



BOUNDARY COMMISSION FOR ENGLAND

Fifth Periodical Report

Presented to Parliament pursuant to section 3(5) of the
Parliamentary Constituencies Act 1986

**Volume 1
Report**

Cm 7032

£120.00

Four Volumes.
Not to be sold separately



BOUNDARY COMMISSION FOR ENGLAND

Fifth Periodical Report

Presented to Parliament pursuant to section 3(5) of the
Parliamentary Constituencies Act 1986

Volume 1 Report

Cm 7032

London: The Stationery Office

£120.00
Four Volumes.
Not to be sold separately

© Crown Copyright 2007

The text in this document (excluding the Royal Arms and departmental logos) may be reproduced free of charge in any format or medium providing that it is reproduced accurately and not used in a misleading context. The material must be acknowledged as Crown copyright and the title of the document specified.

Any enquiries relating to the copyright in this document should be addressed to The Licensing Division, HMSO, St Clements House, 2-16 Colegate, Norwich, NR3 1BQ.
Fax: 01603 723000 or e-mail: licensing@cabinet-office.x.gsi.gov.uk

CONSTITUTION OF THE COMMISSION

In accordance with Schedule 1 of the Parliamentary Constituencies Act 1986 (as amended), the Commission was constituted as follows:-

Ex-officio Member

The Speaker of the House of Commons - Chairman

Three other Members

The Honourable Mr Justice Sullivan - Deputy Chairman appointed by the Lord Chancellor

Mr Michael Lewer, CBE, QC - appointed by the Deputy Prime Minister

Mr Robin Gray - appointed by the Deputy Prime Minister

Assessors

The Registrar General for England and Wales

The Director General of Ordnance Survey

Secretary

Mr Robert Farrance of the Office for National Statistics

Joint Secretary

Mr Tony Bellringer of the Department for Constitutional Affairs

CONTENTS

VOLUME 1

	Page
Chapter One	
Introduction	1
Commencement of the General Review	1
Reviews of Local Government	2
Information to the Public	3
Discussion with the Political Parties	4
Data Sources	4
Chapter Two	
General Principles	6
Electoral Quota	6
Theoretical Entitlement to Constituencies	7
County and Borough Averages	8
Number of Constituencies	8
Local Government Boundary Changes	11
Number of Electors	12
County and London Borough Boundaries	13
Districts	14
Wards	14
Special Geographical Considerations	15
Growth or Decline in Electorates	16
Rolling Registration	16
Local Ties	17
Local Inquiries	17
Second Inquiries	18
Assistant Commissioners' Reports	19
Participation	19
Names of Constituencies	20
Designations	21
Chapter Three	THE LONDON BOROUGHS
Part One	
General Considerations	
Introduction	22
The electorates and theoretical entitlement to constituencies of the London boroughs	22
Rule 4 - London borough boundaries	24
Rule 5 - Constituency Electorates	26
Rule 1 - Number of Constituencies	27
Rule 7 - Local Ties	28
Local Inquiries	28
Conclusion	28

Part Two	Page
Description of the Reviews	
Barking and Dagenham and Havering	30
Barnet	36
Bexley and Greenwich	38
Brent, Camden, and Westminster (and the City of London)	42
Bromley and Lewisham	52
<i>Camden (see Brent)</i>	
Croydon	58
Ealing	60
Enfield	64
<i>Greenwich (see Bexley)</i>	
Hackney, Islington, Newham and Tower Hamlets	68
Hammersmith and Fulham and Kensington and Chelsea	76
Haringey	81
Harrow and Hillingdon	83
<i>Havering (see Barking and Dagenham)</i>	
<i>Hillingdon (see Harrow)</i>	
Hounslow	89
<i>Islington (see Hackney)</i>	
Kensington and Chelsea (<i>see Hammersmith and Fulham</i>)	92
Kingston upon Thames and Richmond upon Thames	94
Lambeth and Southwark	94
<i>Lewisham (see Bromley)</i>	
Merton	98
<i>Newham (see Hackney)</i>	
Redbridge and Waltham Forest	100
<i>Richmond upon Thames (see Kingston upon Thames)</i>	
<i>Southwark (see Lambeth)</i>	
Sutton	104
<i>Tower Hamlets (see Hackney)</i>	
<i>Waltham Forest (see Redbridge)</i>	
Wandsworth	106
<i>Westminster (and the City of London) (see Brent)</i>	

Chapter Four

THE METROPOLITAN COUNTIES

Part One	General Considerations	
	Rule 4 – Metropolitan County Boundaries	109
	Metropolitan Borough Boundaries	109
	Theoretical entitlement to constituencies in the Metropolitan Counties	109
	Rule 1 – Number of Constituencies	109
	Local inquiries	111
	Rule 5 – Constituency electorates	112

Part Two	Description of the Reviews	
	Greater Manchester:-	115
	Bolton and Wigan	116
	Bury	117
	Manchester, Salford and Trafford	118
	Oldham, Rochdale and Tameside	120
	Stockport	121

	Page
Merseyside:-	132
Knowsley, Liverpool, and Wirral	133
Sefton	134
St Helens	134
South Yorkshire:-	145
Barnsley, Rotherham and Sheffield	146
Doncaster	147
Tyne and Wear:-	155
Gateshead and South Tyneside	156
Newcastle upon Tyne and North Tyneside	159
Sunderland	163
West Midlands:-	167
Birmingham	168
Coventry	177
Dudley, Sandwell and Wolverhampton	178
Solihull	182
Walsall	183
West Yorkshire:-	185
Bradford	186
Calderdale	188
Kirklees	189
Leeds and Wakefield	190

Chapter Five

THE NON-METROPOLITAN COUNTIES

Part One	General Considerations	
	Introduction	204
	Rule 4 - County Boundaries	206
	Rule 1 - Number of Constituencies	208
	Rule 5 - Constituency Electorates	208
	Local Inquiries	209
Part Two	Description of the Reviews	
	Bath and North East Somerset	210
	Bedfordshire and Luton	213
	Berkshire	218
	Blackburn with Darwen (<i>see Lancashire</i>)	
	Blackpool (<i>see Lancashire</i>)	
	Bournemouth (<i>see Dorset</i>)	
	Brighton and Hove (<i>see East Sussex</i>)	
	Bristol	225
	Buckinghamshire	229
	Cambridgeshire and Peterborough	233

	Page
Cheshire and Halton	239
Cornwall and the Isles of Scilly	245
Cumbria	253
Darlington (<i>see Durham</i>)	261
Derby (<i>see Derbyshire</i>)	271
Derbyshire and Derby	280
Devon, Plymouth and Torbay	286
Dorset, Bournemouth and Poole	290
Durham and Darlington	295
East Riding of Yorkshire, Kingston upon Hull,	301
North East Lincolnshire and North Lincolnshire	313
East Sussex and Brighton and Hove	318
Essex, Southend-on-Sea and Thurrock	326
Gloucestershire	331
Halton (<i>see Cheshire</i>)	335
Hampshire and Southampton	340
Hartlepool, Middlesbrough, Redcar and Cleveland, and	342
Stockton-on-Tees	354
Herefordshire	365
Hertfordshire	368
Isle of Wight	372
Kent and Medway	378
Kingston upon Hull (<i>see East Riding of Yorkshire</i>)	381
Lancashire, Blackburn with Darwen and Blackpool	389
Leicester	394
Leicestershire and Rutland	396
Lincolnshire	399
Luton (<i>see Bedfordshire</i>)	405
Medway (<i>see Kent</i>)	408
Middlesbrough (<i>see Hartlepool</i>)	414
Milton Keynes	420
Norfolk	422
Northamptonshire	424
North East Lincolnshire (<i>see East Riding of Yorkshire</i>)	428
North Lincolnshire (<i>see East Riding of Yorkshire</i>)	428
North Somerset	428
Northumberland	428
North Yorkshire	428
Nottingham	428
Nottinghamshire	428
Oxfordshire	428
Peterborough (<i>see Cambridgeshire</i>)	428
Plymouth (<i>see Devon</i>)	428
Poole (<i>see Dorset</i>)	428
Portsmouth	428
Redcar and Cleveland (<i>see Hartlepool</i>)	428
Rutland (<i>see Leicestershire</i>)	428
Shropshire and Telford and Wrekin	428
Somerset	428
Southampton (<i>see Hampshire</i>)	428
Southend-on-Sea (<i>see Essex</i>)	428
South Gloucestershire	428

	Page
Staffordshire and Stoke-on-Trent	433
Stockton-on-Tees (<i>see Hartlepool</i>)	
Stoke-on-Trent (<i>see Staffordshire</i>)	
Suffolk	443
Surrey	447
Swindon	451
Telford and Wrekin (<i>see Shropshire</i>)	
Thurrock (<i>see Essex</i>)	
Torbay (<i>see Devon</i>)	
Warrington	453
Warwickshire	456
West Sussex	462
Wiltshire	466
Worcestershire	472
York	476

Chapter Six

The need for change	480
Deviation from the Electoral Quota	480
Disparity in the constituency electorates	483
Applying the Rules	483
Difficulties in applying the Rules	485
The representation period	486
The need for legislative change	487
Assessors	487
Secretariat	488
Commission membership	488
Recommendation	489

VOLUME 2

Appendices	A Rules for redistribution of seats
	B List of statutory instruments
	C Schedule of recommendations
	D Meeting with parliamentary political parties
	E Newsletters
	F Existing constituencies – the number of parliamentary electors in 2000 and 2006
	G Recommended constituencies:- i) in alphabetical order with parliamentary electors in 2000 and 2006 ii) in descending order of parliamentary electors in 2000 and 2006
	H The number of parliamentary electors, the theoretical entitlements, and county and borough averages in 2000 and 2006
	I Local inquiries held during the general review
	J Dates on which the provisional and revised recommendations were published
	K The Commission's Secretariat
	L Glossary of terms

VOLUME 3 Maps of the existing and recommended constituencies in the London boroughs and Metropolitan counties

VOLUME 4 Maps of the existing and recommended constituencies in the Non-Metropolitan counties

Boundary Commission for England

Report on the Fifth General Review of Parliamentary Constituencies
under the Parliamentary Constituencies Act 1986, as amended by the
Boundary Commissions Act 1992

CHAPTER ONE

The Right Honourable Lord Falconer of Thoroton, QC

Her Majesty's Lord Chancellor and Secretary of State for Constitutional Affairs

Sir,

Introduction

1.1 We, the Boundary Commission for England, constituted in accordance with the Parliamentary Constituencies Act 1986, as amended by the Boundary Commissions Act 1992, are required to keep the representation of England in the House of Commons under continuous review and periodically report to the Secretary of State. In reviewing the Parliamentary constituencies and making recommendations, we are required to give effect to the Rules for Redistribution of Seats which form Schedule 2 to the 1986 Act. The Rules are reproduced at Appendix A in Volume 2 of this report.

1.2 Our previous report on a general review (Cmnd 433-i) recommended 529 constituencies and was submitted on 12 April 1995. The recommendations were given effect by Order in Council made on 28 June 1995 (SI 1995 No.1626). Following that general review, two interim reviews were undertaken under Section 3(3) of the 1986 Act recommending alterations to constituency boundaries. The Orders in Council making these alterations are listed in Appendix B in Volume 2.

1.3 This is the fifth periodical report on the whole of England. The contents of the 533 constituencies we recommend are given in Appendix C in Volume 2. Maps illustrating our recommendations are provided in Volumes 3 and 4.

Commencement of the General Review

1.4 During 1998 we discussed whether we should commence the general review in 1999 or 2000. We considered a number of factors before deciding to commence the review in February 2000. They were:-

- The Parliamentary Constituencies Act 1986, as amended by the Boundary Commissions Act 1992, required us to:-

- a) submit our report to the Secretary of State not less than eight or more than twelve years from the date of submission of our last report. The fourth periodical report had been submitted on 12 April 1995 and we were therefore required to submit the fifth periodical report between 12 April 2003 and 12 April 2007; and
- b) take account of those county and London borough boundaries in operation at whichever would be the earlier of:
 - i) the date our report would be submitted (initially planned for December 2005); or
 - ii) the tenth anniversary of the date of submission of our last periodical report (12 April 2005).
- We noted that in 1996, the Local Government Commission for England (later to become the Boundary Committee for England) had commenced a mandatory review of the electoral arrangements for each borough and district in England. At that time, they considered that they would complete the programme of Periodic Electoral Reviews (PERs) during 2003/2004. We decided that it would be essential to base our recommended Parliamentary constituencies on the new local government wards in each area and, therefore, to plan our own review to reflect progress with the PER programme.
- We considered that a period of six years would be required to complete the review with the planned resources, which we based on the experience of the fourth general review.

1.5 In February 1999, we decided to commence the general review shortly after the publication of the electoral registers in February 2000. We announced our intention on 10 February 2000 and the Home Secretary informed the House of Commons of this in reply to a Parliamentary Question on 17 February 2000, the date on which the statutory notice of our intention was published in the London Gazette.

1.6 In the event, our review could not progress to the timetable that we had set out and was not completed by December 2005 as we had planned. The Boundary Committee for England required longer to undertake their PERs of the metropolitan boroughs than they had initially planned. The six month delay to their programme resulted in our review being similarly delayed.

Reviews of Local Government

1.7 Many people were undoubtedly confused because, for a period of time, our general review of Parliamentary constituencies was running in parallel with, although slightly behind, the PERs of the Local Government Commission for England. This was made considerably worse when, in April 2002, the Local Government Commission for England became a statutory committee of the newly formed United Kingdom Electoral Commission and was, from that point, called the Boundary Committee for England.

1.8 Further confusion followed the passage of the Regional Assemblies (Preparations) Act 2003 under which, between June 2003 and June 2004, the Boundary Committee for England was required to undertake reviews of the structure of local government in the North-East, North-West, and Yorkshire and the Humber regions. Some argued that our general review of constituencies in these areas should be postponed until after decisions on the restructuring of local government had been agreed and the new authorities established following the creation of Regional Assemblies. We considered that, given the need to submit our report to you in compliance with the conditions explained in paragraph 1.4 above, it would only be possible to take account of boundaries in operation on 12 April 2005 and we could not take account of changes to local government that might be introduced after that date. In some cases it was also mistakenly believed that our review was part of the re-structure review. In the event, the referendum in the North-East resulted in a “No” vote for a Regional Assembly, and plans for the creation of Regional Assemblies were not taken forward.

Information to the Public

1.9 In June 2000, at the same time as we published our first set of proposals, we issued an information booklet, “The Review of Parliamentary Constituencies in England 2000”. The booklet was intended to assist those participating in the general review by explaining the rules that guide our proposals and the procedures we are required to follow. It was also intended to help make our work more widely known and understood. The booklet was an expanded and updated version of the booklet issued at the start of the fourth general review in 1991, and included information about local inquiries which had previously been contained in a separate leaflet.

1.10 The booklet was issued to all MPs representing English constituencies, the headquarters of the Parliamentary political parties, the House of Commons library, the Chief Executives of each county, district, London and metropolitan borough council, and all Electoral Registration Officers. The booklet was placed on our website and made available, free of charge, to anyone who requested a copy. Large numbers of the booklet were also made freely available at the local inquiries held during the general review.

1.11 We noted that our predecessors had previously reported that the general public had a number of misconceptions about the nature and objectives of a general review and that many representations received in respect of proposals contained arguments based on irrelevant considerations. We hoped that the availability of the information booklet, which explained the issues that we could consider, would help remove some of these misconceptions. However, we found that the same issues experienced by our predecessors arose again. They were that our proposals would:-

- transfer electors to another local authority,
- lead to an increase in council tax,
- affect the availability of local services such as education,
- reduce house prices and increase house and car insurance premiums,
- lead to the loss of a good MP,

and that our proposals should:-

- take account of historical (sometimes ancient) considerations,

- apply human or social “geographical considerations” as well as physical ones,
- take account of future, speculative, electoral (or population) growth.

1.12 We issued Newsletters on a regular basis to give those interested in the general review news about the progress with specific review areas and to explain aspects of procedure or policy that were causing difficulty.

1.13 News releases were issued that announced our provisional, revised, modified (in one case only) and final recommendations for each review area. These were more detailed than those issued during previous general reviews and they contained maps which illustrated our proposed constituencies. Additionally, all the major issues raised at local inquiries and in the representations received in respect of our revised recommendations were addressed in detail in these news releases. At each stage of the process, we placed documents on deposit at local libraries and council offices in the areas under review so that members of the public had access to information about what was being proposed for their area.

1.14 We also issued news releases that announced the details of local inquiries. To facilitate the local inquiries we issued statements that not only explained our proposals but also set out what the main objections to those proposals were. We also issued summaries of the representations that we had received and these were placed on deposit, for public inspection, along with copies of the representations we had received. We have also issued annual reports every year since 1997/98. During the period of the general review these have included, *inter alia*, information about the progress being made in each review area, as well as the targets we set for the key stages of those review areas in the year ahead. Every document we issued was made available on our website.

Discussion with the Political Parties

1.15 As has been the practice at previous general reviews, we held a joint meeting with the representatives of the English Parliamentary political parties in April 2000. We found the discussion, which concentrated on broad issues of policy and not specific boundary proposals, to be most helpful. The minutes of the meeting are reproduced at Appendix D in Volume 2.

Data Sources

1.16 We are very pleased to be able to acknowledge the co-operation we have received from all our sources of information.

1.17 The Rules require us to base our recommendations on the Parliamentary electorate on the electoral registers in force on the enumeration date. The enumeration date (*17 February 2000*) is the date on which notice of our intention to make a report was published in the London Gazette. The Registrar General for England and Wales provided us with the number of electors for each county, borough and district ward that were on the electoral registers which came into being in February 2000. The Registrar General also supplied us with the electorates for these areas for each of the subsequent years of the review (2001 – 2006). This information has been used to compile Appendix F in Volume 2 which is a listing of the numbers of Parliamentary electors in the existing constituencies.

1.18 The Director General of Ordnance Survey supplied us with the paper mapping that we used for public consultation as well as the digital mapping for use in our Geographic Information System. Both types of mapping included all relevant administrative and electoral boundaries. Particular mention should be made about the digital mapping which included the most up-to-date information relating to the effects of the recommendations of the Boundary Committee for England on district ward boundaries. The district wards were our building blocks for the constituencies. Without the timely supply of this information there is little doubt that our review would have taken longer.

1.19 Particular mention should also be made of the electoral registration staff in the various city, borough and district councils throughout England. Whilst the Registrar General for England and Wales supplied us with the 2000 electoral statistics for each district ward, we required much assistance from the electoral registration staff in the difficult task of recalculating the distribution of the 2000 electorate to the new wards that were created in the subsequent years (2001 – 2004). Again, without that assistance, it is possible that our review would have taken longer. The electoral registration staff also assisted us by ensuring that our recommendations, and the information we issued ahead of local inquiries, were made available at local libraries and council offices throughout their districts.

CHAPTER TWO

General Principles

2.1 The principles described in this chapter have evolved over a number of general reviews of Parliamentary constituencies as a direct consequence of the Rules for Redistribution of Seats (which are in Appendix A) and take account of the decision by the Court of Appeal in *R v Boundary Commission for England Ex parte Foot [1983] QB 600*. The principles have also been reconsidered in policy and management reviews held respectively before and after general reviews.

Electoral Quota

2.2 The principle that each MP should carry an equal weight of representation in Parliament is evident from Rule 5, as qualified by Rule 8, which provides the method of calculating the electoral quota: that is, the average number of electors in all the constituencies in England on the enumeration date (the date of commencement of the review). The effect of the Rule is that:-

- the number of Parliamentary electors on the electoral register in England on *17 February 2000* (the enumeration date), i.e. 36,995,495, forms the basis of the recommendations. The figure was originally thought to be 36,994,211 but minor corrections to the electoral returns from a small number of electoral registration officers led to revisions, first to 36,995,157, and then to 36,995,495.
- the electoral quota is the number of registered Parliamentary electors on the enumeration date divided by the number of constituencies in England (i.e. 529) on that date,
- dividing the 36,995,495 electors by 529 constituencies gives an *electoral quota of 69,935* for this review.

2.3 The effect of applying that electoral quota in conjunction with the other Rules has been a recommendation for an increase of four constituencies to a total of 533 constituencies in England. We illustrate, in paragraph 2.11, how the consequence of the interplay of the existing Rules, other than Rule 1, is a tendency for an ever increasing allocation of constituencies in England in future reviews. This could be changed if the Rules were altered.

2.4 The electoral quota has increased since the commencement of the previous general review in 1991 when it was 69,281. If a general review had commenced in 2006 the electoral quota would have been 70,231 (see the table below). This is a function of an increased electorate. Between the enumeration date of the fourth general review (14 February 1991) and the enumeration date of this review (17 February 2000) the electorate of England had grown by 692,509 or by the equivalent of 9.90 constituencies using the 2000 electoral quota.

Year	Constituencies	Electoral Quota
1991	524	69,281
1992	524	69,534
1993	524	69,487
1994	524	69,571
1995	524	69,742
1996	524	69,899
1997	524	70,241
1997 ¹	529	69,577
1998	529	69,727
1999	529	69,844
2000	529	69,935
2001	529	70,135
2002	529	70,503
2003	529	70,283
2004	529	69,891
2005	529	70,031
2006	529	70,231
2006 ²	533	69,703

¹ Five extra constituencies came into effect at the general election on 1 May 1997.

² Four extra constituencies will result if our recommendations are accepted.

2.5 The recommended increase of four constituencies in this review will result in a total of 533. If that number of constituencies was applied to calculate the 2006 electoral quota, it would reduce the quota to 69,703. In turn, a smaller electoral quota will result in higher theoretical entitlements and, even if there were no increase in the electorate, the possible allocation of further constituencies at the next general review.

Theoretical Entitlement to Constituencies

2.6 To comply with Rule 4, that so far as practicable constituencies should not cross county or London borough boundaries, we have continued to use the concept of "*theoretical entitlement to constituencies*". The electorate of a county or London borough is divided by the electoral quota to give the number of constituencies to which it is theoretically entitled. From this theoretical entitlement to constituencies, the actual number of constituencies that should be allocated can be derived (see paragraph 2.11 below).

2.7 We considered the theoretical entitlement to be of sufficient importance that each county or London borough should, if possible, be allocated its full entitlement of constituencies. However, there were some exceptions in the smaller counties (unitary authorities) and London boroughs where, to have done so, would have resulted in constituencies with electorates far too disparate from the electoral quota (see paragraph 2.30). In most of these instances we paired the county or London borough with a neighbouring county or London borough.

2.8 In some of the pairings we created, the allocation of constituencies was one less than the number that would have been allocated had each area been reviewed individually. For example, the London borough of Barking and Dagenham had a 2000 electorate of 114,479 and a theoretical entitlement to 1.64 constituencies. With two constituencies, the average electorate

would have been 57,240 (12,695 below the electoral quota). The neighbouring London borough of Havering had a 2000 electorate of 178,256 and a theoretical entitlement to 2.55 constituencies. With three constituencies, the average electorate would have been 59,419 (10,516 below the electoral quota). Together, the two boroughs had a combined 2000 electorate of 292,735 and a theoretical entitlement to 4.19 constituencies. With four constituencies, instead of five, the combined average electorate would be 73,184 (only 3,249 above the electoral quota). We therefore decided to pair the boroughs and allocate four constituencies.

County and Borough Averages

2.9 The combined principles of Rules 4 and 5 which provide:-

- that we should, where practicable, allocate constituencies wholly within counties and London boroughs,
- that we should avoid an excessive disparity between the electorates of neighbouring constituencies,
- that the electorate of each constituency should be as close as practicable to the electoral quota,

have led us to calculate, for each county and London borough, the average electorate of the constituencies to be allocated within the area. To calculate that average, the electorate of such an area is divided by the electoral quota to calculate the theoretical entitlement to constituencies, and that number is usually rounded to the nearest whole number (but see paragraph 2.11). The electorate of the area is then divided by that whole number to give the average electorate of each constituency to be allocated to the area. For example, Surrey with 797,685 electors had a theoretical entitlement ($797,685 \div 69,935$) to 11.41 constituencies which we rounded to eleven whole constituencies. The county average in Surrey ($797,685 \div 11$) was 72,517 electors, only 2,582 above the electoral quota.

