28 The Council emphasised that the council size should be slightly increased in order to obtain what they considered to be the optimum workload for non-executive councillors. The Council provided evidence to support maintaining a council size similar to the current 72 and also reasoning that supported a small increase in order to address increases in councillor workload.

29 Based on the information provided by the Council, the Boundary Committee recommended a council size of 75 elected members for the new Cheshire West & Chester unitary authority. Subsequently, during Stage Three, representations were invited on warding arrangements based on a council size of 75. We are of the view that a council size of around 75 members would provide for effective and convenient local government in the context of the new Council's internal political management structure and will facilitate the representational role of councillors.

Electoral fairness

30 As discussed in the introduction to this report, the prime aim of an electoral review is to achieve electoral fairness within a local authority.

31 Electoral fairness, in the sense of each elector in a local authority having a vote of equal weight when it comes to the election of councillors, is a fundamental democratic principle. It is expected that our recommendations will provide for electoral fairness, reflect communities in the area, and provide for effective and convenient local government.

32 In seeking to achieve electoral fairness, we work out the average number of electors per councillor. The county average is calculated by dividing the total electorate of the county (251,270 in December 2008 and 255,070 by December 2013) by the total number of councillors representing them on the council, 75 under our draft recommendations. Therefore, the average number of electors per councillor under our draft recommendations is 3,350 in 2008 and 3,401 by 2013. By 2015, the electorate is forecast to rise further to 256,380, with the average number of electors per councillor increasing to 3,418.

33 Under our final recommendations, the number of electors per councillor in three of the 46 wards will vary by more than 10% from the average across the authority by 2015. However, overall, we are satisfied that we have achieved good levels of electoral fairness under our final recommendations for Cheshire West & Chester.

General analysis

34 During Stage One the Boundary Committee received 128 submissions including authority-wide schemes from Cheshire West & Chester Council (henceforth referred to as 'the Council').

35 The Council proposed a pattern of two- and three-member wards which was supported by parish councils in the area surrounding Chester. However, in a number of areas opposing views were submitted by parish councils or local residents.

36 The schemes from the Labour Group on the Council and the Labour Local Government Committee (henceforth referred to as the 'Labour LGC') were similar, but not identical. Both schemes comprised a pattern of single-member wards and both contained wards with very high electoral variances. Neither Labour scheme provided detailed evidence of community identity and, in both schemes, the precise location of a number of ward boundaries was unclear. The Cheshire West & Chester Liberal Democrats (henceforth referred to as the 'Liberal Democrats') provided a scheme with good electoral equality: however, the Committee was not persuaded that it had received sufficient evidence relating to the extent to which it reflected community identities and interests, particularly in terms of community facilities and focal points, and transport links.

37 The Committee received 83 submissions which referred to specific areas of Cheshire West & Chester. A number of submissions suggested more than one warding pattern: a preferred option and an alternative. Many of the respondents provided useful information about their area, often giving some evidence of how their community functioned on the ground and how this would be best reflected in the electoral arrangements for the Council. When formulating its draft recommendations, where a parish council, local resident or local organisation provided clear and relevant evidence, the Committee carefully considered their proposals alongside the authority-wide schemes received.

38 There was significant debate locally on the issue of whether a uniform pattern of single- or multi-member wards should be adopted. The Council's scheme argued that a combination of two- and three-member wards should be created, while the Labour and Liberal Democrat schemes provided similar evidence in support of single-member wards. The Council argued for multi-member wards on the basis that a workload being shared between councillors would benefit electors, and that multi-

member wards more accurately reflect communities. The Committee received 41 representations which solely focused on the merits of either single- or multi-member wards. Of these submissions, 39 were strongly opposed to the principle of multi-member wards, arguing that single-member wards were more democratic as they provide a clear and accountable relationship between councillors and electors. Many asserted that the Council should not propose multi-member wards, as the original bid for unitary status referred to a preference for single-member wards. Conversely, many of the submissions which referred to specific areas argued for multi-member wards.

39 While the Committee recognised that the original bid to the Secretary of State for unitary status proposed single-member wards, it did not consider that this placed an obligation on it to provide for a wholly single-member warding pattern. Neither was the Committee persuaded by the Council's argument that multi-member wards always more accurately reflect community identities and interests. In the City of Chester we received submissions that were strongly opposed to the Council's proposals on the grounds that they unnecessarily combined distinct communities.

40 The Committee took the view that it should provide for warding patterns, whether single- or multi-member, on the basis of which best met its statutory criteria in the areas concerned, and separately from the submissions which opposed or supported multi-member wards solely on principle. The draft recommendations were based on the need to ensure good electoral equality, reflect community identities and secure effective and convenient local government.

41 At Stage Three 203 submissions were received. The Council proposed changes to approximately half the draft recommendations and, in some cases, proposed completely new ward patterns. The Liberal Democrats supported many of the Committee's proposed wards and made new suggestions in some areas, but resubmitted their original scheme in Ellesmere Port. The Labour LGC also supported many of the draft recommendations, suggesting only minor changes. The Labour Group on Cheshire West & Chester Council wrote to reiterate their Stage One request for single-member wards for the whole authority, but did not make any other suggestions. A number of area-specific submissions also argued for single- or multi-member wards as a general principle.

42 The submissions received focused on the areas around Chester, Neston, Weaverham, Frodsham and the central and southern rural area. Very few submissions were received in relation to Northwich, Winsford or Ellesmere Port. It was notable that (with the exception of Frodsham and Dogleston areas) there was little or no consensus in the representations received. For example, in Overleigh and Lache equal numbers of respondents argued strongly for a single-member Lache ward and for its inclusion in a three-member Overleigh ward.

43 Our final recommendations are for a pattern of 22 single-member wards, 19 two-member wards and five three-member wards. We believe our proposals provide good electoral equality while seeking to reflect community identities and interests where we have received such evidence. We have also sought to reflect communication links and, where possible, use parishes as the 'building blocks' of our proposed wards.

Electoral arrangements

44 This section of the report details the submissions received, our consideration of them, and our final recommendations for each area of Cheshire West & Chester. The following areas are considered in turn:

- Ellesmere Port (page 10)
- Neston (page 12)
- Chester (page 14)
- Rural North-West and Centre (page 17)
- Rural South (page 21)
- Weaver, Helsby and Frodsham (page 23)
- Winsford (page 24)
- Northwich and the Rural East (page 26)

45 Details of our final recommendations are set out in Table C1 on pages 41–44, and illustrated on a number of large maps we have produced. The outline map which accompanies this report shows our draft recommendations for the whole authority. It also shows a number of key boxes for which we have produced more detailed maps. These maps are available to be viewed on our website, and have been distributed to the respective council offices and libraries, according to area. If you require a copy of any large-scale detailed map from our website, please contact us using the details found inside the front cover of this report.

46 It should be noted that the Boundary Committee in its draft recommendations report used forecast electorate variances for 2013. All forecast variances in our final recommendations are 2015 figures.

Ellesmere Port

47 Ellesmere Port is an unparished area with clear boundaries. At Stage One the Boundary Committee received submissions from the Council, five local residents, the Ellesmere Port & Neston Conservatives, Cheshire West & Chester Liberal Democrats, the Labour group on the Council and the Labour Local Government Committee. The draft recommendations sought to reflect the limited areas of consensus.

48 At Stage Three the Committee received submissions from the Council, Cheshire West & Chester Liberal Democrats, Ellesmere Port & Neston Liberal Democrats, the Labour LGC, Councillor Anderson (Ledsham & Willaston), Councillor Donovan (Sutton & Manor), Councillor Hogg (Ledsham & Willaston) and two local residents.

Whitby, Strawberry and Sutton

49 In the south west of Ellesmere Port the draft recommendations were for a two-member Heath ward, a single-member Strawberry ward, a two-member West Sutton ward and a two-member Whitby ward. The variances would be 8% more, 3% fewer, 2% fewer and 4% fewer electors than the county average by 2013 respectively.

50 The Council proposed that part of Strawberry and Heath be placed with Whitby to make a three-member ward, and resubmitted its proposal for the area to the west of the main road. The Liberal Democrats resubmitted their original scheme, which

was markedly different to the draft recommendations. The Labour LGC broadly supported the draft recommendations in this area, although it mentioned that it preferred single-member wards.

51 Councillor Anderson supported the Council's proposal. Councillor Hogg supported a ward including the Ledsham, Sutton Green and Manor areas. Councillor Donovan broadly supported the draft recommendations but suggested that Heath ward be called Sutton St John's, Brookside or North Whitby. The two local residents suggested that Strawberry be called Strawberry Fields, that West Sutton revert to the Council name of Ledsham & Manor, Heath be called Sutton, and St Paul's Sutton simply called St Paul's.

52 The two local residents also suggested that part of the Committee's proposed Heath ward be transferred to Strawberry, arguing that the boundary would be more easily identifiable and would better reflect the local community. This area included residential streets, and slightly improves the variances in the two wards from 8% more and 3% fewer to 4% more and 6% more by 2015.

53 We recommend that the draft recommendations be modified to reflect this minor boundary change, and that the Heath ward be renamed Sutton. This would result in a two-member Sutton ward containing 4% more electors and a single-member Strawberry ward containing 6% more electors than the authority average by 2015.

54 We confirm as final the draft recommendation for a two-member Whitby ward containing 4% fewer electors than the authority average by 2015. We also confirm as final the proposed West Sutton ward subject to it being renamed Ledsham & Manor. This two-member Ledsham & Manor ward would contain 3% fewer electors than the average by 2015.

Rossmore, Netherpool, Grange, St Paul's and Ellesmere Port Town

55 The draft recommendations for the north east and central area of Ellesmere Port were for single-member Rossmore, Netherpool and Grange wards with electoral variances of 7% fewer, 6% fewer and 2% more electors per councillor than the average for the authority by 2013. The draft recommendations also provided for a two-member St Paul's Sutton ward with an electoral variance of 1% fewer electors per councillor and a two-member Ellesmere Port ward with a variance of 5% more electors than the authority average by 2013.

56 The Council resubmitted its Stage One proposals for this area, with minor changes. As with the south west of Ellesmere Port, the Liberal Democrats resubmitted their original scheme. The Labour LGC supported the draft recommendations, but suggested a change of name, from 'Rossmore' to 'Westminster'. Councillor Anderson supported the Council's proposals and particularly emphasised that the sections of Ellesmere Port town to the north and south of the railway line should not be divided, and that the Rossmore estate should also not be divided between wards.

57 While we considered that the Council's scheme had some merit in the north of Ellesmere Port, we did not feel that sufficient evidence had been provided to justify a move away from the draft recommendations. The Council and Councillor Anderson argued that their boundaries were stronger than those in the draft recommendations and better reflected the pattern of development in the town. We noted that the main effect of the new pattern would be to produce a greater number of multi-member

wards. Furthermore, the draft recommendations, and particularly the single-member wards, were supported by the Labour LGC.

58 We therefore confirm as final the draft recommendations for single-member Rossmore, Netherpool, Grange wards with electoral variances of 8% fewer, 6% fewer and 2% more electors per councillor than the average for the authority by 2015. We also propose a two-member St Paul's ward with an electoral variance of 1% fewer electors per councillor and a two-member Ellesmere Port Town ward with a variance of 6% more electors than the authority average by 2015.

59 Table C1 (on pages 41–44) provides details of the electoral variances of our final recommendations for wards in Ellesmere Port. Our final recommendations are shown on Maps 1, 3 and 4. These are available at our website, www.lgbce.org.uk.

Neston

60 Neston is a small, parished town in the north-west of Cheshire West & Chester. The neighbouring unparished villages of Willaston and Thornton are to the west, while the unparished village of Burton is to the south of Neston. At Stage One the Boundary Committee received ten submissions regarding this area, as well as single-member warding proposals from the Liberal Democrats, the Labour group on the Council and the Labour LGC. The draft recommendations were based partly on the Council's scheme and partly on the single-member wards proposed in other submissions.

61 At Stage Three the Boundary Committee received submissions from Neston Town Council, Puddington & District Parish Council, Neston & Parkgate Labour Party, the Liberal Democrats, the Labour LGC, Andrew Miller MP, Councillor Hogg (Ledsham & Willaston), the Council and 11 local residents.

Neston Town

62 The draft recommendations in the northern section of Neston parish were for a single-member Parkgate ward and a single-member Neston ward. The proposed wards would contain 10% fewer and 6% fewer electors per councillor than the average for the authority by 2013.

63 The Council proposed that the Committee's single-member Parkgate and Neston wards become a two-member ward, arguing that multi-member wards were preferable to single-member wards and that the boundary between the two proposed wards was unclear. The single-member wards were supported by the Liberal Democrats, the Labour LGC, Andrew Miller MP, Neston & Parkgate Labour Party, Neston Town Council and some local residents.

64 We were not persuaded that the Council provided clear arguments explaining how a two-member ward would better meet our statutory criteria than two single-member wards, and noted that there was strong support for the draft recommendations. We therefore confirm the draft recommendations for Parkgate and Neston wards as final.

65 In the southern section of Neston parish and to the south the draft recommendations were for a two-member Little Neston & Burton ward containing 3% fewer electors per councillor than the average by 2013.

66 The Council and Councillor Hogg supported the draft recommendations. Andrew Miller MP, Neston & Parkgate Labour Party and Neston Town Council and 12 local residents opposed the two-member Little Neston & Burton ward.

67 The Liberal Democrats suggested dividing the proposed Little Neston & Burton ward into two as their Stage One submission had suggested, but did not explain why this particular boundary was suitable. The Labour LGC suggested dividing the ward into two following a different boundary but, again, did not explain why this particular boundary was suitable. Both submissions stressed the benefits of single-member wards in general, but neither mentioned why single-member wards would be appropriate for this area and how they would better meet our statutory criteria. We were not persuaded that the case for single-member wards in this particular area had been made, or that there is one clearly defined boundary which could be used to divide the area into two separate wards.

68 A number of submissions, including that from Neston Town Council, suggested that Burton should not be included in a ward with parts of Neston parish. We consider that Burton appears to have good links into Neston parish and few links to any other sizable towns. Neston on its own would be over-represented, and the inclusion of Burton provides for better electoral equality. Furthermore, there is no other ward into which Burton could be transferred without having serious consequential effects on warding patterns across the rest of the authority.

69 At Stage Three submissions were received from both the Labour LGC and Puddington & District Parish Council suggesting that Burton should be combined with Puddington to the south. They argued that Burton and Puddington share community facilities, including a village hall. Puddington & District Parish Council did not comment on the issue of single- or multi-member wards, while the Labour LGC suggested that both Burton and Puddington be included in a single-member ward with a small area of Neston parish. Puddington & District Parish Council is a grouped parish council, including the parishes of Puddington, Shotwick and Woodbank.

70 We noted that including the three Puddington & District parishes would improve electoral equality but would have an effect on the neighbouring Saughall & Mollington ward. As a result of a number of submissions in the Saughall and Elton area, we undertook further consultations on the proposals for the Neston, Saughall and Elton area. This is discussed further in paragraphs 104–115. As regards the Neston and Burton area, the proposal to include the parishes of Puddington & District in a two-member Little Neston & Burton ward was supported by the Liberal Democrats, Ellesmere Port & Neston Liberal Democrats, Puddington & District Parish Council and a number of local residents.

71 On the basis of the evidence received, we recommend a two-member Little Neston & Burton ward, including Puddington, Shotwick and Woodbank parishes, which would contain 2% more electors than the authority average by 2015.

Willaston and Thornton

72 The draft recommendations were for a single-member Willaston & Thornton ward which would contain 6% fewer electors per councillor than the authority average by 2015. The villages of Willaston and Thornton are situated midway between Neston and Ellesmere Port, and are surrounded by open countryside.

73 At Stage Three the Council supported the Willaston & Thornton ward. This ward was also supported by the Liberal Democrats, the Labour LGC and the Neston & Parkgate Labour Party. No representations were received opposing the draft recommendations. We therefore confirm the draft recommendations as final.

74 Table C1 (on pages 41–44) provides details of the electoral variances of our final recommendations for wards in the Neston area. Our final recommendations are shown on Maps 1, 2 and 3. These are available at our website, www.lgbce.org.uk.