2.10 We then aimed to recommend constituencies which are as close as practicable to the county or London borough average (or, where areas are paired or grouped, to the average of the combined area) and thereby to the electoral quota. This had the effect, for example in Somerset which has a theoretical entitlement to 5.44 constituencies, of dividing the remainder of 0.44 of a constituency as equally as practicable between the five constituencies rather than having the electorate of one constituency 44% (or 30,976) larger than the other four constituencies. The five constituencies we recommend have electorates ranging from 74,064 to 77,780, a disparity of only 3,716 electors. We consider that this procedure best satisfies the requirements of Rules 4 and 5 of creating constituencies so far as practicable of equal electorates but wholly within county and London borough boundaries. In those cases where the county or London borough average was not close to the electoral quota, we considered pairing those areas with a neighbouring county or London borough using the discretion given in Rule 5 to depart from Rule 4 to avoid excessive disparities in the electorates (see paragraph 2.30). The county and borough averages are shown in Appendix H.

Number of Constituencies

2.11 The reasons for the in-built tendency for an increase in the number of constituencies allocated in England are:-

- increases in the total number of electors in England,
- additional constituencies allocated to a county for special geographical considerations in a preceding review are already included in the denominator used to calculate the electoral quota in a current review before special geographical considerations are examined, resulting in double counting of the effect of those considerations,
- once the exact theoretical entitlement to constituencies for an area has been calculated to several decimal points the requirement of Rule 5 (constituencies should have electorates as near to the electoral quota as is practicable) leads to a complication in how the exact theoretical entitlement is rounded.

For example, if the electoral quota was 70,000 and an area had 98,000 electors, that area could be allocated either one or two constituencies. Allocating one constituency would give it an electorate of 98,000 which is 28,000 above the quota; allocating two constituencies would give an average electorate of 49,000 which is 21,000 below the quota. The latter being significantly nearer the electoral quota, would be, all other things being equal, the preferred solution. However, the theoretical entitlement is 1.4 ($98,000 \div 70,000$). A formula can be derived which gives the point from which the exact theoretical entitlement should be rounded up to the next whole number in order to produce constituency electorates nearer the electoral quota. The larger the electorate the greater is the theoretical entitlement and the nearer is this point to 0.5.

Theoretical Entitlement rounding up point	Rounded number of constituencies
1.333	2
2.4	3
3.429	4
4.444	5
5.455	6
6.462	7
7.467	8
8.471	9
9.474	10
10.476	11

The mathematical explanation of this phenomenon, which results from the rounding up point being a figure known as the harmonic mean, is shown at Appendix B to our Third Periodical Report (Cmnd 8797-I). This rounding up of some constituencies with a theoretical entitlement below 0.5 results in an increased allocation to England overall, and

- the extra allocation of constituencies in one review results in a smaller electoral quota than would otherwise have been the case at the following review. This in turn increases the theoretical entitlement to constituencies in every county and London borough leading, in some areas, to an increased allocation of constituencies.

2.12 The 1986 Act has a requirement, in Rule 1, that Great Britain should have a number of constituencies not substantially greater or less than 613, but provides no mechanism for reducing the number of constituencies in one part of Great Britain if another increases its allocation. Exactly what number would be substantially greater than 613 is a matter of conjecture and the increase in the number of constituencies to 659 has made this an increasingly relevant problem. The total of 659 constituencies was reduced to 646 at the 2005 general election when the number of Scottish constituencies was decreased from 72 to 59 as a consequence of the provisions of the Scotland Act 1998, which required the Boundary Commission for Scotland to apply the English electoral quota in their most recent general review.

2.13 We decided not to set ourselves a target number of constituencies for the review but to concentrate upon recommending constituencies with electorates as close to the electoral quota as practicable whilst at the same time keeping in mind the requirements of Rule 1. As we said in our booklet (paragraph 36 on page 8):-

"The Commission continue to take the view that, where it is necessary to do so in order to give effect to Rule 1, it would be proper for them in the exercise of the discretion given to them in Rules 5, 6 and 7 to seek to limit the scope of any further increase in the number of constituencies, regardless of the expected reduction in the level of Scottish representation".

2.14 The number of constituencies we have recommended could have been much higher than 533 if we had rounded up the theoretical entitlement to seats at the harmonic mean. However, we have continued and extended the practice of our predecessors of pairing or grouping areas in order to allocate the correct number of constituencies to which an area is entitled and to create electorates closer to the electoral quota (see paragraph 2.30). Areas in this review where the theoretical entitlement could have been rounded up as their entitlement was above the harmonic mean are:-

County or London borough	Theoretical Entitlement
Bexley	2.40
Blackburn with Darwen	1.46
Brent	2.41
Cumbria	5.49
Derby	2.45
Isle of Wight	1.48
Kingston upon Thames	1.42
Middlesbrough	1.49
Northumberland	3.48
Oxfordshire	6.46
Thurrock	1.47
Torbay	1.35
West Yorkshire	22.49

2.15 The only areas with a fractional entitlement less than 0.5 which have an allocation that has been rounded up, instead of down, are Cumbria and Northumberland where we consider that the special geographical considerations our predecessors identified continue to apply. However,

this did not increase the number of constituencies at this review because the two counties merely retained the “extra” constituency allocated in previous general reviews.

Local Government Boundary Changes

2.16 Following local government boundary changes, we conducted two interim reviews between October 1995 and June 1998. As a result, we recommended changes to twenty-five Parliamentary constituency boundaries in order to re-align them with altered county, London borough, and ward boundaries. The two Orders and twenty-five constituencies affected by the two reviews are shown in Appendix B.

2.17 We decided to continue our long-held practice of using district wards as the smallest unit for designing constituencies and not dividing wards between constituencies. Wards are generally indicative of areas which have a community of interest and the local political party organisations are almost always based on them, or groups of them. Any division of these units between constituencies is therefore very likely to break local ties, disrupt political party organisation, cause difficulties for Electoral Registration and Returning Officers and confuse the electorate. At our meeting with the Political Parties mentioned above, it was agreed by those who came that wards should continue to be the basic building block for Parliamentary constituencies. The practice received approval in the judgement in the Foot case where the ward was described as “the smallest unit of electors for the purposes of the Commission’s deliberations”.

2.18 The Local Government Act 1992 established the Local Government Commission for England (LGCE) as the successor to the Local Government Boundary Commission for England which had been established by the Local Government Act 1972. The Political Parties, Elections and Referendums Act 2000 transferred the functions of the LGCE to a statutory committee of the Electoral Commission called the Boundary Committee for England with effect from 1 April 2002.

2.19 The Boundary Committee for England (formerly the LGCE) is required by the 1992 Act (formerly the 1972 Act) to conduct a Periodical Electoral Review (PER) every 10 to 15 years of the local government electoral arrangements in every county, London borough and district in England i.e. electoral divisions in counties and wards in boroughs and districts. Such a PER of all the wards in England was commenced by the LGCE in 1996 and completed by the Boundary Committee for England in 2003.

2.20 Early in our review, a small number of Parish Orders had the consequential effect of altering the new ward boundaries. After our Secretary explained the difficulties such further Orders might cause to our review to officials from the LGCE and the Department of Environment, Transport and the Regions (whose Secretary of State, at that time, made the Orders) all subsequent PERs took account of changes to parish boundaries. We are grateful for their co-operation.

2.21 Under the 1992 Act, as amended by the Political Parties, Elections and Referendums Act 2000, the Boundary Committee for England shall conduct other reviews if directed to do so by the Electoral Commission. Twenty-two such reviews, that affect ward boundaries, are being conducted, but we note that the new ward boundaries will not come into effect until the local government elections on 3 May 2007, i.e. after the date of this report. The twenty-two districts affected are Barrow-in-Furness, Basingstoke and Deane, Castle Morpeth, Corby, Crewe and Nantwich, Dacorum, East Northamptonshire, Kettering, Lincoln, Mendip, Newark and

Sherwood, North Hertfordshire, North Kesteven, North Wiltshire, South Gloucestershire, South Holland, South Lakeland, South Northamptonshire, Taunton Deane, Wansbeck, Welwyn Hatfield, and West Wiltshire.

2.22 We decided that we should base our recommendations for this review on the new wards resulting from the PER. We arranged the timetable for our review so that we commenced a review of a county or London borough only after the boundaries of the new wards had been decided by the PER. Accordingly, in almost every county and London borough, there are now new wards that are divided between the existing constituencies. Our recommendations remove all such anomalies. A list of the Electoral Arrangements and Parish Orders is also shown in Appendix B.

Number of Electors

2.23 For ease of reference, we have shown at the beginning of the description of the review for each county and London borough (Chapters 3 - 5) the 2000 electorate of each existing constituency, i.e. without accounting for those new wards that are currently divided between constituencies. However, in Appendix C, which contains our final recommendations, we have shown both the 2000 and 2006 electorates of the constituencies we recommend which are based on the new wards.

2.24 In paragraph 6 on page 11 of our information booklet “The Review of Parliamentary Constituencies in England (2000)” issued at the start of the review, we confirmed the electoral quota for the review as 69,932. It then came to our attention that a return from the Electoral Registration Officer from one London borough council contained an error resulting in an undercount of 997 electors. Also, two minor corrections were necessary because of errors (a net overcount of 51 electors) in returns from other Electoral Registration Officers. The net effect of these three corrections was an increase of 946 in the total electorate of England to 36,995,157. The upward revision of the total electorate resulted in an increase to the electoral quota from 69,932 to 69,934.

2.25 We announced the revision to the electoral quota in Newsletter No.1/2001 issued on 24 January 2001, and the next edition of our booklet quoted the revised figure. We stated in our Newsletter that it would not be possible to say whether there would be any further revisions, but that experience from previous reviews suggested that further revisions might not be necessary. However, it later came to light that the 2000 electoral return from a Metropolitan Borough Council contained an error which resulted in an undercount of 338 electors. Although this error, too, barely affected the electoral quota, we considered that it should be taken into account. As a result, the total electorate of England was revised upward from 36,995,157 to 36,995,495, and the electoral quota rose by one from 69,934 to 69,935. We announced this revision in Newsletter No.2/2004 issued on 20 July 2004.

2.26 Neither of the minor revisions to the electoral quota affected the number of constituencies we had allocated to the areas we had already reviewed or the provisional allocation of constituencies to areas we had yet to review.

County and London Borough Boundaries

2.27 In earlier reviews, our predecessors exercised discretion to recommend constituencies that crossed county or London borough boundaries only in extreme cases:-

- the small number of electors in the County of the City of London are in a constituency with City of Westminster electors,
- the small number of electors on the Isles of Scilly are in a mainland constituency (St Ives CC).

2.28 Whilst these exceptions were continued in the recommendations in the fourth general review, our predecessors recommended no further constituencies that crossed county boundaries. However, in the fourth general review, they did recommend a number of constituencies that crossed London borough boundaries for the first time because of the reduction in the electorates within many of them (see Chapter 3 of our Fourth Periodical Report).

2.29 As mentioned above (see “Number of Constituencies”), during this review we have recommended more constituencies that cross London borough and county boundaries than in previous reviews. In part, this is due to the creation of the Unitary Authorities that came into effect on 1 April 1997. Under Rule 4, the Unitary Authorities have the status of counties. This applies in every case with the exception of the six unitary authorities in Berkshire that have the status of districts and not counties. In a number of cases, the electorates of the Unitary Authorities did not produce a theoretical entitlement close to a whole number of constituencies and this required us to pair or group them with another authority: usually the county from which they had been created. We have recommended constituencies that cross the boundaries of nineteen of the thirty-two London boroughs and the City of London, sixteen of the thirty-five Non-Metropolitan Counties and the Isles of Scilly, and thirty-one of the forty Unitary Authorities. This has enabled us to allocate the correct number of constituencies to each area and/or to recommend constituencies with electorates closer to the electoral quota.

2.30 In considering whether we should pair or group Non-Metropolitan Counties, Unitary Authorities, or London boroughs together for the purpose of allocating constituencies, we also considered whether they should be paired or grouped to bring about an improvement in electorates. We noted that our predecessors had adopted a guideline whereby they would pair authorities if the average constituency electorate that would result if they did not pair or group was more than 12,500 from the electoral quota. In our meeting with the political parties at the start of the review, it was agreed that the 12,500 “threshold” used by our predecessors should be reduced to 10,000 for the purposes of this review.

2.31 As a result, in every case where the disparity between the average constituency electorate in a London borough, Non-Metropolitan County, or Unitary Authority was more than 10,000 from the electoral quota, we considered whether the local authority should be paired with a neighbouring local authority to bring about constituency electorates that would not be too disparate from the electoral quota or from one another.

2.32 We also used this 10,000 “threshold” to help us decide which Metropolitan Boroughs should be paired or grouped within the Metropolitan Counties to enable us to bring about the correct allocation of constituencies to each Metropolitan County, as well as to improve constituency electorates within those counties.

Districts

2.33 The Rules make no provision for us to have regard to district boundaries in framing our recommendations. Our predecessors had their attention drawn to the debate in Standing Committee on 20 March 1972 on the Local Government Bill where the Home Office Minister of State promised to advise the Commission that district boundaries should be taken into account but he recognised that in many cases districts would be too large or too small to create whole constituencies.

2.34 There are advantages in having coterminous districts and constituencies but, with districts having 2000 electorates ranging from 721,183 to 19,841 electors, it was frequently not possible to achieve this outcome. Indeed it was sometimes necessary to divide a district which had an electorate close to the electoral quota to accommodate neighbouring districts with very small or very large electorates. We were aware that proposals which appeared to tinker with established district communities in an effort to reduce electoral disparities would be unpopular but accepted that we could not leave unaltered constituencies with very high or very low electorates.

2.35 In the event we made a number of decisions which proved to be unpopular, for example, in Allerdale, Ashford, Bournemouth, Cambridge, Copeland, Darlington, Exeter, Kerrier, Merseyside, North Norfolk, Penwith, Redditch, Salisbury, South Bedfordshire, South Norfolk, Staffordshire Moorlands, Wakefield and West Somerset. The strong and sincerely held views of a large number of electors have not been ignored and we have done as much, in our view, as the Rules allow in order to accommodate them but we could not always act as many electors wished if we were to fulfil our statutory duty.

2.36 In the previous review thirteen constituencies were recommended which crossed metropolitan district boundaries and our recommendations also include twenty-two which do so. Similarly, 170 constituencies crossed non-metropolitan district boundaries whereas our recommendations include 165 which do so. In each case we considered it necessary for the purpose of Rule 5. It should be noted that since the previous general review was conducted forty of the non-metropolitan districts have become Unitary Authorities, which have the status of counties under Rule 4.

Wards

2.37 As mentioned above (see “Local Government Boundary Changes”) we decided, like our predecessors, that we should use district wards as our building blocks for the constituencies. None of our recommended constituencies divides district wards. There were, however, four problems which we experienced in using wards:-

- in some areas, particularly in some metropolitan counties and some London boroughs, the large number of electors in each ward made them less effective in building constituencies since in many cases moving one ward between constituencies merely transferred the problem of either a too large or too small electorate from one constituency to the other,

- the number of wards might not divide equally between the number of constituencies to be allocated. In Wirral, for example, where twenty-two wards had to be divided between four constituencies this led to two constituencies with very low electorates and produced a high electoral disparity within the county of Merseyside,
- geographically large wards or oddly shaped wards such as those listed below, often reduced the number of practicable, alternative distributions:-
 - a) the Bovingdon, Flaunden and Chipperfield ward of Dacorum District,
 - b) the East Wolds and Coastal ward of the East Riding of Yorkshire District,
 - c) the Bolney and Hurstpierpoint, and Downs wards of Mid Sussex District, and
 - d) the Inkberrow ward of Wychavon District.
- some wards on the outskirts of towns contained very different communities. For instance, there were occasions where the majority of the electorate of the ward were urban dwellers residing in a very small area of the ward on the edge of a town. However, the small remainder of the ward's electorate was made up of those living in rural communities some distance from the town. The Bovingdon, Flaunden and Chipperfield ward in the Dacorum District of Hertfordshire again provides an example.

Special Geographical Considerations

2.38 Discretion is given by Rule 6 to depart from the need to respect county and London borough boundaries as required by Rule 4, and from the equality of electorates required by Rule 5, if special geographical considerations, including in particular the size, shape and accessibility of a constituency, make it desirable. We continue to interpret special geographical considerations to relate mainly to matters of physical geography such as the presence of mountains, islands and wide river estuaries with no crossing points. These features may make it difficult to comply with Rule 5 (as in the case of the Isle of Wight and Northumberland) but we have not found it necessary to cross a county or London borough boundary due to special geographical considerations.

2.39 We do not consider that human or social geography are special geographical considerations, although they may be relevant when considering the local ties and inconveniences mentioned in the second limb of Rule 7. Using Rule 6 in the past, we have allocated an extra constituency to a county. In previous general reviews such "extra" constituencies were allocated in Cumbria, Lancashire and Northumberland. In this review, the "extra" constituencies in Cumbria and Northumberland have been retained (also see "Number of Constituencies" above), but no further "extra constituencies" have been allocated because of special geographical reasons.

Growth or Decline in Electorates

2.40 We are statutorily required to base our recommendations on the electorates as they exist on the enumeration date. Where there are a number of options, all of which give effect to Rule 5 as well as the other rules, we may take into account as a relevant factor any growth or decline in the electorate that has actually occurred since the 2000 enumeration date. For example, if by 2004 there had been a strong growth in the electorates in one part of a county whilst in another part there had been a steady decline, we may have been able to recommend a constituency with a 2000 electorate less than the county average in the area where the electorate had grown, and a constituency with a 2000 electorate greater than the county average in the area which had declined. However, there was no question that the number of constituencies allocated to an area would be based on anything other than the 2000 electorate.

2.41 We were sometimes asked (e.g. at the local inquiries covering Ashford in Kent and Milton Keynes) to take into account projected growth or decline, but usually growth, in the electorate. Such projections were considered to be speculative and we did not have regard to them. However, where we were satisfied that growth or decline would occur in the very near future, such as in the case of a large housing development nearing completion, we felt able to take such factors into account in our deliberations when considering the composition of a particular constituency.

2.42 In some cases where submissions had been made of future significant growth in the electorate, such as in Ashford and Milton Keynes, we note that the latest 2006 figures do not show the degree of growth that had been forecast at the respective local inquiries. The electorate of the Borough of Ashford increased by 4.64% between 2000 and 2006 (from 76,405 to 79,949). The electorate of the Borough of Milton Keynes increased by 5.61% over the same period (from 150,994 to 159,464). In both cases, especially in view of what we say below about rolling registers, we have given a commitment to monitor the electorates and consider holding an interim review if, in our view, the levels of growth justify it. We consider that the growth so far in these areas does not justify the holding of interim reviews in the immediate future, but the situation will continue to be monitored.

Rolling Registration

2.43 In considering the changes in the electoral figures since the 2000 enumeration date, we were aware that the system of electoral registration changed during the review and we had to exercise more caution than usual when looking at these figures. Under the former system for compiling the electoral register, which existed up to and including 2001, local authorities were required to undertake an annual canvas of electors with a qualifying date for residency at 10 October. The electoral roll would then be published on 16 February the following year. Under the new system of rolling registration, local authorities are now able to add or remove electors at any time during the year. The annual figures are now based on 15 October and are published on 1 December. The 2000 and 2001 figures used during the review were those published in February 2000 and 2001, whereas the figures for 2002 to 2006 are those published in December 2001 to 2005, respectively.

2.44 It was not clear to us whether the change to rolling registration affected the way in which Electoral Registration Officers compiled their registers. We noted that in some districts or boroughs the electoral register showed erratic trends with very marked growth, or decline, in the electorates which appeared to be far in excess of previous trends. In addition, there was also

some evidence to suggest that Electoral Registration Officers took action to cleanse their registers in order to “weed out” electors who had not completed an annual return (e.g. in the City of Preston there was a decrease of 16,051 electors in just one year, and in the Borough of Wirral there was a fall of 6,507 also in one year). We considered that the possibility this was happening cast some doubt on the validity of the annual figures, in terms of growth and decline, in the years (December 2001 to December 2005) after the change to rolling registration.

Local Ties

2.45 There was usually more debate at local inquiries about local ties (in their many, varied and often subjective guises) than about any other matter. We were frequently requested to use the discretionary power in Rule 7 not to recommend changes that would bring constituency electorates nearer the electoral quota, and thus give full effect to Rule 5, because those changes would cause inconveniences and break local ties. Some wished us to invoke that power in order to recommend constituencies which repaired local ties previously broken in the creation of the existing pattern of constituencies and some saw the exercise of the power as a mandatory duty in every instance.

2.46 We consider that proposals for redistribution must strike a balance between reducing the disparity between the electorates of each constituency and the electoral quota and the disruption and breaking of local ties. Furthermore, the provision relates to the breaking of local ties by new proposals rather than the restoration of local ties allegedly broken on a previous occasion. We consider that the redistribution of constituencies is a matter of judgement taking all the evidence into account in each case.

Local Inquiries

2.47 Local inquiries are usually held in a county or London borough (or a pair or grouping of such areas) to consider our provisional recommendations, any counter-proposals which have been made, and to assist us in assessing local opinion. These public meetings are mandatory when an interested local authority or a group of 100 or more electors make representations objecting to changes provisionally recommended for constituencies. We also have a discretionary power to order a local inquiry in the absence of such objections.

2.48 During the review, we held local inquiries as follows:-

- for 26 of the 32 London boroughs and the City of London (there were no local inquiries for Barnet, Croydon, Kingston upon Thames, Merton, Richmond upon Thames and Sutton),
- for all six metropolitan counties, although six of the 36 metropolitan boroughs were not considered at local inquiries (Bury, Calderdale, Coventry, Doncaster, Solihull and Walsall),
- for 34 of the 35 non-metropolitan counties (only Shropshire did not have a local inquiry), and
- for 34 of the 40 unitary authorities (there were no inquiries in Hartlepool, Isle of Wight, North Somerset, Rutland, Swindon and Telford and Wrekin).

2.49 Many local inquiries covered more than one area. For example, one inquiry covered eight London boroughs and the City of London, and many of the unitary authorities were dealt with at the same local inquiry as the non-metropolitan counties from which they were created. The inquiries were conducted on our behalf by independent lawyers from a panel appointed by the Secretary of State for the Home Department at our request. Appendix I contains a list of the local inquiries held showing the Assistant Commissioners who conducted them.

2.50 Our information booklet, which contains a section on the purpose of and procedure at local inquiries, was made available prior to each inquiry to assist those preparing for and attending them so that they could play an effective part in the process. There is no statutory procedure for the conduct of local inquiries but, in order to provide for a degree of consistency, we supplied every Assistant Commissioner who conducted a local inquiry with a brief that contained guidance on running an inquiry, with the main emphasis on ensuring that everyone who wished to make a contribution was given the opportunity to do so (with the exception that party political points were not allowed).

2.51 In a number of areas, we decided to provide a structure and timetable for the inquiry. This was to facilitate the submission of lengthy, and in some cases, complex presentations by the representatives of the Parliamentary political parties who had to co-ordinate the attendance of a large number of witnesses. In other instances, it was to assist the local authorities who wished to be represented at the inquiries. This structuring also enabled members of the public and other interested parties with limited time to decide which sessions of the inquiry they wished to attend. In every case where we held a structured inquiry, we published the timetable in advance.

2.52 The local inquiries conducted on our behalf and the reports submitted to us by Assistant Commissioners were of a consistently high standard and we are grateful to them for their efforts. In the limited number of cases where we disagreed with a point or conclusion made by an Assistant Commissioner we gave an explanation of our reasons for doing so in the news releases we issued during the review. We have also given those reasons in the descriptions of the review of each area in Chapters 3 to 5 of this report.

Second Inquiries

2.53 We received a number of requests for us to use the discretion provided by the legislation for second inquiries to be conducted. However, in every case, we decided that there were insufficient grounds or no, new, compelling evidence to warrant the setting up of a second inquiry. We also considered that the representations made in respect of our revised or final recommendations, which were announced following a local inquiry, did not contain alternative proposals or more acceptable solutions to those we had announced.

2.54 In the main, requests for second inquiries were made by those whose submissions had not been successful at the first inquiry. We considered every request for a second inquiry most carefully, looking for significant and relevant new information that had not been considered at the first inquiry. Some of the requests for second inquiries were made by those who did not attend the first one. We had anticipated that this might be the case and gave very clear warnings in our news releases and information booklet that it should not be assumed that local inquiries would discuss only those matters raised in the representations made in respect of our provisional recommendations. We also made very clear that any interested person or party should attend the inquiry and that they should be aware that they might not be able to state their case at a further (second) inquiry, as such inquiries would only rarely be held.

2.55 We also considered that the reason why requests for second inquiries were unsuccessful was due to the very thorough nature of the first inquiries where every opportunity was given by the Assistant Commissioners to those who attended to make submissions. The majority of local inquiries during this general review ran for longer than during the fourth general review and were attended by representatives of the three Parliamentary political parties, by local authorities, and by many local organisations and members of the public. We also provided more support staff to help with the running of the inquiries.

Assistant Commissioners' Reports

2.56 In their reports of the local inquiries Assistant Commissioners were requested to give a concise description of the points raised at the inquiry, a balanced but brief evaluation of the arguments on every side and the reasons for their recommendations. Copies of the reports were sent to all those who participated and, on request, to others. The reports, and the verbatim transcripts of the inquiries, were placed on our website. Where we revised our proposals, the reports were also deposited in local council offices and libraries for public inspection.

2.57 We read all the Assistant Commissioners' reports and we considered all the submissions made at the inquiries together with the verbatim transcripts upon which the Assistant Commissioners' reports were based. We considered every representation submitted to us. There were in the region of 29,000 representations during the review. The use of information technology and the photocopier have no doubt added greatly to the increase in the paperwork involved, but they have also assisted us in assessing it. Consideration of so much material took a long time and involved much work, but it assisted us with our decisions.

2.58 The content of some of the representations alerted us to the extent of misconception about the reasons for the review. Despite having stated in our booklet, in our local inquiry statements and in the Assistant Commissioners' introductory remarks, and having repeated in most news releases, that the recommendations in this review would not:-

- have any effect on local authority structure, boundaries, taxes or services,
- result in changes to postcodes,
- have an adverse effect on house prices, or car and house insurance premiums,

many representations appeared concerned only or primarily about those issues. Many others were concerned with what they saw as the loss of a good constituency MP and were obviously not aware that in framing our recommendations we did not, and could not, take that into account any more than we could take into account the existing political party affiliation of the sitting member. Nor did they have regard to the fact that we could not take into account voting patterns or the likely political effects of proposals or counter-proposals.

Participation

2.59 The report of the fourth general review records that over 40,000 representations and petitions were received. The equivalent figure for this review is 29,000. The petitions alone contained an approximate total of 54,000 signatures giving an overall participation of about 83,000. Although a substantial number of representations supported our proposals, the majority contained objections.

2.60 In 64% of the counties and London boroughs we published revised recommendations compared with 74% in the fourth general review. We published just one modified recommendation in this review and that was only in respect of the name of one constituency. We consider the reasons for this to be the same as for there being no second local inquiries (see “Second Inquiries” above). What the 64% confirms is that we have been prepared to revise our provisional recommendations and that it is worthwhile participating in the review. It is evident, however, that a number of electors who were content with the provisional recommendations or who supported one counter-proposal chose not to attend the relevant local inquiry and were therefore unable to express their views about alternative counter-proposals. Such electors were often upset when we adopted alternative proposals recommended to us by the Assistant Commissioners.

2.61 It may be of interest, however, to the few who complained about our policy of allowing representations and counter-proposals to be produced as late as the opening of local inquiries, that, despite changing our provisional recommendations in so many areas, the changes adopted came in 68% of cases from proposals submitted to us within the one month representation period of publication of the provisional recommendations and had been placed on deposit for public inspection before the inquiry. The figure of 68% is lower than we would have expected. It is not higher because many of the suggested name changes for constituencies were first raised at the inquiries and were not contained in representations made to us.

2.62 Despite criticism of the procedures at local inquiries in some quarters, including some calls for inquiries to be removed from the process of redistribution of constituencies, they undoubtedly remain extremely effective in enabling public discussion about the issues and in informing us of local views. It is, however, sometimes difficult for us to obtain a true measure of local information and opinion especially where those who support or do not object to provisional recommendations do not make this known to us. Such electors are less likely to attend local inquiries although our booklet stressed the importance of doing so. There were several occasions during the review when a level of support for our provisional recommendations was made evident only after they had been revised following a local inquiry which was not attended by supporters of the provisional recommendations.

2.63 We should like to record here our thanks to Mr Roger Pratt CBE, Boundary Review Project Director at Conservative Central Office, Mr Greg Cook, Head of Political Strategy at the Labour Party headquarters, and Mr Mark Pack, Campaigns Officer at the Liberal Democrat Party headquarters, who assisted the review at various stages, for example by ensuring that their parties consistently submitted relevant and timely written representations about our provisional and revised recommendations. They particularly assisted the efficient conduct of local inquiries by agreeing to submit their parties’ cases at pre-arranged times, supplying lists of their respective witnesses beforehand, marshalling those witnesses at the inquiries, and supplying sufficient copies of their and their witnesses’ submissions.

Names of Constituencies

2.64 We are statutorily required to recommend a name for each constituency but there is no statutory guidance on how to do so. We adopted a similar policy to our predecessors:-

- where constituencies remain largely unchanged, we usually recommend retention of the existing names,

- constituency names are likely to be altered only where there is good reason for change, e.g. where the renaming of a local authority area makes the name no longer appropriate,
- where the boundaries of a constituency have been redrawn to the extent that the existing name is no longer appropriate, or for a new constituency, we normally recommend a name that reflects the name of the district, borough or unitary authority wholly or principally contained in the constituency,
- we adopt compass point names when there is not a more suitable option, and the compass point may form either a prefix or a suffix to the name, depending on which seems more appropriate or euphonious in the circumstances of the particular case,
- where a provisionally recommended name is strongly objected to, we will normally be prepared to publish revised recommendations if there is a suitable alternative which generally commands greater local support, and
- we prefer recommending shorter names than longer ones.

Designations

2.65 We are also statutorily required to recommend a designation for each constituency, although again there is no statutory guidance on how to do so. We consider that, as a general principle:-

- where constituencies contain more than a small rural element they should normally be designated as county constituencies,
- otherwise they should be designated as borough constituencies.

2.66 The designation generally determines who shall act as returning officer for Parliamentary elections, and also affects the level of a candidate's campaign expenses allowable at Parliamentary elections. The returning officer in borough constituencies is a district council chairman or mayor. For county constituencies it is the high sheriff. The level of expenses in borough constituencies is slightly lower to reflect lower costs of running a campaign in an urban, usually compact, area. The designation is suffixed to the constituency name and is usually abbreviated: BC for borough constituency or CC for county constituency.

CHAPTER THREE – THE LONDON BOROUGHHS

PART ONE – GENERAL CONSIDERATIONS

Introduction

3.1 At the end of the fourth general review, our predecessors reported that the redistribution of constituencies in London had always presented the Commission with special problems. They noted that the report on the Second Periodical Review said:-

“The Rules embrace two principles of representative government – equal representation (Rule 5) and territorial representation (Rule 4) which are often difficult to reconcile. The more equality in constituency electorates is sought, the greater the likelihood of disrupting local government units. Conversely, the more the preservation of local government units is pursued, the greater the disparity in electorates”.

3.2 Rule 4 requires that, so far as is practicable, constituency boundaries shall not cross London borough boundaries. However, due to the electoral size of many of the London boroughs, it continues to be difficult, as our predecessors also found, both to respect Rule 4 and to give effect to Rule 5, which requires constituency electorates to be as near as is practicable to the electoral quota.

3.3 The provision in Rule 4, which requires that no part of a London borough shall be included in a constituency which includes the whole or part of any other London borough, led at the second and third general reviews to recommendations for constituencies that were contained wholly within London boroughs. The result of this was to create constituencies with a wide deviation of electorates from the electoral quota as shown in Table 1 below.

Table 1 - the effect of not pairing London boroughs at the second and third general reviews

General Review (start date)	Electoral Quota	Electorate of London constituencies		Disparity
		Largest	Smallest	
2 nd (1965)	58,759	74,854	43,084	31,770
3 rd (1976)	65,753	84,401	46,493	37,908

The electorates and theoretical entitlement to constituencies of the London boroughs

3.4 Table 2 below, particularly the final column, shows the large differences between the electoral quota and the average constituency electorates that would result if every London borough was reviewed individually and received its own allocation of constituencies, as required by Rule 4. Of particular note are the deviations that would result between the electoral quota and the average constituency electorates in some London boroughs, which in eleven instances would be more than 10,000 electors. The effect of pairing those boroughs is demonstrated in Table 3 where no deviation is more than 10,000 from the electoral quota.

Table 2 - individual borough electorates, theoretical entitlements, borough averages and deviation from the electoral quota (69,935)

London Borough	2000 Electorate	Theoretical Entitlement		Borough Average	Deviation between Borough Average and Electoral Quota
		Exact	Rounded		
Barking and Dagenham	114,479	1.64	2	57,240	- 12,695
Barnet	220,666	3.16	3	73,555	+ 3,620
Bexley *	167,946	2.40	2 or 3	83,973 or 55,982	+ 14,038 or - 13,953
Brent *	168,548	2.41	2 or 3	84,274 or 56,183	+ 14,339 or - 13,752
Bromley	222,759	3.19	3	74,253	+ 4,318
Camden	126,803	1.81	2	63,402	- 6,533
Croydon	231,602	3.31	3	77,201	+ 7,266
Ealing	206,570	2.95	3	68,857	- 1,078
Enfield	199,095	2.85	3	66,365	- 3,570
Greenwich	150,959	2.16	2	75,480	+ 5,545
Hackney	120,389	1.72	2	60,195	- 9,740
Hammersmith and Fulham	105,872	1.51	2	52,936	- 16,999
Haringey	139,940	2.00	2	69,970	+ 35
Harrow	154,664	2.21	2	77,332	+ 7,397
Havering	178,256	2.55	3	59,419	- 10,516
Hillingdon	177,172	2.53	3	59,057	- 10,878
Hounslow	156,950	2.24	2	78,475	+ 8,540
Islington	119,893	1.71	2	59,947	- 9,988
Kensington and Chelsea	90,813	1.30	1	90,813	+ 20,878
Kingston upon Thames *	99,320	1.42	1 or 2	99,320 or 49,660	+ 29,385 or - 20,275
Lambeth	179,481	2.57	3	59,827	- 10,108
Lewisham	175,035	2.50	3	58,345	- 11,590
Merton	130,470	1.87	2	65,235	- 4,700
Newham	150,884	2.16	2	75,442	+ 5,507
Redbridge	176,195	2.52	3	58,732	- 11,203
Richmond upon Thames	120,893	1.73	2	60,447	- 9,488
Southwark	156,459	2.24	2	78,230	+ 8,295
Sutton	131,757	1.88	2	65,879	- 4,056
Tower Hamlets	125,823	1.80	2	62,912	- 7,023
Waltham Forest	157,808	2.26	2	78,904	+ 8,969
Wandsworth	195,887	2.80	3	65,296	- 4,639
Westminster (and City of London)	120,637	1.72	2	60,319	- 9,616
Total	4,974,025	71.12	73 - 76	-	-

* Indicates a “Walton” theoretical entitlement – see paragraph 3.15 below

Table 3 - recommended pairings, borough electorates, theoretical entitlements, borough averages and deviation from the electoral quota (69,935)

London Borough	2000 Electorate	Theoretical Entitlement		Borough Average	Deviation between Borough Average and Electoral Quota
		Exact	Rounded		
Barking and Dagenham, and Havering	292,735	4.19	4	73,184	+ 3,249
Barnet	220,666	3.16	3	73,555	+ 3,620
Bexley and Greenwich	318,905	4.56	5	63,781	- 6,154
Brent and Camden	295,351	4.22	4	73,838	+ 3,903
Bromley and Lewisham	397,794	5.69	6	66,299	- 3,636
Croydon	231,602	3.31	3	77,201	+ 7,266
Ealing	206,570	2.95	3	68,857	- 1,078
Enfield	199,095	2.85	3	66,365	- 3,570
Hackney	120,389	1.72	2	60,195	- 9,740
Hammersmith and Fulham, and Kensington and Chelsea	196,685	2.81	3	65,562	- 4,373
Haringey	139,940	2.00	2	69,970	+ 35
Harrow and Hillingdon	331,836	4.74	5	66,367	- 3,568
Hounslow	156,950	2.24	2	78,475	+ 8,540
Islington	119,893	1.71	2	59,947	- 9,988
Kingston upon Thames and Richmond upon Thames	220,213	3.15	3	73,404	+ 3,469
Lambeth and Southwark	335,940	4.80	5	67,188	- 2,747
Merton	130,470	1.87	2	65,235	- 4,700
Newham	150,884	2.16	2	75,442	+ 5,507
Redbridge and Waltham Forest	334,003	4.78	5	66,801	- 3,134
Sutton	131,757	1.88	2	65,879	- 4,056
Tower Hamlets	125,823	1.80	2	62,912	- 7,023
Wandsworth	195,887	2.80	3	65,296	- 4,639
Westminster (and City of London)	120,637	1.72	2	60,319	- 9,616
Total	4,974,025	* 71.11	73	-	-

* Rounding this different arrangement of theoretical entitlements to two decimal places produces a slightly different total than that in Table 2 above, which shows 71.12

Rule 4 – London borough boundaries

3.5 In the policy review which was conducted before the fourth general review commenced, our predecessors considered it would be desirable to cross London borough boundaries for the first time (leaving aside the exceptional case of the very small City of London which has been paired with the City of Westminster since single member constituencies were made compulsory in 1949). They decided to pair London boroughs for

the allocation of constituencies and to cross the common boundaries in those instances where:-

- the average number of electors per constituency in a London borough (the borough average) was more than a threshold of 12,500 electors above or below the electoral quota;
- the number of constituencies allocated to the two London boroughs would not be greater than the sum of the constituencies to which they were separately entitled;
- the result of pairing would be to reduce the disparity from the electoral quota of the borough average of both boroughs in the pair;
- there was a continuous residential area or some community of interest across the relevant boundaries; and
- the relevant boroughs were not on opposite sides of the river below Richmond upon Thames.

3.6 In the event, they crossed the boundaries of fourteen of the thirty-two London boroughs, by reviewing the fourteen boroughs as seven pairs, and applying the discretion given by Rule 5 to cross London borough boundaries in order to avoid excessive disparities in the constituency electorates.

3.7. We also considered that it would be necessary to continue to cross London borough boundaries in order to avoid excessive disparities in the constituency electorates. However, we adapted the policy of our predecessors for this review, in order to provide the opportunity to be able to remove more of the excessive disparities in the constituency electorates, by making two changes:-

- we reduced the threshold figure for triggering consideration of pairing London boroughs from the 12,500 deviation of the borough average from the electoral quota applied in the previous review to a threshold of 10,000; and
- the result of pairing would be to reduce the deviation from the electoral quota of the borough average of both boroughs in the pair, or to reduce significantly the deviation from the electoral quota of the average electorate of one of the boroughs whilst only slightly increasing the deviation of the other borough average from the electoral quota, but not so as to create an excessive deviation.

3.8 In this review, we have crossed the boundaries of nineteen of the thirty-two boroughs and the City of London: there are now nine pairs. In the pairing of Redbridge and Waltham Forest, we decided to retain two constituencies that crossed their common boundary.

3.9 The result of the pairing of the London boroughs at the fourth general review and at this general review is shown in Table 4 below. It should be noted that the effect of crossing London borough boundaries at the fourth general review was a significant reduction in the electoral disparity between constituencies from those which resulted at the first three general reviews. We have further reduced the electoral disparity at this general review.

Table 4 - the effect of pairing London boroughs at the fourth and fifth general reviews

General Review (start date)	Electoral Quota	Electorate of London constituencies		Disparity
		Largest	Smallest	
4 th (1991)	69,281	82,032	54,443	27,589
5 th (2000)	69,935	79,819	57,204	22,615

Rule 5 – Constituency Electorates

3.10 Our policy of creating more constituencies which cross London borough boundaries has enabled us to give better effect to Rule 5 and improve the constituency electorates to a greater extent than would otherwise have been possible. The disparity in the 2000 electorates of the existing seventy-four Parliamentary constituencies in Greater London is 33,439. If our recommendations are accepted, the disparity in the seventy-three recommended constituencies will be reduced to 22,615. This is shown in Table 5 below.

Table 5 - electoral disparities between the existing and recommended constituencies with the highest and lowest number of electors

	Highest Electorate		Lowest Electorate		Disparity
Existing seats	Ealing, Southall BC	84,129	Camberwell and Peckham BC	50,690	33,439
Recommended seats	Croydon North BC	79,819	Hackney South and Shoreditch BC	57,204	22,615
Improvement		4,310		6,514	10,824

3.11 The constituency with the highest 2000 electorate in London will be Croydon North BC with 79,819 electors: this will be the second highest electorate in England after that of Isle of Wight CC. Although this constituency electorate is 9,884 above the electoral quota, it is only 2,618 above the Croydon borough average of 77,201, which is itself 7,266 above the electoral quota and, therefore, within the 10,000 threshold described in paragraph 3.7 (first bullet point) above. We did not consider it was necessary to pair Croydon with a neighbouring borough. The disparity within the three recommended constituencies in Croydon is only 6,399, which is less than the average electorate (9,650) of the twenty-four wards in the borough.

3.12 The constituency with the lowest 2000 electorate in London will be Hackney South and Shoreditch BC with 57,204 electors: this will be the second lowest electorate in England after that of Wirral West BC. This constituency electorate is 12,731 below the electorate quota, but only 2,991 below the Hackney borough average of 60,195. Although the borough average is within 260 electors of the 10,000 threshold, we nevertheless considered pairing Hackney with a neighbouring borough. However, we concluded that there was no suitable partner that was not already paired with another borough or one that met our criteria for pairing.

3.13 We therefore decided to review Hackney separately and to retain its allocation of two constituencies. Pairing Hackney with a neighbouring borough would have meant significantly worsening the electorates in the partner, even though Hackney's electoral figures would have improved. It may have also involved crossing an unsuitable boundary or creating a "Walton" allocation (see paragraph 3.15 below).

3.14 Table 6 below demonstrates that setting a threshold of 10,000 electors between the borough average and the electoral quota, at which we would consider pairing a London borough, has resulted in more constituencies being recommended with electorates that are closer to the electoral quota than was achieved at the fourth general review.

Table 6 - the effect of our recommendations

Deviation from the EQ	Fourth General Review			Fifth General Review		
	1991 Electorate	Existing Seats	Proposed Seats	2000 Electorate	Existing Seats	Proposed Seats
Over 30%	90,066 or more	-	-	90,916 or more	-	-
20% - 30%	83,138 - 90,065	1	-	83,922 - 90,915	1	-
10% - 20%	76,210 - 83,137	1	5	76,929 - 83,921	8	7
Within 10%	69,282 - 76,209	4	18	69,936 - 76,928	17	17
Electoral Quota (EQ)	69,281			69,935		
Within 10%	62,353 - 69,280	17	29	62,942 - 69,934	23	40
10% - 20%	55,425 - 62,352	35	21	55,948 - 62,941	22	9
20% - 30%	48,497 - 55,424	21	1	48,955 - 55,947	3	-
Over 30%	48,496 or less	5	-	48,954 or less	-	-
Total		84	74		74	73

Rule 1 – Number of Constituencies

3.15 The pairing of London boroughs has also assisted us in achieving our policy aim to try to limit the overall increase in the number of constituencies in England and thereby give effect to Rule 1. This was achieved in part by pairing those with theoretical entitlements that were between the harmonic mean and the arithmetic mean, and which are sometimes rounded up from below the arithmetic mean to allocate an extra constituency and thereby create constituency electorates closer to the electoral quota – sometimes known as "Walton" constituencies: see the Commission's Third Periodical report (Cmnd 8797-I), Appendix B, by Sir Raymond Walton, the Deputy Chairman at that time.

3.16 Rule 4 refers to London boroughs and not to Greater London, so there is no theoretical entitlement to constituencies for Greater London as such. However, if there were, Greater London's total 2000 electorate of 4,974,025 would have produced a theoretical entitlement of 71.12, indicating an allocation of seventy-one constituencies. If each London borough had been allocated constituencies separately (i.e. without crossing any London borough boundaries), and every one of the three "Walton" constituencies had been allocated, we could have been recommending a total of seventy-six constituencies, although there would have been some very large disparities in the constituency electorates (see Table 2 above).

3.17 There are currently seventy-four constituencies in London. Our recommendations reduce this figure by one to seventy-three. This net reduction of one constituency is a consequence of allocating constituencies to a different arrangement of single and paired boroughs compared to the previous review (see Table 3 above). The uncoupling of Westminster (and the City of London) from Kensington and Chelsea has created an extra constituency, and the two new pairings of Brent with Camden, and Barking and Dagenham with Havering, have each reduced the number of constituencies by one.

Rule 7 – Local Ties

3.18 The greater frequency of crossing London borough boundaries has also produced two other effects, both of which added to the complexity of our review. However, both also resulted in what we consider to be a more satisfactory outcome in terms of taking account of local ties as required by Rule 7. The first was that it widened the scope for counter-proposals to be made against our proposals. Not only did we receive counter-proposals for the constituencies in each pair of boroughs, but we also received counter-proposals for a different arrangement of pairings, some of which allocated a different number of constituencies. The second related to the conduct of local inquiries and is explained below.

Local Inquiries

3.19 The counter-proposals for alternative pairings of boroughs required that two of the local inquiries we held had to cover more than one or two London boroughs, so that the various counter-proposals could be considered, compared and evaluated together. One inquiry in West London covered the eight London boroughs of Brent, Camden, Hammersmith and Fulham, Harrow, Hillingdon, Hounslow, Kensington and Chelsea, and Westminster (and the City of London). Another inquiry in East London covered the four boroughs of Hackney, Islington, Newham, and Tower Hamlets.

3.20 These local inquiries took much longer to conduct than an inquiry into one borough and therefore had to be provided with a structured timetable beforehand so that interested parties knew when it would be best for them to attend, if they could not attend for the whole of the inquiry. Also, the West London local inquiry covered such a large area that, in order to make it easier for local electors to attend, we decided to hold it over a two week period in three separate locations: Hammersmith, Wembley and Uxbridge. These arrangements placed a greater burden on Assistant Commissioners, our Secretariat staff, and the verbatim reporters, but we considered it essential that all the issues should be allowed to have a full and thorough public debate. The feedback that we received during the review was that the interested parties welcomed the arrangements we had made for these local inquiries.

Conclusion

3.21 Despite the continuing difficulties in reviewing the constituencies in the London boroughs, we consider that we have done as much in this general review as we reasonably could to take account of local ties and local views in our efforts to balance the conflicting requirements of Rules 1, 4, 5 and 7. Of course, not everyone will find our recommendations acceptable. However, while those who are not content will focus on their particular constituency, we must have regard to the overall picture.

PART TWO – DESCRIPTION OF THE REVIEWS

3.22 In Part One of this Chapter, we set out our approach to the allocation of constituencies to the London boroughs. In the pages that follow, we show in detail the progress of the review in each borough. In some instances, we have reported on individual boroughs. In others, we have reported on a pair of boroughs where we considered them together. Others have also been reported on in the groups of boroughs that were considered together at the local inquiry stage. For instance, in West London, eight boroughs were considered at one inquiry and, in East London, four boroughs were considered at another inquiry.

BARKING AND DAGENHAM AND HAVERING

The Number of Electors in Barking and Dagenham

1. There are currently two constituencies in the London Borough of Barking and Dagenham:-

2000 Electorate	
Barking BC	54,837
Dagenham BC	59,642
	<hr/>
	114,479
	<hr/>

The Number of Electors in Havering

2. There are currently three constituencies in the London Borough of Havering:-

2000 Electorate	
Hornchurch BC	61,111
Romford BC	60,061
Upminster BC	57,084
	<hr/>
	178,256
	<hr/>

The Number of Constituencies

3. Barking and Dagenham had a 2000 parliamentary electorate of 114,479, which gave a theoretical entitlement to 1.64 constituencies. We noted that if two constituencies were retained in Barking and Dagenham the borough average would be 57,240. Each constituency would therefore be, on average, 12,695 below the electoral quota, and 2,695 over our 10,000 threshold.

4. Havering had a 2000 parliamentary electorate of 178,256, which gave a theoretical entitlement to 2.55 constituencies. We noted that if three constituencies were retained in Havering the average constituency in the borough would be 59,419. Each constituency would therefore be, on average, 10,516 below the electoral quota and 516 over our 10,000 threshold.

5. We considered that neither borough could be treated separately and that both needed a partner. We noted that Barking and Dagenham's neighbours are Havering, Newham and Redbridge. However, we provisionally decided that Newham and Redbridge should continue to be paired with Tower Hamlets and Waltham Forest, respectively (Newham was later separated from Tower Hamlets). We therefore provisionally decided to recommend that Barking and Dagenham be paired with Havering and that four constituencies be allocated to the pair instead of the five that would have been allocated if the boroughs had been reviewed separately.