Chester

75 Chester sits close to the border with Wales, in the west of Cheshire West & Chester. At Stage One, 31 submissions were received regarding this area, as well as single-member warding patterns from the Liberal Democrats, the Labour group on the Council and the Labour LGC. A number of these submissions requested single-member wards in Chester as a whole. The draft recommendations included a combination of single- and multi-member wards, and were not based on any single scheme submitted at Stage One.

76 At Stage Three 15 submissions were received specifically regarding the Garden Quarter area of Chester, from 13 local residents, the Garden Quarter Resident and Trade Association and the Chester University Students Union. Submissions were received from 27 respondents regarding the Overleigh area, from 20 local residents, Councillors Dury (City ward), Harada (Overleigh ward), Short (Overleigh ward) and Tate (Blacon), the Lache Park Ltd charity, Queens Park Residents' Association and St Mark's Christian Centre. Submissions were received from 28 respondents regarding other parts of Chester, from 27 local residents and a joint submission from Councillors Jones and Nelson (Blacon ward). We also received representations from the Council, the Liberal Democrats and the Labour LGC regarding all areas in Chester.

Hoole and Newton

77 In the north west of the city of Chester the draft recommendations were for a two-member Hoole ward and a two-member Newton ward, which would have variances of 5% fewer and 4% more electors than the authority average by 2013.

78 The draft recommendations were supported by the Council, subject to a minor change to the boundary between Newton and Garden Quarter wards. During Stage Three a query was raised regarding the predicted 2013 electorate forecast in the University area, which was divided between the proposed Newton and Garden Quarter wards. An error was identified in the draft recommendations, as the university campus had been placed into Newton ward but the forecasted increase of electorate for the campus had been included in the figures for Garden Quarter ward. We have altered the boundary so that the University buildings are included in the Garden Quarter as intended. This boundary is shown on Map 6.

79 The Liberal Democrats suggested dividing Newton into two wards but supported the Committee's Hoole ward. Five submissions were received from local residents opposing a two-member Newton ward and one submission from a local resident supported the Committee's two-member Newton ward. None of the local residents made detailed suggestions for a new ward boundary. We consider that the Liberal Democrats' suggested boundary is neither strong nor easily identifiable.

80 On the basis of the evidence received, we have therefore confirmed as final the draft recommendations for a two-member Hoole ward with a variance of 5% fewer electors than the authority average by 2015. We also confirm as final, with the boundary modification as mentioned above, the draft recommendation for a two-member Newton ward containing 4% more electors than the authority average in 2015.

Blacon and the Garden Quarter

81 The draft recommendations were for a single-member Garden Quarter ward containing 10% more electors per councillor than the average for the authority by 2013 and a three-member Blacon ward containing 7% fewer electors per councillor than the authority average by 2013.

82 During Stage One, local residents argued that the Garden Quarter ward was a well-defined area, with a thriving trade association and a sense of community, and provided strong evidence in support of their views. A total of 16 local residents supported the draft recommendation, as did the Council and the Liberal Democrats subject to minor changes. One minor change is as a result of the need to correctly locate the site of student accommodation, as explained in paragraph 78 under the Newton section.

83 The proposed Blacon ward was supported by the Council and four local residents. The Liberal Democrats suggested that it should be divided into a two-member and a single-member ward. Having toured the area, we consider that the Liberal Democrats' proposals would unnecessarily divide a cohesive community. Councillor Jones suggested that the boundary should be amended slightly in the south-east corner of the ward, as one street which is geographically closer to Garden Quarter was included in Blacon. The boundary can be seen on Map 6.

84 We have decided to confirm as final, subject to the minor amendments outlined above, the draft recommendations for a single-member Garden Quarter ward and three-member Blacon ward. These wards would contain 9% more and 7% fewer electors per councillor than the authority average by 2015.

The City of Chester and Boughton

85 The draft recommendations were for a two-member Great Boughton ward with a variance of 0% in 2013. To the west of Great Boughton, the Boundary Committee recommended a single-member Boughton ward with an electoral variance of 7% more, and a single-member Chester City ward with an electoral variance of 5% fewer electors than the average by 2013.

86 At Stage Three the Council proposed that Great Boughton be combined with Dodleston & Huntington to form a three-member ward. This is discussed further in paragraphs 131–137, under the section on the Rural South. The Liberal Democrats supported the draft recommendation in this area.

87 The Council proposed that the proposed single-member City and Boughton wards be combined to form a two-member ward with a variance of 1% by 2013. The Liberal Democrats and the Labour LGC supported the Committee's draft recommendations for these two wards. Submissions were also received from ten local residents in support of the draft recommendation, while five local residents suggested that the wards be combined into a two-member ward. The submissions in favour of single-member wards argued that Boughton was a separate community,

while those in favour of a two-member ward suggested that the councillor workload in the centre of Chester meant that a two-member ward would ensure more effective representation. Based on the evidence received, we note that there is a clear difference of opinion in this area. However, on balance we are not persuaded to move away from the draft recommendations which we consider provide a better reflection of community identities and interest in this area than the alternatives submitted at Stage Three.

88 A local resident suggested a minor boundary change between Boughton and Great Boughton, pointing out that the parish boundary, on which the draft recommendations were based, cut across a street. We note that to move the ward boundary to the north would ensure this street is wholly contained within a single ward and have therefore decided to adopt this amendment as part of our final recommendations. This is shown on Map 6.

89 We therefore confirm as final the draft recommendations for this area, with a minor modification between Boughton and Great Boughton wards. We recommend a two-member Great Boughton ward with an electoral variance of 1% in 2015 and a single-member Boughton ward with an electoral variance of 5% more electors per councillor than the authority average by 2015. We also recommend a single-member Chester City ward with an electoral variance of 5% fewer electors per councillor than the average by 2015.

South of the river

90 To the south of the river the draft recommendations were for a single-member Lache ward with a variance of 7% more electors and a two-member Handbridge Park ward with a variance of 1% more electors than the authority average by 2013.

91 The Council resubmitted its original proposal for a three-member ward in this area, to be called Overleigh. The Liberal Democrats supported the draft recommendations. The Labour LGC resubmitted its Stage One proposal for three single-member wards. Submissions were received from 11 local residents in support of a single-member Lache ward, some of whom also suggested dividing the Committee's proposed Handbridge Park ward. Submissions were received from 15 local residents in support of a three-member Overleigh ward.

92 A large number of respondents argued that Lache, as a deprived area, required fair representation, but differed on whether this could be most effectively provided through single- or multi-member wards.

93 A small number of respondents also argued that Handbridge Park should be divided into two wards using the A483 Wrexham Road. This would produce wards with variances of 13% and -11%. However, none of the submissions expanded on their reasons for opposing a two-member ward, other than preferring single-member wards on principle, and did not demonstrate that the Westminster and Handbridge areas have markedly different community interests. We do not consider that sufficient evidence has been provided to justify the electoral variances that would result from such a warding pattern, or that there would be a detrimental effect on the area being in a two-member ward.

94 We therefore confirm as final the draft recommendations for a single-member Lache ward with an electoral variance of 7% more electors per councillor and a two-

member Handbridge Park ward with an electoral variance of 1% more electors per councillor than the authority average in 2015.

95 Table C1 (on pages 41–44) provides details of the electoral variances of our final recommendations for wards in Chester. Our final recommendations are shown on Maps 1 and 6. These are available at our website, www.lgbce.org.uk.

Rural North-West and Centre

96 The rural north-west of Cheshire comprises the area between Chester and Ellesmere Port, while the centre is the area of Eddisbury and Gowy. At Stage One seven submissions were received regarding this area, as well as single-member ward patterns from the Liberal Democrats, the Labour group on the Council and the Labour LGC. The draft recommendations were based on the Liberal Democrat scheme in the north-west and the Council's scheme in the central area.

97 At Stage Three 15 submissions were received regarding Upton, Elton and Saughall, from seven local residents, Councillor Crowe (Mickle Trafford ward), Backford & District Parish Council, Lea-by-Backford Parish Council, Little Stanney & District Parish Council, Mollington Parish Council, Upton-by-Chester & District Parish Council and Upton-by-Chester Liberal Democrats. Submissions were received from 14 respondents regarding Eddisbury and Chester Villages. These were from six local residents, Councillor Parker (Gowy ward), Barrow Parish Council, Darnhall Parish Council, Kelsall Parish Council, Mouldsworth Parish Council, Tarporley Parish Council, Tarvin Parish Council and Utkinton Parish Council. The Council, the Labour LGC and the Liberal Democrats also included this area in their submissions.