6. The combined area of Barking and Dagenham, and Havering had a 2000 parliamentary electorate of 292,735, which gave a theoretical entitlement to 4.19 constituencies. With four constituencies allocated to the paired boroughs, the average constituency electorate would be 73,184, which is 3,249 above the electoral quota. We noted

that the average would be much closer to the electoral quota than if both boroughs were reviewed separately. We recognised that the allocation of four constituencies, where five currently exist, required some major changes to be made, but considered such changes necessary in order to avoid excessive disparities between constituencies and to bring electorates closer to the electoral quota, in accordance with Rule 5.

7. The electorates of the five existing constituencies ranged from 61,111 in Hornchurch BC to 54,837 in Barking BC (15,098 below the electoral quota), a disparity of 6,274. Our provisional recommendations increased this disparity to 9,848.

Provisional Recommendations

8. As a result of changes to ward boundaries, two of the new wards in Barking and Dagenham are divided between the existing constituencies. In addition to allocating the whole of a divided ward to a constituency, we proposed that the five Barking and Dagenham Borough wards of Chadwell Heath, Heath, Parsloes, Valence and Whalebone be included in Barking BC. We also proposed that the Barking and Dagenham Borough wards of Goresbrook and Thames should be included in a renamed Dagenham and Rainham BC with the three Havering Borough wards of Elm Park, Rainham and Wennington, and South Hornchurch.

9. As a result of changes to ward boundaries, four of the new wards in Havering are divided between the existing constituencies. In addition to allocating the whole of a divided ward to a constituency, we proposed that the three Havering Borough wards of Hacton, Hylands and St Andrew's be included in a renamed Hornchurch and Upminster BC. We also proposed that the Havering Borough wards of Gooshays and Heaton be included in Romford BC. We noted that, with fifteen Havering Borough wards to be allocated to two constituencies, it was inevitable that there would be a disparity between the electorates of the two constituencies contained wholly within Havering.

10. We considered that the best place to form a cross-borough boundary constituency would be in the south of the two boroughs. We examined whether to recommend two cross-borough boundary constituencies, but decided that this would result in too much disruption to the existing pattern of constituencies in the two boroughs.

11. Our provisional recommendations were:-

	2000 electorate
Barking BC	73,809
Dagenham and Rainham BC	69,894
Hornchurch and Upminster BC	69,592
Romford BC	<u>79,440</u>
	<u>292,735</u>

Representations

12. Following publication of our provisional recommendations we received seventy-four representations, of which four supported all or parts of our proposals, one supported part of our proposals whilst objecting to other parts, one made no comment, and sixty-eight objected

to them. One of the objections suggested that Barking and Dagenham, and Havering should be paired with other London boroughs.

13. The main issues raised in the objections were contained in seven counter-proposals, though only the principal one received significant support and was actively promoted at the inquiry:-

- a) the principal counter-proposal suggested that the Barking and Dagenham Borough wards of Alibon, Goresbrook and Thames should be included in Barking BC; the Barking and Dagenham Borough wards of Chadwell Heath, Heath and Whalebone should be included in Dagenham and Rainham BC; the Havering Borough wards of Gooshays and Heaton should be included in Hornchurch and Upminster BC; and the Havering Borough ward of Hylands should be included in Romford BC;
- b) there were four counter-proposals directed to different ways in which the link between the Havering Borough wards of Elm Park and of Hacton and St Andrew's could be retained. However, only one attracted any support at the inquiry. The other three, which had no support and no one to speak to them, all had significant disadvantages when compared to the other counter-proposals and were rejected by the Assistant Commissioner;
- c) a sixth counter-proposal, which addressed the Elm Park issue also attracted some support, but joined the Elm Park ward only with the St Andrew's ward in a proposed Hornchurch and Becontree Heath BC, whilst the Hacton ward remained detached from it in a proposed Upminster BC;
- d) a seventh counter-proposal, which received neither support nor promotion at the inquiry, reduced the electoral disparity but produced two cross-borough boundary seats and resolved none of the problems identified by the evidence and the principal counter-proposal. This was accordingly rejected by the Assistant Commissioner; and
- e) there was also an unsupported proposal for a different pairing of boroughs, but with no detail as to how this might be achieved. Other witnesses asked for the retention of five seats.

Local Inquiry and Assistant Commissioner's Report

14. We were required to hold an inquiry. Following the announcement of the inquiry, twenty-one representations were received, of which eight supported all or parts of our proposals, one supported parts whilst objecting to other parts and twelve objected to them. Some of the representations were in response to the counter-proposals to our provisional recommendations. The Assistant Commissioner reported that the main issues were those which were addressed in the counter-proposals identified above.

15. The Assistant Commissioner supported the pairing of the two boroughs. She rejected the argument that the boroughs should not be paired and allocated two and three constituencies respectively. She considered that it was inevitable that a considerable degree of disruption to the current constituencies would be necessary, but it was important to keep

disruption to a minimum and to maintain local ties. She noted that the reduction in the number of constituencies and the new pairing had led to a number of counter-proposals.

The principal counter-proposal

16. The Assistant Commissioner noted that this counter-proposal affected all four constituencies. She also noted that the shapes of the constituencies were not as good as those in the provisional recommendations (Dagenham and Rainham BC stretched from the Barking and Dagenham Borough ward of Chadwell Heath in the north-west, to the Havering Borough ward of Rainham and Wennington in the south-east), but that it produced acceptable levels of disparity and deviation from the electoral quota and borough average. She reported that, in Barking and Dagenham, this counter-proposal had the advantages that it also resulted in the Heath ward, in the centre of Dagenham, remaining in Dagenham and Rainham BC and in the Thames ward remaining in Barking BC; and in Havering, the advantages of the Emerson Park and Harold Wood wards being included in Hornchurch and Upminster BC and the Squirrel's Heath ward remaining in Romford BC. Further, fewer electors were moved than in the provisional proposals.

17. She considered that the main advantages of the counter-proposal were that more local ties were maintained than in our provisional proposals, some of the objections to the provisional recommendations made by other groups were addressed and that it had the support of local political groups and some members of the public. She considered that the main disadvantages were that in Havering, the Elm Park ward was separated from the town of Hornchurch, and in particular, from the Hacton and St Andrew's wards, and that the Rainham and Wennington, and South Hornchurch wards were also separated from Hornchurch. Nevertheless, she concluded that of all the proposals it did the most to maintain the main local links and also caused the least disruption.

The counter-proposals affecting Elm Park ward

18. The Assistant Commissioner identified the four counter-proposals which maintained the ties between the Elm Park and the Hacton and St Andrew's wards. She rejected three because they had little or no support, were not improvements on other counter-proposals and had major defects such as too large an electoral disparity, or produced unsatisfactory cross-borough constituencies. The counter-proposal which attracted some support had the additional advantage of maintaining local ties between Harold Wood and Harold Hill, but she rejected it because it placed the centre of Dagenham in Romford BC and separated it from the four southern Dagenham wards of Albion, Parsloes, River and Valence, and also separated the Havering Park and Squirrel's Heath wards from Romford BC.

The fifth counter-proposal affecting Elm Park ward

19. The Assistant Commissioner reported that this counter-proposal also sought to avoid separating the Elm Park ward from Hornchurch and Upminster BC, but in so doing, separated it from the Hacton ward. She noted that it had an advantage in that links between Harold Hill and Harold Wood were maintained. However, she rejected this counter-proposal because of its unsatisfactory division of Dagenham and she noted that it proposed forming two cross-borough boundary constituencies.

20. Although the Assistant Commissioner considered that our provisional recommendations produced four reasonably shaped constituencies with acceptable figures she decided to reject them, primarily because the Barking and Dagenham Borough ward of Heath, which the evidence suggested was the heart of Dagenham town, would be included in Barking BC. Our proposals were also rejected because she considered that they disregarded the links between Harold Hill and Harold Wood, Hylands and Romford, and Elm Park and Hornchurch. Despite some disadvantages, she recommended that the principal counter-proposal offered the best solution and that it be adopted.

Revised Recommendations

21. We agreed with the Assistant Commissioner's recommendations, which would result in alterations to all four of our provisionally recommended constituencies. We accordingly published the following revised recommendations:-

	2000 electorate
Barking BC	72,498
Dagenham and Rainham BC	71,205
Hornchurch and Upminster BC	79,496
Romford BC	<u>69,536</u>
	<u><u>292,735</u></u>

Further Representations

22. Following publication of our revised recommendations, we received seventy-six representations, of which fifty-four supported our revised recommendations, one made no comment and twenty-one (including 483 proformas) objected to our revised recommendations. The main issues raised were objections to:-

- a) the division of the current Hornchurch BC between the proposed Dagenham and Rainham BC and Hornchurch and Upminster BC;
- b) the division of Dagenham between constituencies;
- c) the inclusion of the Elm Park, Rainham and Wennington, and South Hornchurch wards in Dagenham and Rainham BC;
- d) the high electorate in Hornchurch and Upminster BC; and
- e) the London Borough of Havering losing one constituency.

23. We considered that all the above representations repeated objections which had already been considered at the inquiry and that none contained significant new evidence. We were therefore satisfied that our revised recommendations did not need to be modified.

Recommendation

24. We therefore recommend the adoption of the following constituencies containing the wards as listed in Appendix C:-

	2000 electorate
Barking BC	72,498
Dagenham and Rainham BC	71,205
Hornchurch and Upminster BC	79,496
Romford BC	<u>69,536</u>
	<u><u>292,735</u></u>

BARNET

The Number of Electors

1. There are currently three constituencies in the London Borough of Barnet:-

	2000 electorate
Chipping Barnet BC	69,824
Finchley and Golders Green BC	73,765
Hendon BC	<u>77,077</u>
	<u><u>220,666</u></u>

The Number of Constituencies

2. Barnet had a 2000 parliamentary electorate of 220,666, which gave a theoretical entitlement to 3.16 constituencies. We decided that the borough should continue to be reviewed separately and that it should continue to be allocated three constituencies. With three seats, the average constituency electorate in the borough would be 73,555, which is 3,620 above the electoral quota. The electorates of the three existing constituencies produced a disparity of 7,253 which our provisional recommendations reduced to 3,090.

Provisional Recommendations

3. As a result of changes to ward boundaries in the borough, seven of the new wards are partly in one constituency and partly in another. Our provisional recommendations realigned the constituency boundaries with the new ward boundaries. We proposed that the four divided wards of Finchley Church End, Garden Suburb, Golders Green and Woodhouse should be included in Finchley and Golders Green BC, the divided Mill Hill ward should be included in Hendon BC and that the divided Underhill ward should be included in Chipping Barnet BC.

4. In order to create constituencies with a low disparity, we proposed that the divided ward of Coppetts should be included in Chipping Barnet BC, even though the larger part of this ward is currently in Finchley and Golders Green BC.

5. Our provisional recommendations were:-

	2000 electorate
Chipping Barnet BC	74,890
Finchley and Golders Green BC	71,800
Hendon BC	<u>73,976</u>
	<u><u>220,666</u></u>

Representations

6. Following publication of our provisional recommendations we received twelve representations, eleven of which approved of the provisional recommendations and one which made general comments about the review of constituencies in North London.

Recommendation

7. No local inquiry was required to be held. We were satisfied that no compelling argument against our provisional recommendations had been put forward and, in the circumstances, we decided not to use our discretion to hold an inquiry. In view of this, and given the support received for our proposals, we recommend that the borough should continue to have three constituencies containing the wards as listed in Appendix C:-

	2000 electorate
Chipping Barnet BC	74,890
Finchley and Golders Green BC	71,800
Hendon BC	<u>73,976</u>
	<u>220,666</u>

BEXLEY AND GREENWICH

The Number of Electors

1. There are currently five constituencies in the paired London Boroughs of Bexley and Greenwich:-

	2000 electorate
Bexleyheath and Crayford BC	64,082
Eltham BC	57,876
Erith and Thamesmead BC	65,832
Greenwich and Woolwich BC	62,735
Old Bexley and Sidcup BC	68,380
	<hr/>
	<hr/>
	318,905

The Number of Constituencies

2. Bexley had a 2000 parliamentary electorate of 167,946, which gave a theoretical entitlement to 2.40 constituencies. We noted that if the borough were reviewed separately and either two or three constituencies allocated, the borough average would be more than 10,000 from the electoral quota, and Thamesmead Town would have to be divided.

3. Greenwich had a 2000 parliamentary electorate of 150,959, which gave a theoretical entitlement to 2.16 constituencies. We noted that if the borough were reviewed separately and two constituencies allocated, the borough average would be 75,480, which is 5,545 above the electoral quota.

4. The paired boroughs had a 2000 parliamentary electorate of 318,905, which gave a theoretical entitlement to 4.56 constituencies. We therefore provisionally decided that Bexley and Greenwich should continue to be paired and retain five constituencies. This gave an average constituency electorate of 63,781, which is 6,154 below the electoral quota. The existing constituency electorates ranged from 57,876 in Eltham BC to 68,380 in Old Bexley and Sidcup BC, a disparity of 10,504.

Provisional Recommendations

5. As a result of changes to the borough ward boundaries in Bexley and Greenwich, fourteen of the new wards are divided between the existing constituencies. We noted that making only the minimum changes required to realign ward and constituency boundaries would involve 26,114 electors, produce an Eltham constituency with an electorate more than 13,000 below the electoral quota, and increase the disparity between the electorates of the constituencies to more than 16,000. We therefore proposed changes to Bexleyheath and Crayford BC, Eltham BC, and Greenwich and Woolwich BC in order to reduce the disparity.

6. We decided that the Bexley Borough ward of Lesnes Abbey, which is currently divided between Bexleyheath and Crayford BC and Erith and Thamesmead BC, should be included in Erith and Thamesmead BC; that the Greenwich Borough ward of Glyndon, which is currently divided between Eltham BC, Erith and Thamesmead BC, and Greenwich and Woolwich BC should be included in Greenwich and Woolwich BC; and that the Greenwich

Borough ward of Kidbrooke with Hornfair, which is currently divided between Eltham BC and Greenwich and Woolwich BC should be included in Eltham BC.

7. The effect of these changes would reduce the existing disparity between the constituency electorates from 10,504 to 4,713. Our provisional recommendations were:-

	2000 electorate
Bexleyheath and Crayford BC	64,032
Eltham BC	64,907
Erith and Thamesmead BC	64,307
Greenwich and Woolwich BC	60,473
Old Bexley and Sidcup BC	<u>65,186</u>
	<u>318,905</u>

Representations

8. Following publication of our provisional recommendations we received a total of fifty-one representations, of which eighteen opposed all or part of our proposals. There was overall approval of our decision to continue the pairing of the boroughs. The main issues raised in the objections were principally contained in two unrelated counter-proposals affecting each borough:-

- a) in Greenwich the supporters of the first counter-proposal included the divided ward of Kidbrooke with Hornfair in Greenwich and Woolwich BC instead of in Eltham BC; and if the electoral figures meant this could not be achieved as a single transfer, and to equalise the electorates, they further proposed placing the divided wards of Glyndon and Plumstead in Erith and Thamesmead BC and Eltham BC, respectively; and
- b) in Bexley the second counter-proposal included the divided ward of Danson Park in Old Bexley and Sidcup BC instead of in Bexleyheath and Crayford BC, and the East Wickham ward in Bexleyheath and Crayford BC instead of in Old Bexley and Sidcup BC.

Local Inquiry and Assistant Commissioner's Report

9. We were required to hold an inquiry. Following the announcement of the inquiry a further eleven representations were received. One of them included a counter-proposal which was a variation of the first counter-proposal and affected the two constituencies wholly in Greenwich. Four representations were received after the inquiry had finished. The new counter-proposal submitted that, in Greenwich, there should be an exchange of the divided wards of Kidbrooke with Hornfair in Eltham BC, and Woolwich Common in Greenwich and Woolwich BC.

The Greenwich Borough ward of Kidbrooke with Hornfair

10. There were many local objections to our provisional recommendation to place this ward in Eltham BC, and these included a petition in support of the first counter-proposal containing 237 signatures.

11. The Assistant Commissioner reported that there was much evidence that Hornfair, and other parts of the Kidbrooke with Hornfair ward that lie north of Shooters Hill Road, had strong local ties with Charlton and the Greenwich and Woolwich constituency, although there was also evidence of local ties between the southern part of the ward and Eltham. However, he referred to what he described as the unacceptable disparity in electorates that would occur if the ward remained in Greenwich and Woolwich BC, and he supported our proposed inclusion of the ward in Eltham BC. He considered that it was without question the best solution to the problems presented by the conflicting requirements of equalising constituency electorates whilst respecting local boundaries and ties.

Counter-proposal involving the Greenwich Borough wards of Kidbrooke with Hornfair, Glyndon, and Plumstead

12. The Assistant Commissioner reported that there was opposition to the proposal that the electoral disparity caused by moving the Kidbrooke with Hornfair ward could be resolved by also moving the Glyndon and Plumstead wards. The opposition submitted that the Plumstead ward had no affinity with Eltham, and that the people of Plumstead had not been consulted on the matter and would be opposed to it. He also reported opposition to the counter-proposal on the grounds that Plumstead had community links with both the areas of Abbey Wood to its east and Glyndon to its west, and that its removal to a constituency away from both of them could not be defended. He reported further opposition to the counter-proposal in that the inclusion of the Plumstead ward in the Eltham constituency would create an awkward shape, and that part of central Plumstead would be almost detached from the rest of the constituency, with only circuitous road connections to Eltham.

13. The Assistant Commissioner considered that Kidbrooke was more naturally linked to the Eltham area than was Plumstead and that the counter-proposal created a poorly shaped Erith and Thamesmead constituency. He concluded that the counter-proposal was flawed and involved major change and he rejected it.

Counter-proposal involving the Greenwich Borough wards of Kidbrooke with Hornfair, and Woolwich Common

14. The Assistant Commissioner reported that the opposition to the third counter-proposal submitted that it would make no sense as it would take the Eltham constituency almost into Woolwich town centre. He also reported that there was no general support from the residents in the Woolwich Common ward for the counter-proposal, which had been put forward at a late stage and, it had been suggested, would be widely opposed if it were generally known. He concluded that the Woolwich Common ward lay more naturally in the Greenwich and Woolwich constituency than did the Kidbrooke part of the Kidbrooke with Hornfair ward. He rejected the counter-proposal.

Counter-proposal involving the Bexley Borough wards of Danson Park and East Wickham

15. The Assistant Commissioner reported that the second counter-proposal would involve the movement between constituencies of 13,064 electors in Bexley, whereas our proposals would involve the movement of only 3,194 electors. He further reported that opponents of the counter-proposal stated that the East Wickham ward was part of Welling rather than Bexleyheath, that the ward was more strongly associated with the Falconwood and Welling

ward to its south, and that the eastern part of the Danson Park ward was essentially part of the Bexleyheath area and should be included in that constituency.

16. The Assistant Commissioner could see no strong reason for moving the East Wickham ward from one constituency to another and concluded that the Danson Park ward was better placed in Bexleyheath and Crayford BC. He therefore rejected the counter-proposal.

Name of the Erith and Thamesmead constituency

17. A suggestion was made that the Erith and Thamesmead constituency should be renamed Erith, Abbey Wood and Thamesmead BC, Greenwich East and North Bexley BC, or Greenwich North East and Bexley Riverside BC to describe the constituency more accurately. The Assistant Commissioner rejected these suggestions.

Recommendation

18. We agreed with the Assistant Commissioner's recommendations. We accepted that local ties would be broken in the Hornfair part of the Kidbrooke with Hornfair ward by including the ward in Eltham BC but, as adjustments had to be made in order to equalise constituency electorates, we considered the recommendation to be the better solution. We therefore recommend the adoption of the following constituencies containing the wards as listed in Appendix C:-

	2000 electorate
Bexleyheath and Crayford BC	64,032
Eltham BC	64,907
Erith and Thamesmead BC	64,307
Greenwich and Woolwich BC	60,473
Old Bexley and Sidcup BC	65,186
	<hr/>
	318,905

BRENT, CAMDEN AND WESTMINSTER (AND THE CITY OF LONDON)

1. In considering our review of the London Boroughs of Brent, Camden and Westminster (and the City of London), it is necessary also to consider the information relating to our review of the London Boroughs of Hammersmith and Fulham, Harrow, Hillingdon, Hounslow, and Kensington and Chelsea. In the event, we decided to hold one local inquiry that considered our provisional recommendations for all eight London Boroughs, as well as counter-proposals that we received which suggested alternative pairings of the boroughs to those we had proposed.

The Number of Electors in Brent

2. There are currently three constituencies in the London Borough of Brent:-

	2000 electorate
Brent East BC	56,777
Brent North BC	57,162
Brent South BC	<u>54,609</u>
	<u>168,548</u>

The Number of Electors in Camden

3. There are currently two constituencies in the London Borough of Camden:-

	2000 Electorate
Hampstead and Highgate BC	64,616
Holborn and St Pancras BC	<u>62,187</u>
	<u>126,803</u>

The Number of Electors in Westminster (and the City of London)

4. There is currently one whole constituency in the City of Westminster (and the City of London) and another, which is partly in Westminster (and the City of London) and partly in the Royal Borough of Kensington and Chelsea. The electoral figures set out below for these two constituencies relate only to those electors who are within Westminster (and the City of London):-

	2000 electorate
Cities of London and Westminster BC	69,687
Regent's Park and North Kensington BC (part)	<u>50,950</u>
	<u>120,637</u>

The Number of Constituencies

5. Brent had a 2000 parliamentary electorate of 168,548, which gave a theoretical entitlement to 2.41 constituencies. We noted that if three constituencies were retained in Brent the borough average would be 56,183. Each constituency would therefore be, on

average, 13,752 below the electoral quota and 3,752 over our 10,000 threshold. If two constituencies were allocated to Brent, the average electorate would be 84,274, which is 14,339 above the electoral quota and 4,339 over our 10,000 threshold.

6. Westminster and the City of London had a parliamentary electorate of 120,637, which gave a theoretical entitlement to 1.72 constituencies. We noted that if two constituencies were retained in Westminster and the City of London the borough average would be 60,319. Each seat would therefore be, on average, 9,616 below the electoral quota.

7. Although Westminster and the City of London did not require a partner, it was apparent that Brent did. Brent's neighbouring boroughs are Barnet, Camden, Ealing, Harrow, Hammersmith and Fulham, Kensington and Chelsea, and Westminster and the City of London. We considered that Brent's boundaries with Camden, Hammersmith and Fulham, and Kensington and Chelsea were not ideal for creating a cross-borough boundary constituency. Also, we proposed to pair Hammersmith and Fulham with Kensington and Chelsea, to pair Harrow with Hillingdon, and to review Barnet, Camden, and Ealing individually, as these three boroughs did not need to be paired.

8. We therefore provisionally decided to recommend that the boroughs of Brent and Westminster and the City of London should be paired for the purpose of allocating parliamentary constituencies. We recognised that some major changes would have to be made to the existing constituencies within each borough, but considered such changes necessary in order to avoid excessive disparities and to bring electorates closer to the electoral quota in accordance with Rule 5.

9. The combined area of Brent, Westminster and the City of London had a 2000 electorate of 289,185, which gave a theoretical entitlement to 4.14 constituencies, and, on the basis that four constituencies were allocated, a combined borough average of 72,296. This is only 2,361 above the electoral quota and closer to the electoral quota than both the individual borough averages. We provisionally decided to allocate four constituencies to the pair instead of the five that would have been allocated if the boroughs had been reviewed separately. The electorates of the five existing constituencies in the combined area ranged from 54,609 in Brent South BC to 74,808 (including 23,858 Kensington and Chelsea electors) in Regent's Park and North Kensington BC, a high disparity of 20,199, which our proposals would reduce.

10. Camden had a 2000 parliamentary electorate of 126,803, which gave a theoretical entitlement to 1.81 constituencies. We decided that the borough should continue to be reviewed separately and that it should continue to be allocated two constituencies. With two constituencies, the borough average would be 63,402, which is 6,533 below the electoral quota. The electorates of the two existing constituencies produced a disparity of 2,429, which our provisional recommendations would reduce.

Provisional Recommendations

11. As a result of changes to ward boundaries, eleven of the new wards, nine in Brent and two in Westminster, are partly in one constituency and partly in another. The review provided the opportunity to remove these anomalies by wholly including wards within a constituency.