Chester Villages

98 The draft recommendations were for a two-member Chester Villages ward, comprising the villages to the east of Chester which would have an electoral variance of 4% fewer electors than the average for the authority by 2013.

99 The draft recommendations were supported by the Council, the Liberal Democrats, the Labour LGC and a local resident. Another local resident suggested dividing Chester Villages into two single-member wards, but did not provide any reason for this beyond a desire for single-member wards. We are not persuaded we have received sufficient evidence to suggest that the draft recommendations should be altered.

100 We therefore confirm as final the draft recommendations for a two-member Chester Villages ward containing 4% fewer electors per councillor than the authority average by 2015.

Upton, Saughall and Elton

101 The draft recommendations in Upton were for a two-member Upton ward, which would have an electoral variance of 5% fewer electors per councillor than the authority average by 2013.

102 The proposed ward was supported by the Council. Upton-by-Chester Parish Council, Upton-by-Chester Liberal Democrats, the Labour LGC and two local residents suggested that Upton be divided into two single-member wards. An approximate boundary was suggested by the Upton-by-Chester Liberal Democrats

and the Labour LGC. Although a number of residents also suggested single-member wards, they did not explain where they considered the boundary should be. We do not consider that the boundary suggested is a clear dividing line, or that the two halves of the proposed ward are noticeably different, and we note that the first submission from Upton Parish Council stated that they would not be unhappy with a two-member ward.

103 We therefore confirm as final the draft recommendations for a two-member Upton ward containing 5% fewer electors per councillor than the authority average for 2015.

104 The draft recommendations in Saughall and Elton were for a single-member Saughall & Mollington ward containing 3% more electors and a single-member Elton ward containing 6% more electors than the authority average by 2013.

105 At Stage Three the Council proposed that the two single-member wards be combined to form one two-member Elton & Saughall ward. Their proposal was supported by three local residents and Mollington Parish Council. Mollington Parish Council supported this two-member ward because they wished to remain in a ward with Lea-by-Backford parish and the three grouped parishes that comprise Backford & District Parish Council.

106 The Liberal Democrats supported two single-member wards in this area. However, they also suggested moving all four Backford parishes from Elton ward into Saughall & Mollington ward. This position was supported by Backford & District Parish Council, who argued that they have no links with Elton and many links with Mollington. Lea-by-Backford Parish Council argued that they, Backford & District and Mollington share many community facilities, including a village hall. Little Stanney & District Parish Council also stated that while they looked to Elton, they had very few links to the four Backford parishes.

107 In order to balance this change the Liberal Democrats suggested moving Puddington (but not Shotwick and Woodbank, which are part of the Puddington & District Parish Council) into Little Neston & Burton ward. The Labour LGC suggested that all three parishes which comprise Puddington & District Parish Council should be included in Little Neston & Burton, arguing that Burton and Puddington & District shared a village hall. This is also discussed in paragraphs 69–70.

108 Three submissions were received from local residents in favour of a two-member Elton & Saughall ward, and one local resident in favour of single-member wards. A number of residents also expressed their wish for Mollington and the four Backford parishes to remain in the same ward, but did not express a clear view for either single- or two-member wards.

109 We consider that the evidence of community links between Mollington and the four Backford parishes is clear, and that there appears to be a consensus. As this option had emerged during Stage Three and had not previously been consulted on, we undertook further limited consultation for the areas covered by the wards of Little Neston & Burton, Saughall & Mollington and Elton.

110 Two options were offered as part of this further consultation. Option One was the draft recommendations for the area. Option Two was an alternative pattern based on the different proposals received during consultation, under which the parishes of

Puddington, Shotwick and Woodbank would be transferred from Saughall & Mollington ward to Little Neston & Burton ward, and the parishes of Lea-by-Backford, Backford, Chorlton-by-Backford and Caughall would be transferred from Elton ward to Saughall & Mollington ward.

111 During the further consultation 29 responses were received. Cheshire West & Chester Council did not make a submission. Of the 29 submissions, one did not give a preference, one supported Option One (the draft recommendations) and 27 supported Option Two (the alternative warding arrangements).

112 The submission giving no preference was sent by a local resident and argued that the proposed Little Neston & Burton ward should be divided into two single-member wards. Option One, which was the draft recommendations, was supported by a local resident who asserted that Puddington and Burton had few connections with Neston.

113 Option Two, which was the alternative proposal, was supported by Backford & District Parish Council (both chair and clerk), Cheshire West & Chester Liberal Democrats, Ellesmere Port and Neston Liberal Democrats, Lea and Mollington Residents' Association, Lea-by-Backford Parish Council (both chair and clerk), Little Stanney & District Parish Council, Mollington Parish Council (both chair and clerk), Puddington & District Parish Council, Saughall & Shotwick Parish Council, Councillor Crowe and 14 local residents.

114 In particular, Backford & District Parish Council argued a natural affinity with Mollington and that they share a village hall which is well used by local groups from all villages. The parish council stated they share a church and send their children to the same school and also have better transport links with Mollington than with Elton. These views were supported and expanded upon by Lea-by-Backford, Mollington and Saughall & Shotwick Parish Councils. Puddington & District Parish Council expressed their preference for being placed in the same ward as Burton, citing their common histories, their shared village hall and primary school and their shared interests with regard to planning issues. These views were also supported by the Liberal Democrats and local residents.

115 Having considered the submissions received during the further consultation, we consider we have received sufficient evidence to move away from the draft recommendations and adopt the alternative warding option. We therefore recommend a single-member Saughall & Mollington ward, including all four Backford parishes but not including the three Puddington & District parishes, which would have an electoral variance of 1% more electors per councillor than the authority average by 2015. We also recommend a single-member Elton ward with an electoral variance of 4% fewer electors per councillor than the authority average by 2015.

Gowy, Tarvin, Kelsall and Tarporley

116 The draft recommendations were for a single-member Gowy ward containing 6% fewer electors and a three-member Eddisbury ward with a variance of less than 1% from the average by 2013. In the draft recommendations the Boundary Committee also outlined an alternative warding option of a two-member Tarvin & Kelsall ward and a single-member Tarporley ward, which would replace the three-member Eddisbury ward.

117 At Stage Three there was little consensus between the submissions received, and a wide variety of conflicting views. The alternative proposal as outlined in the draft recommendations was supported by the Labour LGC.

118 The Council proposed a new pattern, giving two members to Gowy and two members to Eddisbury. However, this would remove two parishes from the Tattenhall ward in order to increase the electorate in Tarporley and gave a number of other parishes to Weaverham ward in order to reduce the size of the proposed Gowy ward. This was a completely new proposal from the Council which would have a significant impact on the draft recommendations in this part of the district. We note that the draft recommendations for these surrounding areas have a degree of support from local interests. On the basis of the information provided, we do not consider that such a significant change as that proposed by the Council is justified. The Liberal Democrats also suggested a variation on the Council's proposal, but with different parishes being removed from Gowy ward.

119 Kelsall Parish Council preferred a single-member ward, but also referred to its links with Tarvin. The parish council argued that it had no connections with Tarporley. Tarporley Parish Council, although expressing a preference for a single-member ward at Stage One, said that, on balance, it now favoured a three-member ward. Tarvin Parish Council supported the Council's proposal and, in particular, emphasised the links between itself and Kelsall, Duddon and Clotton.

120 Barrow Parish Council, which is in the Committee's proposed Gowy ward, supported being in a two-member ward with Kelsall and Tarvin. Mouldsworth Parish Council, also in the proposed Gowy ward, was in favour of single-member wards.

121 A local resident suggested a single-member Tarvin ward. Another local resident suggested that Barrow should be included in a Kelsall and Tarvin ward. A third local resident in Ashton Hayes emphasised links with Kelsall and suggested that Kelsall and Tarvin be in different wards. A fourth local resident suggested that Ashton Hayes be linked with Kelsall, and was strongly in favour of a single-member Tarporley ward. A fifth local resident was against Tarvin being part of a three-member ward either with Tarporley or with the Gowy area.

122 We consider that the submissions point to a lack of links between Tarporley and the two villages of Tarvin and Kelsall. Only Tarporley Parish Council now supports a three-member Eddisbury ward (in the first stage of consultation they suggested a single-member Tarporley ward).