12. We proposed that three Brent Borough wards should be joined with eight City of Westminster wards to form a cross-borough boundary constituency named Regent's Park and Brent South BC, with an electorate of 72,805. We also proposed that the remaining eighteen Brent wards should form new Brent East and Brent West constituencies, with nine wards each.

13. We also proposed that the remaining twelve City of Westminster wards and the City of London should form a constituency named Cities of London and Westminster BC. This constituency would have an electorate of 73,186 and would be based closely on the existing constituency, but would take account of the new ward boundaries.

14. We considered that one of the merits of our proposals for Brent and the City of Westminster (and the City of London) would be that only one constituency would cross the common borough boundary. The net effect of these changes would reduce the current disparity between the constituency electorates from 20,199 to 1,792.

15. As a result of changes to the ward boundaries in Camden, four of the new wards are divided between the existing constituencies. Our provisional recommendations realigned the constituency boundaries with the new ward boundaries. We provisionally decided that the divided wards of Gospel Oak and Highgate should be included in Hampstead and Highgate BC and that the divided wards of Camden Town with Primrose Hill, and Haverstock should be included in Holborn and St Pancras BC. The disparity between the constituency electorates would be reduced to 1,069.

16. Our provisional recommendations for Brent and Westminster (and the City of London) were:-

	2000 electorate
Brent East BC	71,800
Brent West BC	71,394
Cities of London and Westminster BC	73,186
Regent's Park and Brent South BC	72,805
	<hr/>
	289,185
	<hr/>

17. Our provisional recommendations for Camden were:-

	2000 Electorate
Hampstead and Highgate BC	62,867
Holborn and St Pancras BC	63,936
	<hr/>
	126,803
	<hr/>

Representations made in respect of Brent and Westminster (and the City of London)

18. Following publication of our provisional recommendations we received a total of 195 representations, of which 135 opposed all or part of our proposals.

19. There was significant support for the proposal that Brent should be paired. The main issues raised in the objections related to which borough its partner should be and how the pairing should be effected and were principally contained in four counter-proposals:-

- a) the first counter-proposal paired Brent with Harrow and allocated five constituencies, and proposed that Westminster and the City of London should be reviewed separately and allocated two constituencies. It also affected other boroughs;
- b) the second counter-proposal, which was supported by a number of objectors, paired Brent with Camden and allocated four constituencies, and proposed that the pairing of Kensington and Chelsea, Westminster and the City of London should be retained and allocated three constituencies. It also affected other boroughs;
- c) a third counter-proposal was identical to the second counter-proposal regarding Kensington and Chelsea, and Westminster and the City of London, but contained the counter-proposal that Brent should be paired with Hammersmith and Fulham and that four constituencies should be allocated; and
- d) a fourth counter-proposal was based on the provisional recommendations for Brent, Westminster and the City of London, but included three different wards in the Cities of London and Westminster constituency in exchange for three different wards in the Regent's Park and Brent South constituency, which was renamed Paddington and Brent South BC.

Representations made in respect of Camden

20. Following publication of our provisional recommendations we received thirty-three representations, of which twenty-four opposed all or part of our proposals. Apart from a counter-proposal to pair Brent with Camden (the second counter-proposal mentioned above in the section headed "Representations made in respect of Brent and Westminster (and the City of London)" all of the objectors were based in Brent. They were not objecting to our provisional recommendations for Camden per se, but were objecting to the proposal to pair Brent with Westminster and the City of London. They wished Brent to be reviewed separately and to retain three constituencies but, if it had to be paired, they argued that Camden (or Harrow) would make a better partner than Westminster.

21. We were required to hold an inquiry for each of the three boroughs.

Local Inquiry and Assistant Commissioner's Report

22. In view of the alternative pairings of boroughs proposed in the counter-proposals (principally in the first and second counter-proposals), we decided to hold one inquiry to consider Brent, Camden, Hammersmith and Fulham, Harrow, Hillingdon, Hounslow, Kensington and Chelsea, and Westminster (and the City of London) which was held at three venues: Wembley, Hammersmith and Uxbridge. Following the announcement of the inquiry a further 152 representations were received. The main issues were:-

- a) which boroughs should be reviewed separately, which boroughs should be paired, and what the best pairings would be;

- b) the number of constituencies allocated to the combined area of the eight boroughs (and the City of London);
- c) the first wide-ranging counter-proposal for a different arrangement of paired and single boroughs and the allocation of an extra constituency;
- d) the second wide-ranging counter-proposal that involved placing all the eight boroughs in pairs;
- e) a large number of other counter-proposals;
- f) the distribution of wards between constituencies within Hillingdon;
- g) the distribution of wards between constituencies within Brent; and
- h) the names of some constituencies.

The first counter-proposal

23. This counter-proposed a total allocation of seventeen constituencies to the combined area and proposed that:-

- i) Brent and Harrow should be paired and have an allocation of five constituencies;
- ii) Camden should be reviewed separately and have an allocation of two constituencies;
- iii) Westminster (and the City of London) should be reviewed separately and have an allocation of two constituencies;
- iv) Hammersmith and Fulham, and Kensington and Chelsea should be paired and have an allocation of three constituencies; and
- v) Hillingdon and Hounslow should be paired and have an allocation of five constituencies.

The second counter-proposal

24. This counter-proposed a total allocation of sixteen constituencies to the combined area and proposed that:-

- i) Brent and Camden should be paired and have an allocation of four constituencies;
- ii) Westminster (and the City of London) and Kensington and Chelsea should be paired and have an allocation of three constituencies;
- iii) Hammersmith and Fulham, and Hounslow should be paired and have an allocation of four constituencies; and

iv) Harrow and Hillingdon should be paired and have an allocation of five constituencies.

Assistant Commissioner's recommendations

25. The Assistant Commissioner recommended a total allocation of sixteen constituencies to the combined area as we had proposed, and that:-

- a) Brent and Camden should be paired and have an allocation of four constituencies;
- b) Westminster (and the City of London) should be reviewed separately and have an allocation of two constituencies;
- c) Hammersmith and Fulham, and Kensington and Chelsea should be paired and have an allocation of three constituencies;
- d) Harrow and Hillingdon should be paired and have an allocation of five constituencies; and
- e) Hounslow should be reviewed separately and have an allocation of two constituencies.

Other counter-proposals

26. The Assistant Commissioner rejected all the other counter-proposals except where they coincided with those parts of the provisional recommendations that he had endorsed or with those parts of the wide-ranging counter-proposals that he had accepted. There was little support for these other counter-proposals, particularly those that involved yet further pairings. A request to bring in Ealing and retain its pairing with Hammersmith and Fulham was rejected because it had been made much too late in the process and we had already agreed to review Ealing separately.

Brent, Camden, and Westminster (and the City of London)

27. The first counter-proposal approved of our proposals for Camden, but suggested that Brent should be paired with Harrow and a new cross-borough boundary constituency named Kenton and Queensbury BC be created. This constituency would contain five Brent wards and three Harrow wards. The remainder of Brent would be divided between the Brent Central and Brent South East constituencies, each containing eight wards. The remainder of Harrow would be divided between the Harrow East and Harrow West constituencies, each containing nine wards. It was submitted that there was a far greater continuous residential area between Brent and Harrow than between Brent and Westminster. This pairing would result in the allocation of one more constituency than we had provisionally recommended. It was also counter-proposed that Westminster (and the City of London) should be reviewed separately and be allocated two constituencies.

28. The second counter-proposal suggested that Brent should be paired with Camden proposing a new cross-borough boundary constituency named Hampstead and Kilburn BC. This constituency would contain three Brent wards and seven Camden wards. The remaining eleven Camden wards would form a Holborn and St Pancras constituency. Two options for

dealing with the remaining eighteen Brent wards were proposed. The first option was similar to the provisional recommendations with the Brent East and Brent West constituencies each containing nine wards. In the second option, the remainder of Brent would be divided between the Brent North and Brent South constituencies, each with nine wards. It was submitted that there was a lack of affinity between Brent and Westminster and that the best alternative would be a pairing of Brent with Camden because that would enable Kilburn to be united in one constituency.

29. The Assistant Commissioner reported that there was universal support for our proposal to continue the association of the City of London with Westminster. However, there was almost universal hostility to our proposed pairing of Brent with Westminster (and the City of London). Some wished Brent to be reviewed separately and to retain three constituencies; some supported the first counter-proposal's pairing of Brent with Harrow; and some supported the second counter-proposal's pairing of Brent with Camden. There were no objections from within Camden to our proposal to review Camden separately.

30. The majority of those who made a representation agreed that Brent needed to be paired. Some of those who wished Brent to be reviewed separately supported the second counter-proposal's pairing of Brent and Camden as a second choice. Some who supported a Brent and Harrow pairing preferred a Brent and Camden pairing as a second choice, rather than a Brent and Westminster (and the City of London) pairing. Others who supported a Brent and Camden pairing preferred a Brent and Harrow pairing as a second choice rather than a Brent and Westminster (and the City of London) pairing.

31. The Assistant Commissioner considered that Brent could not be reviewed separately and retain three constituencies because the electoral arithmetic would not allow it. In the light of the significant level of acceptance that Brent needed to be paired, and the strong opposition to our provisionally recommended pairing of Brent with Westminster (and the City of London), his view was that Camden (as in the second counter-proposal) or Harrow (as in the first counter-proposal) would be a much better potential long-term partner for Brent and he was fully persuaded that the pairing of Brent with Westminster (and the City of London) would be a far from satisfactory pairing and a solution of last resort.

32. He accepted the evidence given in favour of both counter-proposals and considered that, in terms of cross-border affinity, there was little or nothing to choose between them. However, on balance, he concluded that the second counter-proposal's pairing of Brent with Camden was the better of these two options because it would involve the allocation of four, rather than five constituencies and it had the potential to form a relatively stable basis for Parliamentary representation in the two boroughs for the foreseeable future. Also, whilst the first counter-proposal's Kenton and Queensbury constituency made sense, it produced anomalies or difficulties elsewhere, particularly in Harrow.

33. The second counter-proposal suggested two options within Brent. The first envisaged a broadly east-west division and the second a broadly north-south division. Another local submission suggested a variant of the first option that switched the wards of Alperton and Tokyngton between the two constituencies. The proponents of the second counter-proposal amended its first option, at the inquiry, in favour of that modification. The Assistant Commissioner recommended that the modified first option should be adopted because it was a rational scheme and clearly commanded greater support than the second option.

34. He agreed that the second counter-proposal's suggested names of Brent North and Brent Central were appropriate because Brent had a north-west to south-east orientation and because the three south-eastern Brent wards in the cross-borough boundary constituency were to be paired with Camden wards.

Revised Recommendations

35. We agreed with all of the Assistant Commissioner's recommendations. We accepted his conclusion that Westminster (and the City of London) should not be paired with Brent, and we accepted in full his recommendations for Brent, Camden and Westminster (and the City of London).

36. The Assistant Commissioner had carefully weighed each of the various issues in terms of their effects on local ties, the electoral figures produced, and the levels of support and opposition they attracted. In some cases, he had additionally considered other factors such as the local history of constituency boundaries, focal points within constituencies, the shapes of the constituencies and the logic of the various proposals. All his recommendations had been considered carefully and justified and we agreed with his conclusions. We, therefore, revised our recommendations for these four constituencies and confirmed our provisional view that Brent needed to be paired. We accepted that Camden was the best partner of those available and therefore consequently accepted that Westminster (and the City of London) should not be paired with Brent.

37. We accordingly published the following revised recommendations for Brent and Camden:-

2000 electorate	
Brent Central BC	71,073
Brent North BC	71,398
Hampstead and Kilburn BC	74,573
Holborn and St Pancras BC	78,307
	<hr/>
	295,351
	<hr/>

38. We also published revised recommendations for the two constituencies in Westminster (and the City of London):-

2000 electorate	
Cities of London and Westminster BC	61,621
Westminster North BC	59,016
	<hr/>
	120,637
	<hr/>

Further Representations

Brent and Camden

39. Following publication of our revised recommendations we received thirty representations. Six of these, including the supporters of the original second counter-proposal, approved of the revised recommendations and in particular the decision to pair Brent with Camden.

40. Eleven representations objected to the two boroughs being paired. All but one of these suggested either that the status quo should be retained, whereby Camden is not paired with another borough, or that Brent should be paired with Westminster, as we originally proposed. Five of the representations supported the same proposal that the Mapesbury and Queens Park wards should be exchanged.

41. This counter-proposal, whilst accepting the pairing of Brent with Camden, objected to the composition of the Brent Central, and Hampstead and Kilburn constituencies. The representations were that the Mapesbury ward of Brent should be transferred from the revised Brent Central constituency to the revised Hampstead and Kilburn constituency with the Queens Park ward of Brent being transferred in the opposite direction. Ten letters supported this position.

42. We noted that the placing of these wards, although not the subject of a personal presentation at the inquiry, had been the subject of a counter-proposal made before the inquiry and had been fully discussed, and the Assistant Commissioner was entitled to give it full consideration. The supporters of the representations therefore had the opportunity to comment on this issue at the inquiry.

43. We noted that the supporters of the representations claimed that their proposal would unite both sides of the Kilburn Road in one constituency but no new evidence was advanced in support of this.

44. We considered the evidence that had been submitted in the representations, the evidence given at the local inquiry and the report submitted by the Assistant Commissioner. We noted that the Assistant Commissioner had recommended, and we had agreed, the adoption of a combination of the two main counter-proposals that had been submitted in respect of the provisional recommendations.

45. We considered that the Assistant Commissioner had given those present at the inquiry every opportunity to state their case, their preferences and opposition to the other proposals that had been submitted both before and during the inquiry. We concluded that those matters relating to Brent and Camden had received a full and thorough examination, particularly in respect of which borough Brent should be paired with, and that we would not make further changes to our revised recommendations.

Recommendation

46. We therefore recommend the adoption of the following constituencies in Brent and Camden containing the wards as listed in Appendix C:-

	2000 electorate
Brent Central BC	71,073
Brent North BC	71,398
Hampstead and Kilburn BC	74,573
Holborn and St Pancras BC	<u>78,307</u>
	<u><u>295,351</u></u>

Westminster (and the City of London)

47. We received seven representations following publication of our revised recommendations including four of support. The three representations that did not support the revised recommendations wanted Westminster (and the City of London) to be paired with another borough for the allocation of constituencies and objected to the low electorates of the two constituencies that would result from a failure to do so.

48. We noted that the issues relating to whether Westminster (and the City of London) should be reviewed separately or paired with Brent, as we had originally proposed, or with another borough, as proposed by others, had been thoroughly debated at the local inquiry. We had accepted the Assistant Commissioner's recommendation that Westminster (and the City of London) should not be paired with another borough and we considered that the electorates of the two resulting constituencies were within acceptable levels. We concluded that there was nothing in the latest representations to persuade us to make further change to our revised recommendations.

Recommendation

49. We therefore recommend the adoption of the following constituencies in Westminster (and the City of London) containing the wards as listed in Appendix C:-

	2000 electorate
Cities of London and Westminster BC	61,621
Westminster North BC	<u>59,016</u>
	<u><u>120,637</u></u>

BROMLEY AND LEWISHAM

The Number of Electors in Bromley

1. There are currently three constituencies in the London Borough of Bromley:-

	2000 electorate
Beckenham BC	72,650
Bromley and Chislehurst BC	71,240
Orpington BC	<u>78,869</u>
	<u><u>222,759</u></u>

The Number of Electors in Lewisham

2. There are currently three constituencies in the London Borough of Lewisham:-

	2000 electorate
Lewisham, Deptford BC	59,493
Lewisham East BC	56,673
Lewisham West BC	<u>58,869</u>
	<u><u>175,035</u></u>

The Number of Constituencies

3. Bromley had a 2000 parliamentary electorate of 222,759, which gave a theoretical entitlement to 3.19 constituencies. We noted that if three constituencies were retained in Bromley the average constituency in the borough would be 74,253. Each constituency would, therefore, be on average 4,318 above the electoral quota. Lewisham had a parliamentary electorate of 175,035, which gave a theoretical entitlement to 2.50 constituencies. We noted that if three constituencies were retained in Lewisham the average constituency in the borough would be 58,345. Each constituency would, therefore, be on average 11,590 below the electoral quota and 1,590 outside the 10,000 threshold.

4. Although Bromley did not require a partner, it was apparent that Lewisham did. Lewisham's neighbouring boroughs are Bromley, Greenwich and Southwark. However, we decided that Greenwich and Southwark should continue to be paired with Bexley and Lambeth, respectively. We therefore provisionally recommended that the boroughs of Bromley and Lewisham be paired for the purpose of allocating parliamentary constituencies. We recognised that some major changes would have to be made to the existing constituencies within each borough, but considered such changes necessary in order to avoid excessive disparities and to bring the electorates closer to the electoral quota in accordance with Rule 5.

5. The combined area of Bromley and Lewisham had a 2000 electorate of 397,794, which gave a theoretical entitlement to 5.69 constituencies and on the basis that six constituencies were allocated, the combined borough average would be 66,299. This is only 3,636 below the electoral quota and closer to the electoral quota than either of the individual borough averages.

Provisional Recommendations

6. We provisionally allocated six constituencies to the combined area of Bromley and Lewisham, which is the same number that would have been allocated if the boroughs had been reviewed separately. The six existing constituencies in the combined area had electorates ranging from 56,673 in Lewisham East BC to 78,869 in Orpington BC, a large disparity of 22,196, which our provisional recommendations reduced to 5,849.

7. As a result of changes to ward boundaries, nine of the new wards, four in Bromley and five in Lewisham, are partly in one constituency and partly in another. Our provisional recommendations realigned the constituency boundaries with the new ward boundaries.

8. We proposed that the three Bromley Borough wards of Clock House, Crystal Palace, and Penge and Cator should be joined with the four Lewisham Borough wards of Bellingham, Forest Hill, Perry Vale and Sydenham to form a cross-borough boundary constituency named Lewisham West and Penge BC. We also proposed that the remaining fourteen Lewisham Borough wards should be divided equally between Lewisham, Deptford BC and Lewisham East BC.

9. We proposed that the revised Bromley and Chislehurst constituency should contain six of the new wards. We further proposed that the current Orpington constituency should be reduced in size by the removal of the Biggin Hill and Darwin wards. The Biggin Hill and Darwin wards would be joined with the five remaining Bromley Borough wards, three of which are currently wholly in Beckenham BC and two of which are currently divided between Beckenham BC and Bromley and Chislehurst BC, to form Beckenham and Biggin Hill BC.

10. We considered that one of the merits of our proposals was that only one constituency would cross the common borough boundary. We also noted that nearly the entire area of the new Biggin Hill and Darwin wards had previously been included in the same constituency with areas comprising the proposed Beckenham and Biggin Hill BC, when the constituency had been known as Ravensbourne BC.

11. Our provisional recommendations were:-

	2000 electorate
Beckenham and Biggin Hill BC	64,139
Bromley and Chislehurst BC	62,562
Lewisham, Deptford BC	67,682
Lewisham East BC	67,833
Lewisham West and Penge BC	68,411
Orpington BC	<u>67,167</u>
	<u><u>397,794</u></u>

Representations

12. Following publication of our provisional recommendations we received fifty-three representations. Thirty-four of these objected to all or part of our proposals and included four counter-proposals. There was considerable, but not unanimous, support for our proposal to

pair the two boroughs and allocate six seats. The main issues raised in the representations were directed at the proposed separation of the Biggin Hill and Darwin wards from Orpington BC, and at the boundary between Lewisham, Deptford BC and Lewisham East BC. The four counter-proposals were:-

- a) that the Boroughs of Bromley and Lewisham should be reviewed separately, with each borough retaining three constituencies and with each constituency based on minimum change realignment of the constituency boundaries with the new ward boundaries. It also proposed new names for four constituencies. There were alternative proposals to pair Bromley with Croydon and Lewisham with Southwark from another source;
- b) the second included the Bromley Borough wards of Biggin Hill and Darwin in Orpington BC, Bromley Common and Keston in Beckenham and Biggin Hill BC, and Cray Valley West in Bromley and Chislehurst BC. It also submitted that Beckenham and Biggin Hill BC should be named Beckenham BC;
- c) the third included the Bromley Borough wards of Biggin Hill, Bromley Common and Keston, and Darwin in Orpington BC, Cray Valley East and Cray Valley West in a Chislehurst-based constituency, and Bromley Town in a constituency named Bromley and Beckenham BC; and included the Lewisham Borough wards of Lewisham Central in Lewisham East BC and Rushey Green in Lewisham Deptford BC; and
- d) the fourth submitted that the Bromley Borough ward of Bromley Common and Keston should be included in Beckenham BC and that the Biggin Hill and Darwin wards should be included in Orpington BC. It also submitted that the name Beckenham BC should be retained.

13. In addition, objections were received to our proposal to include the Bromley Borough ward of Clock House in Lewisham West and Penge BC.

Local Inquiry and Assistant Commissioner's Report

14. We were required to hold an inquiry. Following the announcement of the inquiry a further eleven representations were received, but no new issues emerged. The Assistant Commissioner reported that the main issues raised at the inquiry were the same as those raised in the representations mentioned above, with the additional issues of the location of the Bromley Borough ward of Hayes and Coney Hall.

The pairing of Bromley and Lewisham, the cross-borough boundary constituency, and Clock House ward

15. The Assistant Commissioner considered that the creation of a cross-borough boundary constituency was necessary to reduce the disparity between constituencies in Bromley and Lewisham, and she was satisfied that our proposed cross-borough constituency of Lewisham West and Penge BC was the best solution. She noted that there was some objection to the constituency or to its proposed composition, but that there was also considerable support. She did not consider that the provisional recommendations significantly broke local ties and agreed that the inclusion of the Bromley Borough ward of Clock House in the constituency

was needed to produce a constituency close to the electoral quota. The proposal to retain the Clock House ward in the Beckenham constituency was rejected because it created a very low electorate for Lewisham West and Penge BC.

16. The Assistant Commissioner considered that the proposed name of Lewisham West and Penge BC, referring to a comprehensive geographical area in the north and to the name of a small town in the Bromley part of the constituency, was not balanced as it appeared to describe one part of the constituency more fully than the other. She therefore recommended that the constituency be called Sydenham and Penge BC.

17. Those proposals that involved pairing Bromley with Croydon, and Lewisham with Southwark were rejected as they had little or no support or created excessive disparities between the constituency electorates.

The Biggin Hill, Darwin, Cray Valley East, and Cray Valley West wards

18. The Assistant Commissioner reported evidence that the Bromley Borough wards of Biggin Hill and Darwin had much more in common with Orpington than they had with Beckenham and that there were very poor transport links between Biggin Hill and Beckenham. She concluded that our proposals for the two wards would significantly break local ties and that the case for retaining the two wards in Orpington BC was strong. She rejected the provisional recommendations and recommended that the two wards should remain in Orpington BC.

19. In order to accommodate the two wards in Orpington BC and secure a reduction in the constituency's electorate, she recommended that the Bromley Borough ward of Cray Valley West should be transferred to Bromley and Chislehurst BC, whilst retaining the Bromley Borough ward of Cray Valley East in Orpington BC, as proposed in the second counter-proposal. She justified this on the basis that the two wards were not inextricably linked, as stated in the third counter-proposal, because they were no longer centred on the villages of St Mary's Cray and St Paul's Cray. Both villages were now located in the Cray Valley East ward which had ties with Orpington. She concluded that the separation of the two wards would not break strong ties, whereas the separation of the Cray Valley East ward from Orpington would do so.

The Bromley Town, Bromley Common and Keston, and Hayes and Coney Hall wards

20. The Assistant Commissioner reported that the transfer of the Cray Valley West ward would result in a Bromley and Chislehurst constituency with a high electorate and therefore recommended that the Bromley Borough ward of Bromley Common and Keston should be transferred to a Beckenham constituency as proposed in the second and fourth counter-proposals. The transfer of the ward would compensate the Beckenham and Biggin Hill constituency for the loss of the Biggin Hill and Darwin wards. She accepted evidence that the Bromley Common and Keston ward had an independent nature and could probably be included in any of the three constituencies within Bromley Borough. She considered that arguments submitted in the third counter-proposal to place the Bromley Borough ward of Bromley Town in the same constituency as Beckenham town were less persuasive than those calling for them to remain in separate constituencies, thus avoiding the division of the commercial centre of Bromley. She also reported that, although the inclusion of the Bromley Borough ward of Hayes and Coney Hall in Beckenham and Biggin Hill BC would interfere

with local ties between Hayes and Bromley, the disruption would not be so significant as to prevent the ward being placed with the town of Beckenham. The Assistant Commissioner recommended that the existing constituency name of Beckenham BC should be retained in place of Beckenham and Biggin Hill BC.