123 On the basis of the evidence received we therefore recommend as final the alternative pattern suggested by the Boundary Committee in its draft recommendations for a two-member Tarvin & Kelsall ward containing 5% fewer electors per councillor and a single-member Tarporley ward containing 8% more electors per councillor than the authority average by 2015.

124 Table C1 (on pages 41–44) provides details of the electoral variances of our final recommendations for wards in this area. Our final recommendations are shown on Map 1. These are available at our website, www.lgbce.org.uk.

Rural South

125 The southern part of Cheshire West & Chester is mostly rural. At Stage One 13 submissions were received regarding this area, as well as single-member warding patterns from Cheshire West & Chester Liberal Democrats, the Labour group on the Council and the Labour LGC.

126 At Stage Three the Boundary Committee received 19 submissions regarding the Broxton area. These were from seven local residents, Councillors Ritchie and Wright (Broxton ward), Broxton & District Parish Council, Churton Parish Council, Cuddington Parish Council, Farndon Parish Council, Foulk Stapleford Parish Council, Huxley Parish Council, Malpas Parish Council, No Mans Heath & District Parish Council, Tilstone Parish Council and Tiverton & Tilstone Fearnall Parish Council. The Committee also received 16 submissions regarding the Dodleston area, from 10 local residents, Councillors Board and Hall (Boughton Heath & Vicars Cross ward), Dodleston & District Parish Council, Eaton, Eccleston & Claverton Parish Council, Huntington Parish Council and Poulton & Pulford Parish Council.

Broxton

127 The draft recommendations were for single-member wards of Malpas containing 4% fewer electors, Tattenhall containing 3% more electors, and Farndon & Aldford containing 8% fewer electors per councillor respectively than the authority average by 2013.

128 The Council opposed the draft recommendations and, instead, proposed a three-member ward. The Liberal Democrats and the Labour LGC supported the draft recommendations. Of the other representations received, five local residents and three parish councils opposed the draft recommendations while three local residents and seven parish councils supported them. Councillor Ritchie suggested that Farndon & Aldford ward should simply be called Farndon, arguing that Aldford was not the second largest parish in this area.

129 The submissions opposing single-member wards argued that as rural communities the villages in this area shared services and faced similar issues. The submissions supporting single-member wards argued that, in a geographically large area, smaller wards would provide better representation and that the draft recommendations placed villages together in natural communities. We are of the view that the balance of evidence is in support of single-member wards in this area, although we recognise that there are opposing views among local residents and parish councils.

130 Having considered all the representations received, we have decided to confirm as final the draft recommendations for the single-member wards of Malpas containing 5% fewer electors per councillor and Tattenhall containing 3% more electors per councillor than the average for the authority by 2013. We also recommend a single-member Farndon ward with an electoral variance of 8% fewer electors per councillor than the authority average by 2015.

Dodleston

131 The draft recommendations were for a Dodleston & Huntington ward, comprising the parishes to the south of Chester. This ward has a high variance, at 13% fewer electors than the average, but is located on the very edge of Cheshire West & Chester, bordering Wales.

132 At Stage One the Council proposed a three-member ward combining the rural parishes to the south of Chester with the parish of Great Boughton. The draft recommendations for Great Boughton were for a two-member ward containing 1% more electors per councillor than the average for the authority by 2013. This was opposed at Stage One by Great Boughton Parish Council and a local resident, who argued that Great Boughton had few community links with the rural parishes around Dodleston.

133 At Stage Three the Council proposed that the Committee's Dodleston & Huntington ward be combined with Great Boughton to form a three-member ward with a variance of 4%. This proposal was supported by 11 local residents, Huntington Parish Council, Poulton & Pulford Parish Council, Dodleston & District Parish Council and Councillors Board and Hall (Great Boughton & Huntington ward). Many of the letters were identical.

134 The draft recommendations were supported by the Liberal Democrats and Eaton, Eccleston & Claverton Parish Council.

135 The submissions in favour of a three-member ward argued that the likelihood of the rural communities being represented by a councillor from a similar rural community was increased in a three-member ward. We note that the urban Huntington area has approximately the same number of voters as the rural area, and that there is no logical reason why representatives would be more likely to be rurally based in a three-member ward. Indeed, we also note that the existing three-member ward is currently represented by two councillors from the rural area with no councillors living in Great Boughton.

136 We consider that the submissions received are conflating the fact that the rural area currently receives greater representation than the urban area with the likelihood of being similarly represented in the future. While a three-member ward has attracted considerable support, the evidence provided is based on considerations other than those that we can reasonably take into account. We cannot make boundary decisions based on the likelihood of particular councillors losing or retaining seats, nor on imagined representation for particular areas of a ward in the future.

137 We therefore confirm as final our draft recommendation for a single-member Dodleston & Huntington ward containing 13% fewer electors per councillor than the authority average in 2015.

138 Table C1 (on pages 41–44) provides details of the electoral variances of our final recommendations for wards in this area. Our final recommendations are shown on Map 1. These are available at our website, www.lgbce.org.uk.

Weaver, Helsby and Frodsham

139 At Stage One the Boundary Committee received 12 submissions regarding this area, as well as single-member ward patterns from the Liberal Democrats, the Labour group on the Council and the Labour LGC.

140 At Stage Three 15 submissions were received regarding the Weaverham area, from seven local residents, Acton Bridge Parish Council, Crowton Parish Council, Cuddington Parish Council, Dutton Parish Council, Kingsley Parish Council, Manley Parish Council, Weaverham Parish Council and the Weaverham Trust. The Boundary Committee received 17 submissions regarding the Frodsham area, from 14 local residents, Councillor Ford (Helsby & Frodsham ward), Mike Hall (former MP for Weaver Vale) and Helsby Parish Council.

Frodsham and Helsby

141 The draft recommendations were for a three-member Frodsham & Helsby ward with an electoral variance of 12% more electors per councillor than the average by 2013. However, the draft recommendations report also outlined an alternative option of a single-member Helsby ward with a variance of 14% more electors per councillor and a two-member Frodsham ward with a variance of 12% more electors per councillor than the authority average by 2013.

142 The Council supported the three-member Frodsham and Helsby ward. The Liberal Democrats and Labour LGC supported a single-member Helsby ward. Helsby Parish Council, Mike Hall MP and 13 local residents also wrote in support of a single-member Helsby ward. These submissions argued that Helsby was an independent community with its own social clubs, schools and shops. Beside the Council's submission, there was only one representation in support of a three-member ward: Councillor Ford argued that the Council's scheme, which was adopted in the draft recommendations, would provide for better representation.

143 Although we do not consider that the evidence for either pattern is particularly strong, we recognise that Helsby is a separate community. We have therefore decided to adopt the alternative pattern outlined in the draft recommendations. This is for a two-member Frodsham ward containing 11% more electors per councillor than the authority average by 2015, and a single-member Helsby ward containing 14% more electors per councillor than the authority average in 2015. These are relatively high electoral variances. However, we consider that this pattern more accurately reflects the distinct community identities and interests of these two areas.

Weaver, Cuddington and Kingsley

144 The draft recommendations for the Weaverham area were for a three-member Weaver & Cuddington ward with an electoral variance of 2% fewer electors per councillor and a single-member Kingsley ward with an electoral variance of 3% more electors per councillor than the authority average by 2013.

145 At Stage One Cuddington Parish Council argued that Cuddington parish should not be divided, and that the residents looked to Weaverham. This was supported by submissions from Weaverham, although a number of other submissions argued for single-member wards.

146 The Council opposed the draft recommendations, suggesting instead a three-member Weaverham ward and a single-member Cuddington ward. The Council's proposed Weaverham ward was supported by Acton Bridge Parish Council, Kingsley Parish Council, Dutton Parish Council and three local residents. The draft recommendations were supported by the Liberal Democrats, Weaverham Trust, Cuddington Parish Council and four local residents. We note that both sets of representations argued that their favoured warding pattern better represented the communities of the Weaver area. However, adopting the Council's new proposal would have a consequential effect on warding arrangements in the Gowy area and beyond. We do not consider that there is sufficient evidence to warrant such changes across such a large part of the authority, particularly given that the draft recommendations for the Weaverham area have attracted a measure of support from respondents.