The Lewisham Central and Rushey Green wards

21. The Assistant Commissioner noted that the third counter-proposal suggested the transfer of the Lewisham Borough ward of Lewisham Central from Lewisham, Deptford BC to Lewisham East BC and, in exchange, the Lewisham Borough ward of Rushey Green from Lewisham East BC to Lewisham, Deptford BC. It was claimed that the Lewisham Central ward had ties with the Blackheath, Grove Park and Lee Green areas and not with areas in the north of the borough, whereas the Rushey Green ward was more closely linked with the north of the borough. However, there was also evidence that Rushey Green was part of Catford in the Lewisham East constituency and that the counter-proposal would therefore split Catford between constituencies. She reported that, although the counter-proposal had much support, there was no compelling evidence of a likely breach of local ties which would be caused by our proposals. In the absence of such evidence, she recommended the adoption of the provisional recommendations.

Revised Recommendations

22. After considering all the evidence, we accepted all but one of the Assistant Commissioner's recommendations. We rejected her recommendation to change the name of the proposed Lewisham West and Penge BC to Sydenham and Penge BC. We considered that, whilst there was some support for the name Sydenham and Penge, it was not unanimous. We saw no reason why a constituency name could not include the name of a borough and the name of a town. We decided that, as Lewisham West was an existing constituency name, there was no need to change it since it accurately described that part of the borough contained in the constituency. We accordingly published the following revised recommendations:-

	2000 electorate
Beckenham BC	63,405
Bromley and Chislehurst BC	63,489
Lewisham, Deptford BC	67,682
Lewisham East BC	67,833
Lewisham West and Penge BC	68,411
Orpington BC	66,974
	<hr/>
	397,794

Further Representations

23. Following publication of our revised recommendations we received twelve representations, including three objections. Of the three, two objected to the Bromley Common and Keston ward being included in Beckenham BC, and one objected to the name Lewisham West and Penge BC and made a new counter-proposal to exchange the Bromley Borough wards of Copers Cope and Clock House between Beckenham BC and Lewisham West and Penge BC.

Recommendation

24. We noted that the number of objections was very small. We considered that the issue of the location of the Bromley Common and Keston ward had been fully discussed at the inquiry and we saw no reason to alter our decision that it should be included in Beckenham BC. The issue raised by the new counter-proposal had not been raised before or discussed at the inquiry. It had no support and we saw no value in pursuing it further. We considered that the name Lewisham West and Penge BC had been fully discussed at the inquiry and were satisfied that our proposed name for the constituency was the most appropriate. We concluded that our revised recommendations did not need to be modified.

25. We therefore recommend the adoption of the following constituencies containing the wards as listed in Appendix C:-

	2000 electorate
Beckenham BC	63,405
Bromley and Chislehurst BC	63,489
Lewisham, Deptford BC	67,682
Lewisham East BC	67,833
Lewisham West and Penge BC	68,411
Orpington BC	<u>66,974</u>
	<u><u>397,794</u></u>

CROYDON

The Number of Electors

1. There are currently three constituencies in the London Borough of Croydon:-

	2000 electorate
Croydon Central BC	79,167
Croydon North BC	77,799
Croydon South BC	<u>74,636</u>
	<u>231,602</u>

The Number of Constituencies

2. Croydon had a 2000 parliamentary electorate of 231,602, which gave a theoretical entitlement to 3.31 constituencies. We decided that the borough should continue to be reviewed separately and that it should continue to be allocated three constituencies. With three constituencies, the average constituency electorate in the borough would be 77,201, which is 7,266 above the electoral quota. The electorates of the three existing constituencies produced a disparity of 4,531 which our provisional recommendations increased to 6,399.

Provisional Recommendations

3. As a result of changes to ward boundaries in the borough, five of the new wards are partly in one constituency and partly in another. Our provisional recommendations realigned the constituency boundaries with the new ward boundaries. We proposed that the divided wards of Broad Green and South Norwood should be included in Croydon North BC, and that the divided wards of Croham, Selldon and Ballards, and Waddon should be included in Croydon South BC. Although this minimum change realignment resulted in an increased disparity between the constituencies with the highest and lowest electorates we considered this figure was acceptable as it avoided major changes being made.

4. Our provisional recommendations were:-

	2000 electorate
Croydon Central BC	73,420
Croydon North BC	79,819
Croydon South BC	<u>78,363</u>
	<u>231,602</u>

Representations

5. Following publication of our provisional recommendations we received twelve representations, of which ten approved of the provisional recommendations. One commented on the pairing of South London boroughs, the number of constituencies allocated and the size of electorates, and one other proposed that Croydon should be paired with Bromley.

Recommendation

6. No local inquiry was required to be held. We were satisfied that no compelling argument against our provisional recommendations had been put forward and, in the circumstances, we decided not to use our discretion to hold an inquiry. In view of this, and given the support received for our proposals, we recommend the adoption of the following constituencies containing the wards as listed in Appendix C:-

	2000 electorate
Croydon Central BC	73,420
Croydon North BC	79,819
Croydon South BC	<u>78,363</u>
	<u>231,602</u>

EALING

The Number of Electors

1. The London Borough of Ealing is currently paired with the London Borough of Hammersmith and Fulham with an allocation of four constituencies to the pair.
2. There are currently two whole constituencies in the London Borough of Ealing and another which is partly in Ealing and partly in the London Borough of Hammersmith and Fulham. The electoral figures set out below relate only to those electors who are within the London Borough of Ealing:-

	2000 electorate
Ealing North BC	78,668
Ealing, Southall BC	84,129
Ealing, Acton and Shepherd's Bush BC (part)	43,773
	206,570

The Number of Constituencies

3. Ealing had a 2000 parliamentary electorate of 206,570, which gave a theoretical entitlement to 2.95 constituencies. With three constituencies, the average constituency in the borough would be 68,857, which is 1,078 below the electoral quota. If the current pairing of Ealing with Hammersmith and Fulham were continued, five constituencies could be allocated, producing a combined average which would be 7,447 below the electoral quota. We therefore decided to review Ealing separately and to allocate three constituencies to the borough. We were aware that the decision to uncouple Ealing from Hammersmith and Fulham meant that some major changes would be required to the existing constituencies, but we considered the changes to be justified.

Provisional Recommendations

4. As a result of changes to ward boundaries, six of the new wards are partly in one constituency and partly in another. Our provisional recommendations realigned the constituency boundaries with the new ward boundaries.

5. There are twenty-three new wards in Ealing and, with an allocation of three constituencies, it would not be possible to have an even distribution. Two constituencies would contain eight wards each and one constituency would contain seven wards, which would result in a significant disparity between the electorates of the constituencies. We noted that Ealing, Southall BC had grown by 11.5% since the start of the previous review in 1991, whereas the electorate elsewhere in the borough had declined slightly, and we therefore considered that this should be the constituency that contained seven wards.

6. Our provisional recommendations placed the Cleveland ward, together with the three divided wards of Ealing Broadway, Ealing Common and Hanger Hill, in a new Ealing, Acton constituency to compensate for the loss of the Hammersmith and Fulham wards from the existing Ealing, Acton and Shepherd's Bush BC. We also proposed that the Lady Margaret ward, together with the divided wards of Greenford Broadway and Hobbayne, should be

included in a revised Ealing North constituency. We further proposed that the divided Dormers Wells ward should be included in a revised Ealing, Southall constituency. The effect of our changes would produce a disparity of 10,764.

7. Our provisional recommendations were:-

	2000 electorate
Ealing, Acton BC	71,562
Ealing North BC	72,886
Ealing, Southall BC	<u>62,122</u>
	<u>206,570</u>

Representations

8. Following publication of our provisional recommendations we received 149 representations, of which 122 objected to all or part of our proposals. Our proposal to allocate three whole constituencies to the borough met with wide approval, save for one objector who wished to reserve their position on that part of our proposal, whilst making no contrary proposal. The main issues raised in the objections concerned constituency names and ward transfers which were principally contained in three counter-proposals. All three counter-proposals proposed the inclusion of the Cleveland ward in Ealing North BC and the Lady Margaret ward in Ealing, Southall BC:-

- a) the second counter-proposal additionally included the Walpole ward in Ealing, Acton BC; and
- b) the third counter-proposal was the same as the second counter-proposal, but additionally included the Ealing Broadway ward in Ealing North BC, the Hobbayne ward in Ealing, Southall BC and the Northfield ward in Ealing, Acton BC.

Local Inquiry and Assistant Commissioner's Report

9. We were required to hold an inquiry. Following the announcement of the inquiry, a further two representations were received of which one objected to our proposals. The Assistant Commissioner reported that the issues raised at the inquiry were the same as those raised in the counter-proposals detailed above.

The Cleveland, Hobbayne and Lady Margaret wards

10. The Assistant Commissioner reported that there was widespread support for including the Cleveland ward in Ealing North BC and the Lady Margaret ward in Ealing, Southall BC, a feature common to all three counter-proposals, thus retaining the Cleveland and Hobbayne wards in the same constituency. He agreed and recommended that our provisional recommendations should be revised. Only one submission had not supported this proposal.

The Northfield and Walpole wards

11. The Assistant Commissioner reported that the second and third counter-proposals, which additionally included the Walpole ward in Ealing, Acton BC were objected to by the supporters of the first counter-proposal who argued that Ealing, Acton BC should be the seven ward constituency, with the Walpole ward remaining with the Northfield ward in Ealing, Southall BC. However, he disagreed and reported that, with electoral growth in the seven ward Ealing, Southall constituency, it was likely that the disparity would reduce by the time of the next general review, and recommended that the Walpole ward should be included in Ealing, Acton BC.

12. The Assistant Commissioner rejected the third counter-proposal as it had no support, apart from those features common to the other counter-proposals.

Constituency names

13. It was proposed that Ealing North BC should be renamed Ealing, Greenford BC. The proposal found no other support and it was objected to on the grounds that Greenford is just one of a number of small towns in the constituency. The Assistant Commissioner found no merit in the proposal as the composition of the constituency would remain largely unchanged, and that to change the name would "... single out the name of one town centre in preference to a number of others within the north of the Borough". He proposed that the name Ealing North should be retained.

14. Five alternative names for Ealing, Southall BC were proposed. The Assistant Commissioner found no merit in the alternative names and considered that it would be wrong to change the name of a constituency where its composition remained largely unchanged. He therefore proposed no change to the name of the constituency.

15. Five alternative names for Ealing, Acton BC were proposed. The Assistant Commissioner noted that the new constituency would include the Walpole ward and that the Ealing Broadway ward extended further south than previously and that it would be appropriate to recognise that central Ealing formed part of the new constituency. Accordingly, he recommended that it should be named Ealing Central and Acton BC.

Revised Recommendations

16. We found the case for exchanging the Cleveland and Lady Margaret wards overwhelming, and the case for the transfer of the Walpole ward justifiable if Ealing, Southall BC was to have the smallest electorate. We considered that the change of name for Ealing, Acton BC was appropriate and well supported. We agreed with the Assistant Commissioner's recommendations in full, and accordingly published the following revised recommendations:-

2000 electorate

Ealing Central and Acton BC	71,258
Ealing North BC	72,971
Ealing, Southall BC	62,341
	<hr/>
	206,570

Further Representations

17. Following publication of our revised recommendations, we received six representations, five of which supported our revisions. The supporters of the first counter-proposal approved of the revisions concerning the Cleveland and Lady Margaret wards, but accepted only reluctantly the inclusion of the Walpole ward in Ealing Central and Acton BC. They considered that more weight should have been given to Rule 7 when deciding whether or not the Walpole ward should be transferred.

18. One representation supporting the third counter-proposal objected to our revised recommendations and specifically, the inclusion of the Northfield and Walpole wards in different constituencies.

Recommendation

19. On the issue of the reluctance of our decision to include the Walpole ward in Ealing Central and Acton BC, we had made clear in our provisional recommendations the reasons why we believed that Ealing, Southall BC should have the lowest electorate in the borough. Furthermore, in our revised recommendations we proposed that the Walpole ward should be included in Ealing Central and Acton BC to allow for this. The evidence submitted in support of the first counter-proposal provided no basis for us to alter that decision. The issues raised in the sole objection, which supported the third counter-proposal, had been debated fully at the inquiry and no new evidence had been presented. We considered that the proposal would cause inconvenience by transferring a large number of electors and noted that it had attracted no other support. We were satisfied that our revised recommendations did not need to be modified. We therefore recommend the adoption of the following constituencies containing the wards as listed in Appendix C:-

	2000 electorate
Ealing Central and Acton BC	71,258
Ealing North BC	72,971
Ealing, Southall BC	<u>62,341</u>
	<u><u>206,570</u></u>

ENFIELD

The Number of Electors

1. There are currently three constituencies in the London Borough of Enfield:-

	2000 electorate
Edmonton BC	63,800
Enfield North BC	67,849
Enfield, Southgate BC	<u>67,446</u>
	<u>199,095</u>

The Number of Constituencies

2. Enfield had a 2000 parliamentary electorate of 199,095, which gave a theoretical entitlement to 2.85 constituencies. We provisionally decided that the borough should continue to be reviewed separately and that it should continue to be allocated three constituencies. With three constituencies, the average constituency electorate in the borough would be 66,365, which is 3,570 below the electoral quota. The electorates of the three existing constituencies ranged from 63,800 in Edmonton BC to 67,849 in Enfield North BC, a disparity of 4,049 which our provisional recommendations reduced to 1,493.

Provisional Recommendations

3. As a result of changes to ward boundaries in the borough, six of the new wards are partly in one constituency and partly in another. Our provisional recommendations realigned the constituency boundaries with the new ward boundaries. We provisionally proposed that the three divided wards of Bowes, Grange and Highlands should be included in Enfield, Southgate BC, the Bush Hill Park ward should be included in Edmonton BC and the Southbury ward should be included in Enfield North BC. In order to create constituencies with a low disparity, we also proposed that the whole of the divided ward of Palmers Green should be included in Edmonton BC, even though the larger part of this ward was currently in Enfield, Southgate BC.

4. Our provisional recommendations were:-

	2000 electorate
Edmonton BC	66,142
Enfield North BC	65,730
Enfield, Southgate BC	<u>67,223</u>
	<u>199,095</u>

Representations

5. Following publication of our provisional recommendations we received 131 representations of which twenty-three objected to all or part of our proposals. The main issues raised in the representations were contained in two counter-proposals, which shared

the common feature that the Palmers Green ward should be included in Enfield, Southgate BC:-

- a) the first also suggested that the Highlands ward should be included in Enfield North BC and the Ponders End ward should be included in Edmonton BC; and
- b) the second also proposed that the Grange ward should be included in Edmonton BC.

Local Inquiry and Assistant Commissioner's Report

6. We were required to hold an inquiry. Following the announcement of the inquiry a further 1,268 representations were received, some of which were petitions or letters signed by numerous individuals. The Assistant Commissioner reported that the main issues raised at the inquiry were the same as those raised in the counter-proposals mentioned above.

The Palmers Green ward

7. The Assistant Commissioner reported that there was widespread support within the Palmers Green ward for its inclusion in Enfield, Southgate BC, as in the counter-proposals, instead of in Edmonton BC as in our provisional recommendations. He considered that the arguments for its inclusion in Enfield, Southgate BC were compelling and referred to the A10 road as a formidable boundary between the ward and the Edmonton constituency. He also reported that some of the area known as Palmers Green extended beyond the ward of that name into wards in Enfield, Southgate BC and that the inclusion of the ward in Edmonton BC would divide the Palmers Green area between constituencies. He considered that to include the ward in Edmonton BC would, to some extent, isolate parts of the Bowes ward from other parts of Enfield, Southgate BC. He accordingly recommended that the ward should be located within Enfield, Southgate BC.

The Grange ward

8. He reported that there was widespread support within the Grange ward for our provisional recommendation to include it in Enfield, Southgate BC and opposition to the counter-proposal for it to be placed in Edmonton BC. He reported that there was also some support for it to be included in Enfield North BC. He considered that, although the ward had ties with parts of all three constituencies, any dislocation would be the greatest were the ward to be located in Edmonton BC and the least were it to be located in Enfield, Southgate BC. He therefore considered that the inclusion of the ward in Enfield, Southgate BC as in our provisional recommendations, offered the best solution.

The Highlands ward

9. The Assistant Commissioner noted that the ward had, in the past, been located within Enfield North BC and that 4,124 (43%) electors of the new ward are currently located within Enfield North BC. He considered that many of the remaining electors were likely to have significant ties which drew them towards Enfield North BC rather than Enfield, Southgate BC. To include the ward in Enfield North BC would be likely to satisfy the preference of the majority of electors, whilst to include it in Enfield, Southgate BC would be likely to cause the greatest disruption to established local ties. He noted that there was little opposition to the inclusion of the ward in Enfield North BC and accepted this part of the first counter-proposal.

The Ponders End ward

10. The Assistant Commissioner formed the view on the evidence presented that a clear and identifiable community existed within the boundaries of this ward, which he reported was described as an area which was discrete from the areas of its neighbouring wards. Although there was some evidence that the residents traditionally looked north, he noted that very few had been sufficiently motivated by the counter-proposal to express their views either by attendance at, or representations to, the inquiry. He reported that the ward was linked to the wards to its south by the major traffic artery of the A1010, that there was a seamless progression from the Jubilee ward to the south into Ponders End ward and there was no prominent physical boundary between the wards. He was satisfied that the transfer of the Ponders End ward to Edmonton BC would not cause any community division of the kind or nature which would be involved were the Palmers Green or Grange wards to be moved to Edmonton BC, which he said would result in strong local communities being split between constituencies. He recommended acceptance of the first counter-proposal which involved moving both the Highlands and Ponders End wards.

Revised Recommendations

11. We agreed with the Assistant Commissioner's recommendations and accordingly published the following revised recommendations:-

	2000 electorate
Edmonton BC	65,443
Enfield North BC	65,709
Enfield, Southgate BC	<u>67,943</u>
	<u><u>199,095</u></u>

Further Representations

12. Following publication of our revised recommendations we received 799 written representations and two petitions. One petition, containing 692 signatures, and 519 representations supported our revised recommendations. The other petition, containing 3,894 separately signed letters, and 280 representations, objected to our revised recommendations. Of those expressing approval, the petition and 441 letters approved of our proposals in respect of the Palmers Green ward, seventy-four letters approved in respect of the Grange ward, two approved in respect of the Highlands ward, and one approved in respect of the Ponders End ward. One representation approved of the revised recommendations in their entirety.

13. All of the objections opposed our proposal to include the Ponders End ward in Edmonton BC. One submission supported our decision to locate the Palmers Green ward in Enfield, Southgate BC, but reiterated the view that the Grange ward should be located in Edmonton BC, that the Ponders End ward should be located in Enfield North BC and that the Highlands ward should be located in Enfield, Southgate BC. A new counter-proposal submitted that the Bowes and Palmers Green wards should be located in Edmonton BC, that the Jubilee and Ponders End wards should be located in the Enfield North BC, and that the Highlands and Town wards should be located in Enfield, Southgate BC.

Recommendation

14. We considered that the case for including the Ponders End ward in Edmonton BC was stronger than for the other wards and that moving it from Enfield North BC to Edmonton BC would not divide the local community in the way that the Palmers Green or Grange wards would if included in Edmonton BC.

15. We noted the strength of feeling of those objecting to our revised recommendations for the Ponders End ward. However, we also noted that the effect of including it in Enfield North BC, without a compensatory transfer, would be an Edmonton constituency with a very low electorate of 55,853, which would be 14,082 below the electoral quota. It would also produce a very high disparity of 19,446 between the electorates of the Enfield North and Edmonton constituencies.

16. We noted that the second counter-proposal would produce constituencies with electorates and a disparity that were acceptable and that it had been thoroughly discussed at the local inquiry. However, we rejected it. We noted that the late counter-proposal submitted would also produce constituencies with electorates and a disparity that were acceptable. However, we considered that this counter-proposal would result in excessive disruption to electors and involved three wards (Bowes, Jubilee and Town) that had not featured in the representations made in respect of the provisional recommendations or in the evidence submitted at the local inquiry.

17. We did not consider that any persuasive new evidence had been submitted either to warrant the conduct of a second inquiry or for us to modify our revised recommendations. We therefore recommend the adoption of the following constituencies containing the wards as listed in Appendix C:-

	2000 electorate
Edmonton BC	65,443
Enfield North BC	65,709
Enfield, Southgate BC	<u>67,943</u>
	<u><u>199,095</u></u>

HACKNEY, ISLINGTON, NEWHAM AND TOWER HAMLETS

Hackney

The Number of Electors

1. There are currently two constituencies in the London Borough of Hackney:-

	2000 electorate
Hackney North and Stoke Newington BC	59,097
Hackney South and Shoreditch BC	61,292
	<hr/>
	120,389

The Number of Constituencies

2. Hackney had a 2000 parliamentary electorate of 120,389, which gave a theoretical entitlement to 1.72 constituencies. If two constituencies were retained, the average constituency electorate would be 60,195, which is 9,740 below the electoral quota. We decided that the borough should continue to be reviewed separately and that it should continue to be allocated two constituencies. The electorates of the two existing constituencies gave a disparity of 2,195 which our provisional recommendations increased to 4,735.

Provisional Recommendations

3. As a result of changes to ward boundaries, three of the new wards were partly in Hackney North and Stoke Newington BC and partly in Hackney South and Shoreditch BC. We noted that to keep change to a minimum by including each divided ward wholly within the constituency that contained the larger part of the ward would result in an electorate of 56,431 in Hackney North and Stoke Newington BC which is 13,504 below the electoral quota and 3,504 over our 10,000 threshold. We therefore proposed that, in order to reduce the disparity between the electorates of the two constituencies, the King's Park ward be included in Hackney North and Stoke Newington BC, instead of Hackney South and Shoreditch BC.

4. Our provisional recommendations were:-

	2000 electorate
Hackney North and Stoke Newington BC	62,562
Hackney South and Shoreditch BC	57,827
	<hr/>
	120,389

Representations

5. Following publication of our provisional recommendations, we received six representations, of which one supported our proposals and five objected to them. The main issues raised in the objections were contained in two counter-proposals. One of the objections suggested that Hackney should be paired with Waltham Forest.

6. The first counter-proposal affected the four boroughs of Hackney, Islington, Newham, and Tower Hamlets. It proposed that Hackney should not be considered separately as an individual borough, but placed within a new grouping comprising Hackney, Islington, and Tower Hamlets. The net effect of the counter-proposal in respect of these three boroughs would be an overall reduction of one constituency to five constituencies, instead of the six recommended by us. It proposed that:-

- a) the four Hackney Borough wards of Brownswood, Clissold, Lordship and New River should be included in a new cross-borough boundary constituency named Highbury and Clissold Park BC;
- b) the three Hackney Borough wards of De Beauvoir, Haggerston and Hoxton should be included in a new cross-borough boundary constituency named Bethnal Green and Shoreditch BC; and
- c) the remaining Hackney Borough wards should form a constituency named Hackney Central BC.

7. The second counter-proposal proposed that each of the four boroughs of Hackney, Islington, Newham and Tower Hamlets should be considered separately and allocated two constituencies each. In Hackney it proposed that:-

- a) the Dalston ward should be included in Hackney North and Stoke Newington BC; and
- b) the King's Park ward should be included in Hackney South and Shoreditch BC.

Islington

The Number of Electors

8. There are currently two constituencies in the London Borough of Islington:-

2000 Electorate	
Islington North BC	61,054
Islington South and Finsbury BC	58,839
	<hr/> <hr/> <hr/>
	119,893

The Number of Constituencies

9. Islington had a 2000 parliamentary electorate of 119,893, which gave a theoretical entitlement to 1.71 constituencies. If two constituencies were retained, the average constituency electorate would be 59,947, which is 9,988 below the electoral quota. We decided that the borough should continue to be reviewed separately and that it should continue to be allocated two constituencies. The electorates of the two existing constituencies resulted in a disparity of 2,215, which was unchanged by our provisional recommendations.

Provisional Recommendations

10. None of the new ward boundaries were divided between constituencies. We considered whether to recommend a change to improve the electoral figures but concluded that any change would involve disruption to a large number of electors for a relatively small improvement in the electorates. We therefore decided to recommend no change to the existing constituencies.

11. Our provisional recommendations were:-

	2000 Electorate
Islington North BC	61,054
Islington South and Finsbury BC	<u>58,839</u>
	<u>119,893</u>

Representations

12. Following publication of our provisional recommendations, we received five representations, of which two supported our proposals and three objected to them. The only issue raised in the objections was the counter-proposal which suggested that Islington should not be considered separately as an individual borough, but placed within a new group comprising Hackney, Islington, and Tower Hamlets. The net effect of the counter-proposal in respect of these three boroughs would be an overall reduction of one constituency to five constituencies, instead of the six recommended by us. It proposed that:-

- a) the Islington Borough wards of Junction and St George's should be included in a renamed Islington and Finsbury BC; and
- b) the remaining Islington Borough wards should be included with four Hackney Borough wards in a new cross-borough constituency named Highbury and Clissold Park BC.

Newham and Tower Hamlets

The Number of Electors

13. There are currently four constituencies in the paired London Boroughs of Newham and Tower Hamlets:-

	2000 electorate
Bethnal Green and Bow BC	74,884
East Ham BC	69,715
Poplar and Canning Town BC	72,644
West Ham BC	<u>59,464</u>
	<u>276,707</u>

The Number of Constituencies

14. Newham had a 2000 parliamentary electorate of 150,884, which gave a theoretical entitlement to 2.16 constituencies. We noted that if the borough was reviewed separately and two constituencies allocated, the borough average would be 75,442, which is 5,507 above the electoral quota.

15. Tower Hamlets had a 2000 parliamentary electorate of 125,823, which gave a theoretical entitlement to 1.80 constituencies. We noted that if the borough was reviewed separately and two constituencies allocated, the borough average would be 62,912, which is 7,023 below the electoral quota.

16. We noted that the individual borough averages were now much closer to the electoral quota than they were at the last general review and considered whether to disband the pairing and allocate two constituencies to each of the boroughs. However this would result in a disparity of 12,530 between the two borough averages. We also noted that the combined borough average was much closer to the electoral quota than both the individual borough averages.

17. The paired boroughs had a 2000 parliamentary electorate of 276,707, which gave a theoretical entitlement to 3.96 constituencies. With four constituencies retained, the average constituency electorate would be 69,177, which is only 758 below the electoral quota. We decided, therefore, that Newham and Tower Hamlets should continue to be paired and retain four constituencies. The constituency electorates of the four existing constituencies ranged from 74,884 in Bethnal Green and Bow BC to 59,464 in West Ham BC, a disparity of 15,420, which our provisional recommendations reduced to 6,477.

Provisional Recommendations

18. As a result of changes to ward boundaries, eight of the wards were divided between the existing constituencies and making only the minimum change required to realign ward and constituency boundaries would increase the disparity to 23,344. We therefore proposed additional changes in three constituencies in order to reduce this disparity. We proposed that the whole of the Canning Town North and Custom House wards, which were located in the existing Poplar and Canning Town BC, should be included in West Ham BC. We also proposed that the Royal Docks ward, which was located in the existing Poplar and Canning Town BC, should be included in East Ham BC. Apart from ward realignment, no other change was made to Bethnal Green and Bow BC.

19. Our provisional recommendations were:-

	2000 electorate
Bethnal Green and Bow BC	66,423
East Ham BC	72,900
Poplar and Canning Town BC	66,978
West Ham BC	70,406
	<hr/>
	<hr/>
	276,707

Representations

20. Following publication of our provisional recommendations, we received sixteen representations, of which five supported parts of our proposals whilst objecting to other parts and eleven objected to all of them. The main issues raised in the objections were contained in six counter-proposals. The counter-proposals were:-

- a) the first proposed that Newham should be considered as an individual borough and allocated two constituencies, and that Tower Hamlets should be placed within a new grouping comprising Hackney, Islington, and Tower Hamlets. The net effect of the counter-proposal in respect of these three boroughs would be an overall reduction of one constituency to five constituencies, instead of the six recommended by us. It also proposed that the two Tower Hamlets Borough wards of St Dunstan's and Stepney Green, and Whitechapel should be included in a renamed Stepney and Poplar BC. The remaining Tower Hamlets Borough wards should be included with three wards from Hackney Borough in a new cross-borough boundary constituency named Bethnal Green and Shoreditch BC and the Newham Borough ward of Canning Town South should be included in West Ham BC;
- b) the second affected three of the four constituencies in Newham and Tower Hamlets. It proposed that the boroughs of Newham and Tower Hamlets should be considered separately and that each should be allocated two constituencies. It placed the Newham Borough ward of Canning Town South in West Ham BC and renamed Poplar and Canning Town BC as Poplar and Wapping BC; and
- c) the other four, from individuals, submitted alternative distributions of constituencies in Tower Hamlets, including the suggestion that Tower Hamlets should be paired with the City of London and that Newham should be paired with Barking and Dagenham. Another counter-proposal suggested that Newham should be divided north/south between constituencies instead of east/west.

Local Inquiry and Assistant Commissioner's Report

21. We were required to hold inquiries for Hackney, Islington, and Newham and Tower Hamlets. In view of the counter-proposals received for alternative pairings of boroughs, we decided to hold one inquiry covering the four boroughs. Following the announcement of the inquiry a further fifteen representations were received in relation to Hackney, of which twelve supported our provisional recommendations and three objected to them, including one that suggested the pairing of Hackney with other boroughs. A further seven representations were received relating to Islington, of which four were in support of our provisional recommendations and three objected to them, including one which suggested the pairing of Islington with other boroughs. In relation to Newham and Tower Hamlets, a further five representations were received, one of which was in support of our provisional recommendations, one partly supported our proposals and three objected to them.

22. The Assistant Commissioner reported that the main issues raised at the inquiry were the same as those listed above. He also reported that those supporting the first counter-proposal had argued that its proposals would unite associated communities and result in constituencies with electorates much closer to the electoral quota. However, he did not view reducing the

disparity between electorates and the electoral quota to be a factor which ought to override other considerations and be determinative of the final constituency boundaries.

23. He noted that there was considerable opposition to the first counter-proposal. He considered that the proposed changes resulted in substantial and unnecessary disruption to local ties, in particular in the Stoke Newington and Stamford Hill areas of Hackney, and the Archway area of Islington, where it was his view that the Holloway Road, rather than being a barrier, acted as a focal point for shopping and transport links. He also considered that the resulting inconveniences and breaking of local ties were significant. They outweighed any benefits gained in the re-creation of ties, such as in the Clapton area, and could not be justified by the proposed reduction in the disparity of the electorates. He further considered the arguments put forward to support the association of Hackney and Tower Hamlets wards to be unconvincing and noted the evidence that the Hackney Borough ward of De Beauvoir was more closely associated with Islington, than with Tower Hamlets.

24. He also noted the lack of convincing evidence to group Hackney, Islington, and Tower Hamlets and accordingly rejected the first counter-proposal. He recommended that both Hackney and Islington should be treated as individual boroughs and should not be paired or grouped with any neighbouring boroughs.

25. In relation to the second counter-proposal as it affected Hackney, the Assistant Commissioner reported that, from the evidence gained at the inquiry and as a result of his own observations on site visits, the Dalston ward was more closely associated with Stoke Newington and the northern constituency in terms of local community and transport links, and that the King's Park ward was more closely associated with Hackney South and Shoreditch BC. He stated that, were it simply the question of the King's Park ward, he would have been less persuaded to recommend a departure from the provisional recommendations. However, the close association of Dalston with Stoke Newington appeared to him to be compelling. For these reasons, he recommended that the changes put forward in the second counter-proposal in relation to Hackney should be adopted and that there should be no change to our provisionally recommended constituencies in Islington.

26. The Assistant Commissioner also noted that the second counter-proposal suggested that the continued pairing of Newham and Tower Hamlets could not be justified in terms of improving the disparity between electorates. It also suggested that our provisional recommendations disrupted local ties in the two boroughs. He reported that considerable evidence was submitted to support the discontinuation of the pairing between Newham and Tower Hamlets. He further noted that the theoretical entitlements of both boroughs were sufficiently close to warrant the allocation of two constituencies to each.

27. He considered that the inclusion of the Newham Borough ward of Canning Town South in Poplar and Canning Town BC broke local ties in Newham and he considered that the counter-proposal to include the ward in West Ham BC, for which there was overwhelming support, offered the best solution. He recommended that this change should be the only change made to our provisionally recommended constituencies in Newham and Tower Hamlets. The Assistant Commissioner rejected the other counter-proposals from members of the public because these alternatives would cause greater disruption and did not have local support.

28. The Assistant Commissioner reported that the second counter-proposal had submitted that the revised Poplar and Canning Town BC be renamed Poplar and Wapping. He also reported that there had been no agreement on the name for the revised southern Tower Hamlets constituency and recommended the alternative name of Tower Hamlets South BC for the revised Poplar and Canning Town BC. He also recommended that if such a name was acceptable to us, then Bethnal Green and Bow BC should be renamed Tower Hamlets North BC. He further suggested that should the name Tower Hamlets South be unacceptable to us, then the constituency should be renamed Poplar and Limehouse BC.

Revised Recommendations

29. We agreed with the Assistant Commissioner that there was no need to group Hackney, Islington, and Tower Hamlets. We also agreed with his recommendation that the Hackney Borough ward of Dalston should be included in Hackney North and Stoke Newington BC, the Hackney Borough ward of King's Park ward should be included in Hackney South and Shoreditch BC and the Newham Borough ward of Canning Town South should be included in West Ham BC. We considered the alternative names suggested in his report and we decided not to adopt the alternative name of Tower Hamlets South because to do so would require an alternative to the name of Bethnal Green and Bow BC. That constituency was largely unaltered and there had not been any support for a change of name at the inquiry. We therefore decided to adopt the revised name of Poplar and Limehouse BC.

30. We accordingly published revised recommendations for the two constituencies in Hackney, for West Ham BC in Newham, and for Poplar and Limehouse BC in Tower Hamlets. We also confirmed as final our recommendations for the other four constituencies:-

	2000 electorate
Hackney North and Stoke Newington BC	63,185
Hackney South and Shoreditch BC	<u>57,204</u>
	<u>120,389</u>
Islington North BC	61,054
Islington South and Finsbury BC	<u>58,839</u>
	<u>119,893</u>
East Ham BC	72,900
West Ham BC	<u>77,984</u>
	<u>150,884</u>
Bethnal Green and Bow BC	66,423
Poplar and Limehouse BC	<u>59,400</u>
	<u>125,823</u>

Further Representations

31. Following publication of our revised recommendations in Hackney, we received three representations, all of which fully supported our recommendations. In Newham and Tower Hamlets, we received four representations, three of which fully supported and one objected to

our revised recommendations. The objection related to the two Tower Hamlets constituencies and proposed that the alternative names of Tower Hamlets North BC and Tower Hamlets South BC should be adopted. We considered that there would be no support for modifying our recommendations in relation to the names of the two Tower Hamlets constituencies.

Recommendation

32. We therefore recommend the adoption of the following eight constituencies in Hackney, Islington, Newham, and Tower Hamlets containing the wards listed in Appendix C:-

	2000 electorate
Hackney North and Stoke Newington BC	63,185
Hackney South and Shoreditch BC	57,204
	<hr/>
	120,389
	<hr/> <hr/>
Islington North BC	61,054
Islington South and Finsbury BC	58,839
	<hr/>
	119,893
	<hr/> <hr/>
East Ham BC	72,900
West Ham BC	77,984
	<hr/>
	150,884
	<hr/> <hr/>
Bethnal Green and Bow BC	66,423
Poplar and Limehouse BC	59,400
	<hr/>
	125,823
	<hr/> <hr/>

HAMMERSMITH AND FULHAM AND KENSINGTON AND CHELSEA

1. In considering our review of the London Boroughs of Hammersmith and Fulham and Kensington and Chelsea, it is necessary also to consider the information relating to our review of the London Boroughs of Brent, Camden, Harrow, Hillingdon, Hounslow, and Westminster (and the City of London). In the event, we decided to hold one local inquiry that considered our provisional recommendations for all eight London Boroughs, as well as counter-proposals that we received which suggested alternative pairings of the boroughs to those we had proposed.

The Number of Electors in Hammersmith and Fulham

2. There is currently one whole constituency in the London Borough of Hammersmith and Fulham and another, which is partly in Hammersmith and Fulham and partly in the London Borough of Ealing. The electoral figures set out below for these two constituencies relate only to those electors who are within Hammersmith and Fulham:-

	2000 electorate
Ealing, Acton and Shepherds Bush BC (part)	27,416
Hammersmith and Fulham BC	<u>78,456</u>
	<u><u>105,872</u></u>

The Number of Electors in Kensington and Chelsea

3. There is currently one whole constituency in the Royal Borough of Kensington and Chelsea and another, which is partly in Kensington and Chelsea and partly in the City of Westminster (and the City of London). The electoral figures set out below for these two constituencies relate only to those electors who are within Kensington and Chelsea:-

	2000 electorate
Kensington and Chelsea BC	66,955
Regent's Park and Kensington North BC (part)	<u>23,858</u>
	<u><u>90,813</u></u>

The Number of Constituencies

4. Hammersmith and Fulham had a 2000 parliamentary electorate of 105,872, which gave a theoretical entitlement to 1.51 constituencies. We noted that if the borough were reviewed separately and two constituencies allocated, the borough average would be 52,936. Each seat would therefore be, on average, 16,999 below the electoral quota and 6,999 over our 10,000 threshold. Kensington and Chelsea had a 2000 parliamentary electorate of 90,813, which gave a theoretical entitlement to 1.30 constituencies. We noted that if the borough were reviewed separately and one constituency allocated, the borough average would be 90,813, and 45,407 if two constituencies were allocated. Each seat would therefore be, on average, either 20,878 above or 24,528 below the electoral quota, both of which would be considerably over our 10,000 threshold. It was apparent that both boroughs needed a partner.

5. Hammersmith and Fulham's neighbouring boroughs are Brent, Ealing, Hounslow, and Kensington and Chelsea. Hammersmith and Fulham is currently paired with Ealing, with a combined total allocation of four constituencies. We noted that Ealing's borough average was very close to the electoral quota and therefore provisionally decided to review Ealing separately. We further noted that Hammersmith and Fulham's boundaries with Brent and Hounslow are very short and considered them to be unsuitable for creating a cross-borough boundary constituency. However, Hammersmith and Fulham, and Kensington and Chelsea share a very long common borough boundary which we considered could be crossed to create a constituency.

6. Kensington and Chelsea's neighbouring boroughs are Brent, Hammersmith and Fulham, and Westminster. The boundary with Brent is very short and unsuitable for crossing. Kensington and Chelsea is currently grouped with Westminster and the City of London, with a combined total allocation of three constituencies. We had provisionally decided to disband this group in order to join Westminster and the City of London with Brent. We provisionally decided to pair Hammersmith and Fulham with Kensington and Chelsea. We recognised that some major changes would have to be made to the existing constituencies within each borough, but considered such changes necessary in order to avoid excessive disparities and to bring electorates closer to the electoral quota in accordance with Rule 5.

7. The combined area of Hammersmith and Fulham, and Kensington and Chelsea had a 2000 electorate of 196,685, which gave a theoretical entitlement to 2.81 constituencies, and if three constituencies were allocated, would produce a combined borough average of 65,562. This is 4,373 below the electoral quota and closer to the quota than both the individual borough averages. We provisionally decided to allocate three constituencies to the pair. The electorates of the existing constituencies in the combined area ranged from 66,955 in Kensington and Chelsea BC to 78,456 in Hammersmith and Fulham BC, a disparity of 11,501, which our proposals would reduce to 4,543.

Provisional Recommendations

8. As a result of changes to ward boundaries, three of the new wards, two in Hammersmith and Fulham and one in Kensington and Chelsea, are partly in one constituency and partly in another. The review provided the opportunity to remove these anomalies by placing wards wholly within a constituency.

9. We proposed that six Hammersmith and Fulham wards should be joined with five Kensington and Chelsea wards to form a cross-borough boundary constituency named Chelsea and Fulham BC. We also proposed that the remaining ten Hammersmith and Fulham wards should form a new Hammersmith constituency. We further proposed that the remaining thirteen Kensington and Chelsea wards should form a new Kensington constituency. We considered that one of the merits of the proposals would be that only one constituency would cross the common borough boundary.

10. Our provisional recommendations were:-

	2000 electorate
Chelsea and Fulham BC	63,330
Hammersmith BC	67,873
Kensington BC	<u>65,482</u>
	<u>196,685</u>

Representations

11. Following publication of our provisional recommendations we received a total of seventy-four representations, of which thirty-three opposed all or part of our proposals.

12. The main issues raised in the objections were principally contained in one counter-proposal which paired Hammersmith and Fulham with Hounslow and retained the pairing of Kensington and Chelsea with Westminster and the City of London (see the second counter-proposal mentioned in paragraph 18b) and paragraphs 22 - 24 in the section relating to Brent, Camden, and Westminster (and the City of London).

13. We were required to hold an inquiry for each of the boroughs. In view of the alternative pairings of boroughs proposed, we decided to hold one inquiry to consider Brent, Camden, Hammersmith and Fulham, Harrow, Hillingdon, Hounslow, Kensington and Chelsea, and Westminster (and the City of London).

Hammersmith and Fulham, and Kensington and Chelsea, together with Westminster (and the City of London)

14. The second counter-proposal suggested that the current pairing of Kensington and Chelsea with Westminster (and the City of London) should be retained. The existing cross-borough boundary constituency of Regent's Park and Kensington North BC would contain four Kensington and Chelsea wards and eight Westminster wards. The remaining fourteen wards of Kensington and Chelsea would form Kensington and Chelsea BC. The City of London and the remaining twelve wards of Westminster would form a constituency named Cities of London and Westminster BC, as in the provisional recommendations. It was submitted that there was no justification for ending the current pairing.

15. It was also counter-proposed that Hammersmith and Fulham should be paired with Hounslow. A new cross-borough boundary constituency named Brentford and Shepherds Bush BC was proposed, which would contain five Hammersmith and Fulham wards and four Hounslow wards. The remaining eleven wards of Hammersmith and Fulham would form Hammersmith and Fulham BC. The remainder of Hounslow would be divided between Feltham BC and Isleworth and Heston BC, each containing eight wards. It was submitted that, despite the short boundary between Hammersmith and Fulham, and Hounslow there was continuous similar development between the two boroughs.

16. The supporters of the first counter-proposal and others approved of our provisional recommendations for Hammersmith and Fulham, and Kensington and Chelsea. As mentioned previously, the first counter-proposal also suggested that Westminster (and the City of London) should be reviewed separately and be allocated two constituencies.

17. Both Hammersmith and Fulham, and Kensington and Chelsea needed to be paired in order to create constituencies with electorates close to the electoral quota. The Assistant Commissioner reported that there was widespread support for our proposals to pair Hammersmith and Fulham with Kensington and Chelsea and to deal with Hounslow separately. The only opposition came from the second counter-proposal because it sought the retention of the present pairing of Kensington and Chelsea with Westminster (and the City of London) and the creation of a pairing of Hammersmith and Fulham with Hounslow.

18. The Assistant Commissioner accepted that Westminster (and the City of London) should be reviewed separately and allocated two constituencies, as proposed in the first counter-proposal. With adjustments made to take account of the new ward boundaries, the two constituencies would be a return to the constituencies (Cities of London and Westminster, and Westminster North) that had existed before the previous general review. Although the 2000 constituency electorates were low, he noted they had already increased since the start of this general review and said there was evidence that they would continue to grow.

19. He considered that Kensington and Chelsea was a better partner for Hammersmith and Fulham than Hounslow because the second counter-proposal's cross-borough boundary constituency of Brentford and Shepherd's Bush had no real logical basis. He considered that it lacked any internal focus, could be seen to be rather untidy around the edges, lacked affinity between Shepherd's Bush and Brentford and was a wholly artificial creation. However, the pairing of Hammersmith and Fulham with Kensington and Chelsea would seem to have the potential to form a relatively stable basis for Parliamentary representation in these two boroughs for the foreseeable future.

20. With regard to the provisionally recommended cross-borough boundary constituency of Chelsea and Fulham, the Assistant Commissioner reported that, whilst there may have been a fairly clear social divide between the two areas fifty years ago, the position had changed considerably. There was now a continuous residential area in the south of the two boroughs and the north-south borough boundary, although mainly following the railway line, did not present an east-west barrier. Although the previous Assistant Commissioner had recommended against such a cross-borough boundary constituency in his report in 1994, there had been some limited changes since then. There were new ward boundaries, the electoral arithmetic was significantly different, there was now greater residential development in the riverside boundary areas and what had attracted considerable opposition in the previous review had attracted widespread support in the current review. The Assistant Commissioner therefore endorsed our provisional recommendations for Hammersmith and Fulham, and Kensington and Chelsea in full.

Revised and Final Recommendations

21. We agreed with all of the Assistant Commissioner's recommendations. We considered that Kensington and Chelsea was the best partner for Hammersmith and Fulham. Although there was some attraction in the counter-proposal to retain the existing pairing of Kensington and Chelsea with Westminster (and the City of London), we agreed that Westminster (and the City of London) could be left unpaired. Whilst the 2000 electorate of the two constituencies allocated to Westminster (and the City of London) would be low, we considered they were within acceptable levels. Any suggestion that Ealing should be included within the considerations, as a possible partner for Hammersmith and Fulham, had been made too late and, in any case, Ealing

did not need to be paired. In that respect, we also noted that our proposal to review Ealing separately had met with significant approval.

22. We accordingly decided to recommend as our final recommendations the adoption of the following three constituencies in Hammersmith and Fulham, and Kensington and Chelsea containing the wards as listed in Appendix C:-

	2000 electorate
Chelsea and Fulham BC	63,330
Hammersmith BC	67,873
Kensington BC	<u>65,482</u>
	<u>196,685</u>

HARINGEY

The Number of Electors

1. There are currently two constituencies in the London Borough of Haringey:-

	2000 electorate
Hornsey and Wood Green BC	75,052
Tottenham BC	64,888
	<hr/> <hr/> <hr/>
	139,940

The Number of Constituencies

2. Haringey had a 2000 parliamentary electorate of 139,940, which gave a theoretical entitlement to 2.00 constituencies. We decided that the borough should continue to be reviewed separately and that it should continue to be allocated two constituencies. With two seats, the average constituency electorate in the borough would be 69,970, which is just thirty-five above the electoral quota. The electorates of the two existing constituencies produced a disparity of 10,164, which our provisional recommendations did not alter.

Provisional Recommendations

3. There are nineteen new wards in the borough, none of which are divided between constituencies. We noted that with nineteen wards and an allocation of two constituencies it would not be possible to have an even distribution as one constituency would contain ten wards and the other would contain nine wards, resulting in a significant disparity between the constituency electorates. However, we also noted that the electorates of the existing constituencies were within 5,082 of the borough average and within 5,117 of the electoral quota. We therefore proposed no change to constituency boundaries in the borough.

4. Our provisional recommendations were:-

	2000 electorate
Hornsey and Wood Green BC	75,052
Tottenham BC	64,888
	<hr/> <hr/> <hr/>
	139,940

Representations

5. Following publication of our provisional recommendations we received three representations, of which one objected to our proposals. The objection counter-proposed that the Noel Park ward should be located in Tottenham BC instead of in Hornsey and Wood Green BC.

Local Inquiry and Assistant Commissioner's Report

6. Although we were not statutorily required to hold a local inquiry, we decided to exercise our discretion to hold one. Following the announcement of the inquiry, a further thirteen representations were received, of which only one objected to our proposals.

7. The Assistant Commissioner reported that the only issue raised in the representations, and at the inquiry, was the counter-proposal. He considered that, based on the figures, there was a clear case in favour of the counter-proposal, which would substantially reduce the disparity between the constituencies and the divergence of each from the electoral quota. However, he also considered that there was a powerful argument under Rule 7 against the counter-proposal on the grounds that it would involve the substantial breaking of local ties and would cause inconveniences. He concluded that there was effectively no support for the counter-proposal, but strong opposition to it and support for our provisional recommendations.

8. The Assistant Commissioner concluded that Rule 7 clearly outweighed the case under Rule 5 in favour of the counter-proposal. He accordingly rejected the counter-proposal.

Recommendation

9. We agreed with the Assistant Commissioner's conclusion and therefore recommend the adoption of the following constituencies containing the wards as listed in Appendix C:-

	2000 electorate
Hornsey and Wood Green BC	75,052
Tottenham BC	<u>64,888</u>
	<u><u>139,940</u></u>

HARROW AND HILLINGDON

1. In considering our review of the London Boroughs of Harrow and Hillingdon, it is necessary also to consider the information relating to our review of the London Boroughs of Brent, Camden, Hammersmith and Fulham, Hounslow, Kensington and Chelsea, and Westminster (and the City of London). In the event, we decided to hold one local inquiry that considered our provisional recommendations for all eight London Boroughs, as well as counter-proposals that we received which suggested alternative pairings of the boroughs to those we had proposed.