147 At Stage Three Dutton Parish Council specifically argued that it should remain with Weaverham and the Weaver area. Under the draft recommendations, it would be placed in the Marbury ward. We note that while Dutton parish no road connections across the river to the rural parishes around Kingsley, it does have a road link into Weaverham.

148 We consider that Dutton Parish Council provided clear evidence that the parish has better links into Weaverham than into towns and villages in the Marbury ward. Furthermore, including Dutton parish in the Weaver & Cuddington ward rather than in the Marbury ward slightly improves electoral equality.

149 We therefore confirm as final the draft recommendation for a single-member Kingsley ward containing 3% more electors per councillor than the authority average by 2015, and recommend a slightly altered Weaver & Cuddington ward which includes Dutton parish and has a variance of 1% more electors per councillor than the authority average by 2015.

150 Table C1 (on pages 41–44) provides details of the electoral variances of our final recommendations for wards in Weaver, Helsby and Frodsham. Our final recommendations are shown on Map 1. These are available at our website, www.lgbce.org.uk.

Winsford

151 The town of Winsford is in the south-east of Cheshire West & Cheshire, close to the border with Cheshire East. At Stage One the Boundary Committee received one submission regarding this area, as well as proposals for single-member warding patterns from the Liberal Democrats, the Labour group on the Council and the Labour LGC. The draft recommendations were mainly based on the Council's scheme.

152 At Stage Three the Boundary Committee did not receive any submissions besides the authority-wide submissions from the Council and the Liberal Democrats.

East Winsford

153 The draft recommendations were based on the Council's two-member Wharton ward containing 3% more electors per councillor than the average for the authority by 2013.

154 At Stage Three the Council supported this ward, while the Liberal Democrats suggested a different pattern in this area, with considerable knock-on effects to the north. The Liberal Democrats also suggested that the wards be prefaced with the name of the town, which we consider a reasonable suggestion. We did not receive any other submissions about this area.

155 We therefore confirm as final the recommendation for a two-member Winsford Wharton ward containing 3% more electors per councillor than the average for the authority by 2015.

West Winsford

156 The draft recommendations were for a two-member South Winsford ward containing 7% more electors per councillor and a three-member Over & Verdin ward containing 3% fewer electors per councillor than the average for the authority by 2013.

157 The Council broadly supported the draft recommendations, although it also suggested Darnhall be warded with the Eddisbury area. The Liberal Democrats suggested a new pattern which would have knock-on effects to adjoining areas, and argued that all the wards in Winsford should be prefaced by the name of the town. In the case of South Winsford, this name would change to Winsford Swanlow & Dene, which are the names of its constituent parish wards.

158 A submission was received from Darnhall Parish Council commenting on its connections with other rural areas and not with Winsford. The parish council argued that, as a rural parish, it felt particular connections with Tarporley, Beeston, Bunbury, Eaton and Calveley. However, Beeston said that it looks to Tattenhall rather than to Tarporley, while Bunbury and Calveley are in Cheshire East. Furthermore, there is no road linking Darnhall with any area in Cheshire West & Chester apart from Winsford, and Darnhall Parish Council itself stated that part of its population is based along the border with Winsford. No submissions were received about the Winsford town area.

159 A small number of submissions regarding the Eddisbury area also suggested that Darnhall has a stronger affiliation to the rural area than to Winsford. The Council and the Liberal Democrats proposed a new pattern in Eddisbury which would have the knock-on effect of placing Darnhall in a Tarporley ward. If Darnhall was placed in our recommended single-member ward then the electoral variance would be 13%.

160 Although we acknowledge the views of Darnhall Parish Council, we do not consider that they have provided sufficient evidence to justify combining them with an area to which they have no direct road link and which would then result in an electoral variance of 13%.

161 We therefore confirm as final the draft recommendations for a two-member Winsford Swanlow & Dene ward containing 7% more electors per councillor and a three-member Winsford Over & Verdin ward containing 3% fewer electors per councillor than the average for the authority by 2015.

162 Table C1 (on pages 41–44) provides details of the electoral variances of our final recommendations for wards in Winsford. Our final recommendations are shown on Maps 1 and 7. These are available at our website, www.lgbce.org.uk.

Northwich and the Rural East

163 At Stage One seven submissions were received regarding this area, as well as single-member warding patterns from the Liberal Democrats, the Labour group on the Council and the Labour LGC. The draft recommendations were partly based on the Council's submission.

164 At Stage Three the Boundary Committee received six submissions, from three local residents, Davenham Parish Council, Moulton Parish Council and Northwich Town Council.

Leftwich, Kingsmead, Moulton and Davenham

165 To the south of Northwich the draft recommendation were for a three-member ward called Mere Heath & Leftwich, which would have an electoral variance of 3% more than the authority average in 2013. This ward included the communities of Moulton, Davenham, Kingsmead and Leftwich.

166 The Council supported the draft recommendations but proposed including the smaller parishes of Stanthorne and Wimboldsley to the south. We consider that these parishes would be better served by remaining with Winsford rather than be joined in a ward with Northwich. The Liberal Democrats suggested that the parishes of Moulton and Davenham be combined with parts of Shakerley, which would have a consequential effect to warding arrangements in a number of neighbouring wards. The Labour LGC emphasised that there is little connection between Leftwich and the parishes of Davenham and Moulton. Davenham and Moulton Parish Councils both argued that they should not be combined with communities in Northwich.

167 While we acknowledge the views of Davenham and Moulton, the electoral figures do not allow a wholly rural ward. Davenham village and Moulton are together entitled to approximately 1.5 councillors, with the villages being approximately the same size. Unless an artificial line is drawn through the centre of either Davenham Village or Moulton, which we consider undesirable in terms of reflecting community identities, any Davenham and Moulton ward would necessarily include part of Winsford, Northwich or Hartford. The Leftwich area of Northwich is also entitled to 1.5 councillors. We consider that Davenham and Moulton should be combined with the Leftwich area rather than with part of Winsford or Hartford.

168 We therefore confirm as final the draft recommendations for a three-member ward with an electoral variance of 2% more electors per councillor than the authority average by 2015. We recommend that the name be changed to Davenham & Moulton ward.

169 We have been informed by the Council that in February 2009 Vale Royal Borough Council approved a request for that part of Davenham parish which is included in Northwich to become a separate parish. As yet no order has been made for this change, and therefore our maps show the parish boundaries as they currently are.

Hartford and Northwich town

170 The draft recommendations were for a two-member Winnington Bridge ward containing 7% more electors, a two-member Witton & Rudheath ward containing 1%

more electors and a two-member Hartford ward containing 2% fewer electors per councillor than the average for the authority by 2013.

171 The Council proposed that the Greenbank area be removed from the Hartford ward and placed with Winnington Bridge. In order to facilitate this pattern the Council proposed that the parish of Whitegate & Martin to the south of Hartford be included in the Hartford ward and that Rudheath be divided between Shakerley and Winnington Bridge. This would result in a two-member Hartford ward, a three-member Winnington Bridge ward and a two-member Shakerley ward. (Shakerley ward is discussed further in paragraphs 177–178.) The transfer of Whitegate & Martin parish would also leave a three-member Over & Verdin ward with an electoral variance of 12% fewer electors per councillor. We do not consider that we have received sufficient evidence of community identities which support this warding pattern, particularly as we have not received submissions from any residents of Whitegate & Martin.

172 Northwich Town Council and a local resident also suggested that Greenbank has few links with Hartford, but did not suggest an alternative warding pattern. The Labour LGC supported the Committee's Rudheath, Shakerley and Marbury wards, but also proposed that Greenbank be included with Winnington Bridge. The Liberal Democrats support the Committee's Hartford ward. No comments were received in relation to Marbury, except for Dutton Parish Council, which is discussed on the section dealing with Weaverham.

173 We recognise that the residents of the Greenbank area have a community connection into Northwich rather than towards their neighbouring parish of Hartford. However, it is not possible to incorporate the Greenbank area into Winnington Bridge without substantial changes to the warding pattern in that area, in particular in Rudheath and the parish of Whitegate & Martin. While the areas of Greenbank and Hartford may be distinct, separating them would mean drawing an arbitrary line through Rudheath. We do not consider that would be in the best interests of the residents of Rudheath in terms of reflecting their community identity and interests.

174 We therefore confirm as final the draft recommendations for a two-member Winnington & Castle ward containing 9% more electors, a two-member Witton & Rudheath ward containing 3% more electors and a two-member Hartford & Greenbank ward containing 2% fewer electors per councillor than the average for the authority by 2015.

Shakerley and Marbury

175 The draft recommendations were for a three-member Marbury ward and a single-member Shakerley ward both containing 3% fewer electors per councillor than the authority average by 2013.

176 The Council suggested some changes to Marbury as a result of their proposed changes in the Weaverham area. We did not receive any other submissions which specifically mentioned Marbury. Although we did not adopt the Council's scheme in Weaverham, we do recommend that Dutton parish is transferred from Marbury ward into Weaverham & Cuddington ward. This slightly improves the electoral variance of Marbury ward to 1% fewer electors per councillor than the authority average by 2015. (See paragraphs 147–149 regarding Dutton parish.)

177 The Council proposed a number of changes to Shakerley as a result of it proposed warding arrangements in Northwich. The Liberal Democrats suggested that part of Shakerley should be combined with Moulton, in a single-member ward, while other parishes in the Shakerley area should become part of a Northwich ward. We did not consider that the Liberal Democrats' warding pattern provided for an easily identifiable ward boundary, particularly in the urban areas, and it appeared to combine areas with little in the way of communication or road links.

178 We therefore confirm as final the draft recommendations for a single-member Shakerley ward containing 3% fewer electors per councillor than the authority average by 2015. We recommend a slightly amended Marbury ward which does not include Dutton parish and which would have an electoral variance of 1% fewer electors per councillor than the authority average by 2015.

179 Table C1 (on pages 41–44) provides details of the electoral variances of our final recommendations for wards in this area. Our final recommendations are shown on Maps 1 and 5. These are available at our website, www.lgbce.org.uk.

Conclusions

180 Table 1 shows the impact of our final recommendations on electoral equality, based on 2008 and 2015 electorate figures.

Table 1: Summary of electoral arrangements

	Final recommendations	
	2008	2015
Number of councillors	75	75
Number of wards	46	46
Average number of electors per councillor	3,350	3,418
Number of wards with a variance more than 10% from the average	8	3
Number of wards with a variance more than 20% from the average	4	0

Final recommendation

Cheshire West & Chester Council should comprise 75 councillors serving 46 wards, as detailed and named in Table C1 and illustrated on the large maps accompanying this report.

Parish electoral arrangements

181 As part of an electoral review, we are required to have regard to the statutory criteria set out in Schedule 2 to the Local Democracy, Economic Development and Construction Act 2009 (the 2009 Act). The Schedule provides that if a parish is to be divided between different wards it must also be divided into parish wards, so that each parish ward lies wholly within a single ward. We cannot recommend changes to the external boundaries of parishes as part of an electoral review.

182 During Stage Three, some parishes requested changes to parish electoral arrangements, specifically to parish warding and the number of parish councillors. Under the 2009 Act we only have the power to make such changes as a direct consequence of our recommendations for principal authority warding arrangements. However, Cheshire West & Chester Council has powers under the Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act 2007 to conduct community governance reviews to effect changes to parish electoral arrangements. To meet our obligations under the 2009 Act, we propose consequential parish warding arrangements for the parishes of Neston, Northwich and Winsford.

183 The parish of Neston is currently divided into five parish wards: Little Neston parish ward (returning four parish councillors), Ness parish ward (returning one parish councillor), Neston parish ward (returning four parish councillors), Parkgate parish ward (returning four parish councillors) and Riverside parish ward (returning four parish councillors).

184 As a result of our proposed electoral ward boundaries, and having regard to the statutory criteria set out in Schedule 2 to the 2009 Act, we are proposing revised parish electoral arrangements for Neston parish to reflect our proposed warding arrangements in this area.

Final recommendations

Neston Parish Council should comprise 17 councillors, as at present, representing five wards: Little Neston parish ward (returning four parish councillors), Ness parish ward (returning one parish councillor), Neston parish ward (returning four parish councillors), Parkgate parish ward (returning four parish councillors) and Riverside parish ward (returning four parish councillors). The proposed parish ward boundaries are illustrated and named on Map 2.

185 The parish of Northwich is currently divided into five parish wards: Northwich Castle parish ward (returning seven parish councillors), Northwich Leftwich parish ward (returning four parish councillors), Northwich Winnington parish ward (returning two parish councillors), Northwich Witton parish ward (returning seven parish councillors) and Witton parish ward (returning one parish councillor).

186 As a result of our proposed ward boundaries, and having regard to the statutory criteria set out in Schedule 2 to the 2009 Act, we are proposing revised parish electoral arrangements for Northwich parish to reflect our proposed warding arrangements in this area.

Final recommendations

Northwich Parish Council should comprise 21 councillors, as at present, representing five wards: Northwich Greenbank parish ward (returning three parish councillors), Northwich Leftwich parish ward (returning four parish councillors), Northwich Winnington parish ward (returning two parish councillors), Northwich Witton parish ward (returning five parish councillors) and Northwich Bridge parish ward (returning seven parish councillor). The proposed parish ward boundaries are illustrated and named on Map 5.

187 The parish of Winsford is currently divided into six parish wards: Winsford Dene parish ward (returning two parish councillors), Winsford Gravel parish ward (returning two parish councillors), Winsford Over parish ward (returning three parish councillors), Winsford Swanlow parish ward (returning three parish councillors), Winsford Verdin parish ward (returning three parish councillors) and Winsford Wharton parish ward (returning two parish councillors).

188 As a result of our proposed ward boundaries, and having regard to the statutory criteria set out in Schedule 2 to the 2009 Act, we are proposing revised parish electoral arrangements for Winsford parish to reflect our proposed warding arrangements in this area.

Final recommendations

Winsford Parish Council should comprise 15 councillors, as at present, representing six wards: Winsford Dene parish ward (returning two parish councillors), Winsford Gravel parish ward (returning two parish councillors), Winsford Over parish ward (returning three parish councillors), Winsford Swanlow parish ward (returning three parish councillors), Winsford Verdin parish ward (returning three parish councillors) and Winsford Wharton parish ward (returning two parish councillors). The proposed parish ward boundaries are illustrated and named on Map 7.

3 What happens next?

189 We have now completed our review of electoral arrangements for Cheshire West & Chester Council. The changes we have proposed must be approved by Parliament. An Order – the legal document which brings into force our recommendations – will be laid in Parliament. Parliament can either accept or reject our recommendations. If accepted, the new electoral arrangements will come into force at the next elections for Cheshire West & Chester Council in 2011.

4 Mapping

Final recommendations for Cheshire West & Chester Council

190 The following maps illustrate our proposed ward boundaries for Cheshire West & Chester Council:

- **Sheet 1, Map 1** illustrates in outline form the proposed ward for Cheshire West & Chester Council.
- **Sheet 2, Map 2** illustrates the proposed wards in Neston.
- **Sheet 3, Map 3** illustrates the proposed wards in Willaston and Thornton.
- **Sheet 4, Map 4** illustrates the proposed wards in Ellesmere Port.
- **Sheet 5, Map 5** illustrates the proposed wards in Northwich.
- **Sheet 6, Map 6** illustrates the proposed wards in Chester.
- **Sheet 7, Map 7** illustrates the proposed wards in Winsford.

Appendix A

Glossary and abbreviations

AONB (Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty)	A landscape whose distinctive character and natural beauty are so outstanding that it is in the nation's interest to safeguard it
Boundary Committee	The Boundary Committee for England was a committee of the Electoral Commission, responsible for undertaking electoral reviews. The Boundary Committee's functions were assumed by the Local Government Boundary Commission for England in April 2010
Constituent areas	The geographical areas that make up any one ward, expressed in parishes or existing wards, or parts of either
Council size	The number of councillors elected to serve a council
Electoral Change Order (or Order)	A legal document which implements changes to the electoral arrangements of a local authority
Division	A specific area of a county, defined for electoral, administrative and representational purposes. Eligible electors can vote in whichever division they are registered for the candidate or candidates they wish to represent them on the county council
Electoral Commission	An independent body that was set up by the UK Parliament. Its aim is integrity and public confidence in the democratic process. It regulates party and election finance and sets standards for well-run elections

Electoral fairness	When one elector's vote is worth the same as another's
Electoral imbalance	Where there is a difference between the number of electors represented by a councillor and the average for the local authority
Electorate	People in the authority who are registered to vote in elections. For the purposes of this report, we refer specifically to the electorate for local government elections
Local Government Boundary Commission for England (or LGBCE)	The Local Government Boundary Commission for England is responsible for undertaking electoral reviews. The Local Government Boundary Commission for England assumed the functions of the Boundary Committee for England in April 2010
Multi-member ward or division	A ward or division represented by more than one councillor and usually not more than three councillors
National Park	The 12 National Parks in England and Wales were designated under the National Parks and Access to the Countryside Act of 1949 and can be found at www.nationalparks.gov.uk
Number of electors per councillor	The total number of electors in a local authority divided by the number of councillors
Over-represented	Where there are fewer electors per councillor in a ward or division than the average
Parish	A specific and defined area of land within a single local authority enclosed within a parish boundary. There are over 10,000 parishes in England, which provide the first tier of representation to their local residents

Parish council	A body elected by electors in the parish which serves and represents the area defined by the parish boundaries. See also 'Town Council'
Parish (or Town) Council electoral arrangements	The total number of councillors on any one parish or town council; the number, names and boundaries of parish wards; and the number of councillors for each ward
Parish ward	A particular area of a parish, defined for electoral, administrative and representational purposes. Eligible electors vote in whichever parish ward they live for candidate or candidates they wish to represent them on the parish council
PER (or periodic electoral review)	A review of the electoral arrangements of all local authorities in England, undertaken periodically. The last programme of PERs was undertaken between 1996 and 2004 by the Boundary Committee for England and its predecessor, the now-defunct Local Government Commission for England
Political management arrangements	The Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act 2007 enabled local authorities in England to modernise their decision making process. Councils could choose from two broad categories; a directly elected mayor and cabinet or a cabinet with a leader
Town Council	A parish council which has been given ceremonial 'town' status. More information on achieving such status can be found at www.nalc.gov.uk
Under-represented	Where there are more electors per councillor in a ward or division than the average

Variance (or electoral variance)	How far the number of electors per councillor in a ward or division varies in percentage terms from the average
Ward	A specific area of a district or borough, defined for electoral, administrative and representational purposes. Eligible electors can vote in whichever ward they are registered for the candidate or candidates they wish to represent them on the district or borough council

Appendix B

Code of practice on written consultation

The Cabinet Office's *Code of Practice on Written Consultation* (November 2000) (http://archive.cabinetoffice.gov.uk/servicefirst/2000/consult/code/_consultation.pdf) requires all government departments and agencies to adhere to certain criteria, set out below, on the conduct of public consultations. Public bodies, such as the Boundary Committee for England, are encouraged to follow the Code.

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

Table B1: The Local Government Boundary Commission 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 at the start of the review and on our draft recommendations. Our consultation stages are a minimum total of 16 weeks.

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.

Appendix C

Table C1: Final recommendations for Cheshire West & Chester Council

	Ward name	Number of councillors	Electorate (2008)	Number of electors per councillor	Variance from average %	Electorate (2015)	Number of electors per councillor	Variance from average %
1	Blacon	3	9,494	3,165	-6%	9,488	3,163	-7%
2	Boughton	1	3,541	3,541	6%	3,583	3,583	5%
3	Chester City	1	2,481	2,481	-26%	3,247	3,247	-5%
4	Chester Villages	2	6,721	3,361	0%	6,530	3,265	-4%
5	Davenham & Moulton	3	10,387	3,462	3%	10,510	3,503	2%
6	Dodleston & Huntington	1	2,924	2,924	-13%	2,990	2,990	-13%
7	Ellesmere Port Town	2	6,538	3,269	-2%	7,260	3,630	6%
8	Elton	1	3,382	3,382	1%	3,290	3,290	-4%
9	Farndon	1	3,141	3,141	-6%	3,140	3,140	-8%
10	Frodsham	2	7,290	3,645	9%	7,560	3,780	11%
11	Garden Quarter	1	2,603	2,603	-22%	3,740	3,740	9%

Table C1 (cont.): Final recommendations for Cheshire West & Chester Council

Ward name	Number of councillors	Electorate (2008)	Number of electors per councillor	Variance from average %	Electorate (2015)	Number of electors per councillor	Variance from average %
12 Gowy	1	3,064	3,064	-9%	3,180	3,180	-7%
13 Grange	1	3,563	3,563	6%	3,473	3,473	2%
14 Great Boughton	2	7,145	3,573	7%	6,920	3,460	1%
15 Handbridge Park	2	7,055	3,528	5%	6,905	3,453	1%
16 Hartford & Greenbank	2	6,594	3,297	-2%	6,680	3,340	-2%
17 Helsby	1	3,832	3,832	14%	3,890	3,890	14%
18 Hoole	2	6,705	3,353	0%	6,520	3,260	-5%
19 Kingsley	1	3,499	3,499	4%	3,530	3,530	3%
20 Lache	1	3,752	3,752	12%	3,655	3,655	7%
21 Ledsham & Manor	2	6,597	3,299	-2%	6,650	3,325	-3%
22 Little Neston & Burton	2	7,157	3,579	7%	6,980	3,490	2%
23 Malpas	1	3,248	3,248	-3%	3,260	3,260	-5%
24 Marbury	3	9,746	3,249	-3%	10,200	3,400	-1%

Table C1 (cont.): Final recommendations for Cheshire West & Chester Council

	Ward name	Number of councillors	Electorate (2008)	Number of electors per councillor	Variance from average %	Electorate (2015)	Number of electors per councillor	Variance from average %
25	Neston	1	3,248	3,248	-3%	3,220	3,220	-6%
26	Netherpool	1	2,451	2,451	-27%	3,204	3,204	-6%
27	Newton	2	7,140	3,570	7%	7,102	3,551	4%
28	Parkgate	1	3,128	3,128	-7%	3,090	3,090	-10%
29	Rossmore	1	2,426	2,426	-28%	3,146	3,146	-8%
30	Saughall & Mollington	1	3,561	3,561	6%	3,460	3,460	1%
31	Shakerley	1	3,290	3,290	-2%	3,320	3,320	-3%
32	St Paul's	2	6,982	3,491	4%	6,771	3,386	-1%
33	Strawberry	1	3,714	3,714	11%	3,613	3,613	6%
34	Sutton	2	7,354	3,677	10%	7,115	3,558	4%
35	Tarporley	1	3,621	3,621	8%	3,690	3,690	8%
36	Tarvin & Kelsall	2	6,564	3,282	-2%	6,520	3,260	-5%
37	Tattenhall	1	3,603	3,603	8%	3,520	3,520	3%
38	Upton	2	6,333	3,167	-5%	6,470	3,235	-5%

Table C1 (cont.): Final recommendations for Cheshire West & Chester Council

	Ward name	Number of councillors	Electorate (2008)	Number of electors per councillor	Variance from average %	Electorate (2015)	Number of electors per councillor	Variance from average %
39	Weaver & Cuddington	3	10,267	3,422	2%	10,350	3,450	1%
40	Whitby	2	6,729	3,365	0%	6,538	3,269	-4%
41	Willaston & Thornton	1	3,236	3,236	-3%	3,220	3,220	-6%
42	Winnington & Castle	2	6,880	3,440	3%	7,470	3,735	9%
43	Winsford Over & Verdin	3	9,784	3,261	-3%	9,960	3,320	-3%
44	Winsford Swanlow & Dene	2	6,989	3,495	4%	7,340	3,670	7%
45	Winsford Wharton	2	7,008	3,504	5%	7,050	3,525	3%
46	Witton & Rudheath	2	6,503	3,252	-3%	7,030	3,515	3%
	Totals	75	251,270	-	-	256,380	-	-
	Averages	-	-	3,350	-	-	3,418	-

Source: Electorate figures are based on information provided by Cheshire West & Chester Council.

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

Appendix D

Additional legislation we have had regard to

Equal opportunities

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

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

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

We have also had regard to:

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

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The Local Government Boundary Commission for England (LGBCE) is an independent body set up by Parliament in April 2010. It is independent of Government and political parties, and is directly accountable to Parliament through a committee chaired by the Speaker of the House of Commons. It is responsible for conducting boundary, electoral and structural reviews of local government areas.