The Number of Electors in Harrow

2. There are currently two constituencies in the London Borough of Harrow:-

	2000 electorate
Harrow East BC	81,518
Harrow West BC	73,146
	<hr/> <hr/> <hr/>
	154,664

The Number of Electors in Hillingdon

3. There are currently three constituencies in the London Borough of Hillingdon:-

	2000 electorate
Hayes and Harlington BC	57,784
Ruislip-Northwood BC	61,115
Uxbridge BC	58,273
	<hr/> <hr/> <hr/>
	177,172

The Number of Constituencies

4. Harrow had a 2000 parliamentary electorate of 154,664, which gave a theoretical entitlement to 2.21 constituencies. We noted that if two constituencies were retained the borough average would be 77,332, and each constituency would, on average, be 7,397 above the electoral quota. Hillingdon had a 2000 parliamentary electorate of 177,172, which gave a theoretical entitlement to 2.53 constituencies. We noted that if three constituencies were retained the borough average would be 59,057, and each constituency would, on average, be 10,878 below the electoral quota and 878 over our 10,000 threshold.

5. We therefore considered that Hillingdon needed to be paired for the purpose of allocating constituencies. In finding a partner for Hillingdon, we were aware that Harrow did not need to be paired. However, the only other neighbours with which Hillingdon could be paired were Ealing (which we had already decided should be reviewed separately), and Hounslow (which did not need a partner and which we considered did not lend itself to a cross-borough boundary constituency due to the presence of Heathrow Airport).

6. We therefore provisionally decided to pair Hillingdon with Harrow. The combined area of the two boroughs had a 2000 electorate of 331,836, which gave a theoretical entitlement to 4.74 constituencies. On the basis that five constituencies were allocated, this would produce a combined borough average of 66,367. This is only 3,568 below the electoral quota and significantly closer to the electoral quota than both the individual borough averages. We decided to allocate five constituencies to the pair, which is the same number that would have been allocated if they had been reviewed separately. We recognised that some major changes would have to be made to the existing constituencies within each borough, but considered such changes necessary in order to avoid excessive disparities and to bring electorates closer to the electoral quota in accordance with Rule 5. The electorates of the five existing constituencies in the combined area ranged from 57,784 in Hayes and Harlington BC to 81,518 in Harrow East BC, producing a large disparity of 23,734, which our proposals would reduce to 3,696.

Provisional Recommendations

7. As a result of changes to ward boundaries, six of the new wards, one in Harrow and five in Hillingdon, were partly in one constituency and partly in another. Our proposals would place wards wholly within constituencies.

8. We proposed that three Harrow wards should be joined with six Hillingdon wards to form a cross-borough boundary constituency named Northwood and Pinner BC. We also proposed two constituencies each containing nine Harrow wards, Harrow East BC and Harrow West BC, and two constituencies each containing eight Hillingdon wards, Hayes and Harlington BC and Uxbridge BC.

9. The net effect of these changes would reduce the current disparity between the constituency electorates and remove the large deviation of constituency electorates from the electoral quota.

10. Our provisional recommendations were:-

	2000 electorate
Harrow East BC	67,365
Harrow West BC	64,737
Hayes and Harlington BC	65,237
Northwood and Pinner BC	68,433
Uxbridge BC	<u>66,064</u>
	<u>331,836</u>

Representations

11. Following publication of our provisional recommendations we received a total of 207 representations, of which 197 opposed all or part of our proposals. The main issues raised in the objections were principally contained in one counter-proposal which paired the London Boroughs of Harrow and Brent, and Hillingdon and Hounslow (see the first counter-proposal mentioned in paragraph 18a) and paragraphs 22 - 24 in the section relating to Brent, Camden, and Westminster (and the City of London).

12. We were required to hold an inquiry for each of the boroughs. In view of the alternative pairings of boroughs proposed, we decided to hold one inquiry to consider Brent, Camden, Hammersmith and Fulham, Harrow, Hillingdon, Hounslow, Kensington and Chelsea, and Westminster (and the City of London).

13. The first counter-proposal recommended that Harrow should be paired with Brent as described in the section of this report covering Brent, Camden, and Westminster. It was also counter-proposed that Hillingdon should be paired with Hounslow. A new cross-borough boundary constituency of Hayes, Harlington and Heathrow was proposed, which, it was submitted, would help unite communities in Hillingdon and Hounslow, which have Heathrow Airport as their focal point. This constituency would contain six Hillingdon wards and two Hounslow wards. The remainder of Hillingdon would be divided between a Ruislip and Northwood constituency and an Uxbridge constituency, each containing eight Hillingdon wards. The remainder of Hounslow would be divided between a Brentford, Chiswick and Isleworth constituency and a Feltham and Heston constituency, each containing nine Hounslow wards.

14. As mentioned above, the Assistant Commissioner recommended, and we accepted, that Brent should be paired with Camden rather than Harrow (or Westminster and the City of London). He recommended that Harrow and Hillingdon should be paired, as we had proposed, but with a number of adjustments.

15. The Assistant Commissioner reported that the provisional recommendations for Harrow and Hillingdon had generated the greatest number of representations. Many representations wished for either or both boroughs to be reviewed separately, and some wished the existing constituencies to be retained, with the necessary realignments to take account of the new wards. However, this would have resulted in a very large disparity in the constituency electorates. In addition, there were many representations objecting to specific parts of our proposals on the grounds that local ties would be broken.

16. Although many strongly held and contrary views had been expressed, the Assistant Commissioner had no doubt that Harrow was a suitable borough with which Hillingdon could be paired and the existence of continuous residential development was self-evident. He considered that the pairing would seem to have the potential to form a relatively stable basis for Parliamentary representation in these two boroughs for the foreseeable future. He reported that the proposed changes to the two Harrow constituencies did not give rise to any debate if the principle of pairing with Hillingdon was accepted. He therefore recommended that the pairing, and the composition of the two constituencies wholly within Harrow, be adopted.

17. Within Hillingdon, the Assistant Commissioner reported that there were a number of individual issues to be considered:-

- a) the possible switching of the Manor and Cavendish wards between the cross-borough boundary Northwood and Pinner BC and Uxbridge BC;
- b) alternatively, the possible switching of the Ickenham and Manor wards between the same constituencies;
- c) whether the Yiewsley and West Drayton wards should be kept together and, if so, whether they should be placed in Uxbridge BC or in Hayes and Harlington BC; and

d) whether the Charville ward should remain in Hayes and Harlington BC or be moved to Uxbridge BC.

18. The Assistant Commissioner concluded on each of these issues:-

- a) the switch of the Ickenham and Manor wards was to be preferred to the provisional recommendations;
- b) he did not favour keeping the Yiewsley and West Drayton wards together and preferred the provisional recommendations for these wards; and
- c) he preferred the provisional recommendations for the Charville ward.

19. The Assistant Commissioner considered that Hayes and Harlington BC should remain as provisionally recommended, that the Charville and West Drayton wards were best placed in that constituency and, in the southern part of Hillingdon, little change was needed, except for changes to reflect the new ward boundaries. Regarding the view that the Yiewsley and West Drayton wards were inseparable, he considered that, having visited the area, the railway line between the two wards was a clear and natural boundary. He considered that the Charville ward had long standing community links with Hayes rather than Uxbridge. In his view there was a strong case for keeping the Manor and Cavendish wards together in the same constituency.

20. The Assistant Commissioner recommended that the Ickenham ward should be transferred from Uxbridge BC to Northwood and Pinner BC and that the Manor ward should be transferred from Northwood and Pinner BC to Uxbridge BC. He also recommended that the cross-borough boundary Northwood and Pinner BC should be renamed Ruislip, Northwood and Pinner BC and that Uxbridge BC should be renamed Uxbridge and South Ruislip BC.

Revised and Final Recommendations

21. We agreed with all of the Assistant Commissioner's recommendations. We accordingly recommended the adoption of the following constituencies in Harrow and Hillingdon containing the wards as listed in Appendix C:-

	2000 electorate
Harrow East BC	67,365
Harrow West BC	64,737
Hayes and Harlington BC	<u>65,237</u>
	<u>197,339</u>

22. We published revised recommendations for the following constituencies in the paired boroughs:-

	2000 electorate
Ruislip, Northwood and Pinner BC	68,244
Uxbridge and South Ruislip BC	<u>66,253</u>
	<u>134,497</u>

23. Following publication of our revised recommendations, we received 120 representations, of which four were letters of support.

The Cavendish, Ickenham and Manor wards

24. Whilst the supporters of the original first counter-proposal accepted the decision to pair Harrow with Hillingdon, they objected to the relocation of the Ickenham and Manor wards as they did not consider it was necessary to move the two wards from their present constituencies. They submitted a new counter-proposal for a different arrangement of wards within the Ruislip, Northwood and Pinner constituency and within the Uxbridge and South Ruislip constituency. The new counter-proposal was supported by eighteen representations that were received after it had been submitted.

25. The new counter-proposal submitted that:-

- a) the Cavendish ward should be located in Ruislip, Northwood and Pinner BC; and
- b) the Ickenham ward should be located in Uxbridge and South Ruislip BC.

26. Ninety-seven representations also objected to the revised recommendation that resulted in the transfer of the Ickenham ward to Ruislip, Northwood and Pinner BC and the Manor ward to the Uxbridge and South Ruislip BC.

27. We considered that the issues relating to the distribution of constituencies in Harrow and Hillingdon had received a very full and thorough examination at the local inquiry. Both the supporters of the first and second original counter-proposals were given two full days to make their presentations in respect of the eight boroughs under consideration. A further one and a half days were allowed for discussion of the issues relating specifically to Harrow and Hillingdon. Both sets of supporters were given every opportunity to question those who gave evidence and to make known their opposition to any aspects of the written representations with which they disagreed. They were also allowed further time to make closing submissions.

28. We noted that the supporters of the original first counter-proposal contended that there was “very little discussion” about the proposal to locate the Ickenham ward in Ruislip, Northwood and Pinner BC and the Manor ward in Uxbridge and South Ruislip BC (as adopted by the Assistant Commissioner and which formed the revised recommendations). However, we considered that a great deal of evidence had been submitted throughout this part of the inquiry concerning the Cavendish, Ickenham and Manor wards which enabled the Assistant Commissioner, and us, to assess in which constituencies the wards should be located. The Assistant Commissioner reported that there was a strong case for keeping the Cavendish and Manor wards together in the same constituency. He also reported that, if the three wards of Cavendish, Manor and South Ruislip were kept together in the same constituency, they would form a more distinct and weighty local community in the Uxbridge and South Ruislip constituency than would be constituted if the Ickenham, Manor and South Ruislip wards were included in that constituency.

29. Before announcing our revised recommendations, we also carefully considered all the evidence submitted, both before and during the inquiry, as well as the Assistant Commissioner’s report. We accepted his findings, in respect of the distribution of constituencies, and considered that they presented a practical solution.

Recommendation

30. Having considered the latest representations and the new counter-proposal, we decided that, after such a full and thorough inquiry, and in the light of the new evidence in the representations being insufficiently persuasive, we would not make further changes to our revised recommendations. We therefore recommend the adoption of the following constituencies in Harrow and Hillingdon containing the wards as listed in Appendix C:-

	2000 electorate
Harrow East BC	67,365
Harrow West BC	64,737
Hayes and Harlington BC	65,237
Ruislip, Northwood and Pinner BC	68,244
Uxbridge and South Ruislip BC	<u>66,253</u>
	<u>331,836</u>

HOUNSLOW

1. In considering our review of the London Borough of Hounslow, it is necessary also to consider the information relating to our review of the London Boroughs of Brent, Camden, Hammersmith and Fulham, Harrow, Hillingdon, Kensington and Chelsea, and Westminster (and the City of London). In the event, we decided to hold one local inquiry that considered our provisional recommendations for all eight London Boroughs, as well as counter-proposals that we received which suggested alternative pairings of the boroughs to those we had proposed.

The Number of Electors

2. There are currently two constituencies in the London Borough of Hounslow:-

	2000 electorate
Brentford and Isleworth BC	82,977
Feltham and Heston BC	73,973
	<hr/> <hr/> <hr/>
	156,950

The Number of Constituencies

3. Hounslow had a 2000 parliamentary electorate of 156,950, which gave a theoretical entitlement to 2.24 constituencies. We provisionally decided that the borough should continue to be reviewed separately and that it should continue to be allocated two constituencies. With two constituencies the borough average would be 78,475, which is 8,540 above the electoral quota. The electorates of the two existing constituencies produced a disparity of 9,004, which our provisional recommendations would reduce to 1,738.

Provisional Recommendations

4. As a result of changes to ward boundaries, three of the new wards are divided between the existing constituencies. Our provisional recommendations realigned the constituency boundaries with the new ward boundaries. We therefore proposed that the divided wards of Heston Central, Heston East and Hounslow West should be included in Feltham and Heston BC.

5. Our provisional recommendations were:-

	2000 electorate
Brentford and Isleworth BC	79,344
Feltham and Heston BC	77,606
	<hr/> <hr/> <hr/>
	156,950

Representations

6. Following publication of our provisional recommendations we received a total of twenty-two representations, of which twenty-one opposed all or part of our proposals. The main issues raised in the objections were principally contained in the two counter-proposals:-

- a) the first counter-proposal paired the London Boroughs of Hounslow and Hillingdon; and
- b) the second counter-proposal paired the London Boroughs of Hounslow and Hammersmith and Fulham.

7. We were required to hold an inquiry. In view of the alternative pairings of boroughs proposed, we decided to hold one inquiry to consider Brent, Camden, Hammersmith and Fulham, Harrow, Hillingdon, Hounslow, Kensington and Chelsea, and Westminster (and the City of London).

8. The Assistant Commissioner reported that few representations about our provisional recommendations had been made from within Hounslow. The first counter-proposal recommended that Hounslow should be paired with Hillingdon. The second counter-proposal recommended that Hounslow should be paired with Hammersmith and Fulham. Support for both counter-proposals to pair Hounslow with Hillingdon and Hammersmith and Fulham respectively came mainly from other areas. However, there was also criticism of both counter-proposals.

9. As mentioned in earlier paragraphs, the Assistant Commissioner recommended that Hillingdon should be paired with Harrow and that Hammersmith and Fulham should be paired with Kensington and Chelsea. He rejected both counter-proposals for Hounslow and recommended that our provisional recommendations should be adopted. In particular, he agreed with us that the borough boundary between Hounslow and Hillingdon was unsuitable for creating a cross-borough boundary constituency due to the presence of Heathrow Airport. He also concluded that the airport itself, by its sheer size as a land mass, acted as a substantial north-south barrier.

10. Having rejected the counter-proposed pairings affecting Hounslow, the Assistant Commissioner recommended no change to the constituency boundaries within Hounslow. However, he recommended that the name of the Brentford and Isleworth constituency be changed to Brentford, Chiswick and Isleworth BC because it was made up of three distinct and relatively substantial communities.

11. We agreed with all but one of the Assistant Commissioner's recommendations. We rejected his recommendation to change the name of the Brentford and Isleworth constituency to Brentford, Chiswick and Isleworth BC. Apart from the realignment with new ward boundaries, there had been no alteration to the existing constituency and it is our policy that existing names should normally be retained unless boundary changes made those names inappropriate. The boundary and name of the constituency had been in existence and unchanged for over 30 years. There was no widespread call for the name to be changed either in the written representations from the electors of Hounslow, or at the inquiry, where there was little discussion of the issue. It was noted that there were small parts of Chiswick in the Ealing borough ward of Southfield and that to include Chiswick in the name could cause confusion because it might be misunderstood to mean that the borough boundary had been changed to include those other parts of Chiswick, that were in Ealing, in the constituency.

Recommendation

12. We therefore recommend the adoption of the following constituencies in Hounslow containing the wards as listed in Appendix C:-

	2000 electorate
Brentford and Isleworth BC	79,344
Feltham and Heston BC	<u>77,606</u>
	<u><u>156,950</u></u>

KINGSTON UPON THAMES AND RICHMOND UPON THAMES

The Number of Electors

1. There are currently three constituencies in the paired Royal Borough of Kingston upon Thames and London Borough of Richmond upon Thames:-

	2000 electorate
Kingston and Surbiton BC	73,914
Richmond Park BC	72,145
Twickenham BC	<u>74,154</u>
	<u>220,213</u>

The Number of Constituencies

2. Kingston upon Thames had a 2000 parliamentary electorate of 99,320, which gave a theoretical entitlement to 1.42 constituencies. We noted that if the borough were reviewed separately and two constituencies allocated, the borough average would be 49,660, which is 20,275 below the electoral quota. If one constituency was allocated, the borough average would be 99,320, which is 29,385 above the electoral quota. In either circumstance, the constituency electorates would be significantly over our 10,000 threshold.

3. Richmond upon Thames had a 2000 parliamentary electorate of 120,893, which gave a theoretical entitlement to 1.73 constituencies. If the borough were reviewed separately and two constituencies allocated, the borough average would be 60,447, which is 9,488 below the electoral quota.

4. The paired boroughs had a 2000 parliamentary electorate of 220,213, which gave a theoretical entitlement to 3.15 constituencies. With three constituencies retained, the average constituency electorate would be 73,404, which is 3,469 above the electoral quota. We decided to recommend that the boroughs of Kingston upon Thames and Richmond upon Thames should continue to be paired and retain three constituencies. The electorates of the three existing constituencies ranged from 74,154 in Twickenham BC to 72,145 in Richmond Park BC, a disparity of 2,009.

Provisional Recommendations

5. As a result of changes to ward boundaries in Kingston upon Thames and Richmond upon Thames, one of the new wards was partly in Kingston and Surbiton BC and partly in Richmond Park BC. We decided to keep change to a minimum and our provisional recommendations realigned the constituency boundary by including the whole of the Kingston upon Thames Borough ward of Beverley in Kingston and Surbiton BC. We proposed that no change be made to Twickenham BC. Our provisional recommendations were:-

2000 electorate

Kingston and Surbiton BC	74,602
Richmond Park BC	71,457
Twickenham BC	74,154
	<hr/>
	220,213
	<hr/>

Representations

6. Following publication of our provisional recommendations, we received eleven representations, ten of which expressed support for our proposals, whilst one noted our recommendations without expressing support for, or objection to, them.

Recommendation

7. No local inquiry was required to be held. No argument against our provisional recommendations had been put forward and, in the circumstances, we decided not to use our discretion to hold an inquiry. Given the support received for our proposals, we recommend that the paired boroughs should continue to have three constituencies containing the wards as listed in Appendix C:-

2000 electorate

Kingston and Surbiton BC	74,602
Richmond Park BC	71,457
Twickenham BC	74,154
	<hr/>
	220,213
	<hr/>

LAMBETH AND SOUTHWARK

The Number of Electors

1. There are currently five constituencies in the paired London Boroughs of Lambeth and Southwark:-

	2000 Electorate
Camberwell and Peckham BC	50,690
Dulwich and West Norwood BC	68,522
North Southwark and Bermondsey BC	68,662
Streatham BC	75,138
Vauxhall BC	<u>72,928</u>
	<u>335,940</u>

The Number of Constituencies

2. Lambeth had a 2000 parliamentary electorate of 179,481, which gave a theoretical entitlement to 2.57 constituencies. We noted that if the borough was reviewed separately and three constituencies allocated, the borough average would be 59,827, which is 10,108 below the electoral quota and 108 over our 10,000 threshold.

3. Southwark had a 2000 parliamentary electorate of 156,459, which gave a theoretical entitlement to 2.24 constituencies. We noted that if the borough was reviewed separately and two constituencies allocated, the borough average would be 78,230, which is 8,295 above the electoral quota.

4. The paired boroughs had a parliamentary electorate of 335,940, which gave a theoretical entitlement to 4.80 constituencies. With five constituencies retained, the average constituency electorate in the paired boroughs would be 67,188, which is only 2,747 less than the electoral quota. We decided, therefore, that Lambeth and Southwark should continue to be paired and retain five constituencies. The constituency electorates of the five existing constituencies ranged from 75,138 in Streatham BC to 50,690 in Camberwell and Peckham BC, a large disparity of 24,448. Camberwell and Peckham BC had the smallest 2000 electorate of any constituency in England, being 19,245 below the electoral quota. Our provisional recommendations reduced the overall disparity to just 3,596.

Provisional Recommendations

5. As a result of changes to ward boundaries in Lambeth and Southwark, seven of the new wards were divided between the existing constituencies. We noted that making only the minimum required changes to realign ward and constituency boundaries did not significantly improve the disparity between the electorates of the constituencies and we accordingly allocated the divided wards so as better to reduce the disparities. Additionally, we proposed that the Southwark Borough ward of South Camberwell should be included in Camberwell and Peckham BC, instead of in Dulwich and West Norwood BC, in order to increase the very low electorate of Camberwell and Peckham BC.

6. Our provisional recommendations were:-

	2000 Electorate
Camberwell and Peckham BC	67,764
Dulwich and West Norwood BC	66,856
North Southwark and Bermondsey BC	66,206
Streatham BC	69,355
Vauxhall BC	<u>65,759</u>
	<u><u>335,940</u></u>

Representations

7. Following publication of our provisional recommendations, we received thirty-two representations, of which nineteen supported all or parts of our proposals, nine supported parts of our proposals whilst objecting to other parts, and four objected to all or parts of our proposals.

8. The main issues raised in the objections were contained in four counter-proposals:-

- a) the first counter-proposal submitted that the divided Lambeth Borough ward of Coldharbour and the wards of Clapham Town and Tulse Hill should be included in Vauxhall BC, Streatham BC, and Dulwich and West Norwood BC, respectively;
- b) the second counter-proposal submitted that the divided Southwark Borough ward of Livesey should be included in North Southwark and Bermondsey BC, instead of in Camberwell and Peckham BC;
- c) the third counter-proposal suggested that Lambeth Borough should be allocated three constituencies on its own, so as to include the whole of Brixton in one constituency;
- d) the fourth counter-proposal suggested that there should be different pairings for Lambeth and Southwark, i.e. Lambeth and Wandsworth, and Lewisham and Southwark; and
- e) it was also proposed that there should be alternative names for the provisionally recommended Camberwell and Peckham, North Southwark and Bermondsey, and Streatham constituencies.

Local Inquiry and Assistant Commissioner's Report

9. We were required to hold an inquiry. Following the announcement of the inquiry, two further representations were received, both of which supported parts of our proposals whilst objecting to other parts. The Assistant Commissioner reported that the main issues were the same as those listed above.

Dulwich and West Norwood BC, Streatham BC and Vauxhall BC

10. The Assistant Commissioner considered that our recommended inclusion of the Lambeth Borough ward of Coldharbour in Dulwich and West Norwood BC would involve the breaking of ties for those 4,649 electors in the new Coldharbour ward who were previously in Vauxhall BC. He also considered that there were significant ties between the Lambeth Borough wards of Clapham Common and Clapham Town and that the links between these two wards could be reinforced if both were included in Streatham BC. However, he did not recommend that the Lambeth Borough ward of Tulse Hill should be included in Dulwich and West Norwood BC as the ward had links with the Lambeth Borough ward of Brixton Hill, which was located in Streatham BC and had no appreciable local ties with the Dulwich and West Norwood constituency.

11. He decided not to recommend acceptance of the first counter-proposal. He considered that the ties of more electors would be broken and that the disruption caused by the counter-proposal would outweigh the benefits.

Camberwell and Peckham BC and North Southwark and Bermondsey BC

12. The Assistant Commissioner reported that the suggestion that the new Southwark Borough ward of Livesey should be included in North Southwark and Bermondsey BC rather than Camberwell and Peckham BC, whilst assisting the 2,203 electors who lived north of the Old Kent Road, which divided the ward, would break the ties which 5,988 electors on the south side of the Old Kent Road had with Camberwell and Peckham BC. He noted that the disparity between the largest and smallest constituencies would increase to 14,824, which he considered to be excessive.

Brixton

13. He also considered the suggestion that Lambeth Borough should be allocated three constituencies on its own so that Brixton could be unified into one parliamentary constituency. He noted there had been almost unanimous support for our recommended pairing of Lambeth and Southwark, and also that the detailed proposal would result in the division of wards. He therefore rejected the proposal.

The pairing of Lambeth and Southwark

14. In noting that there had been significant support for our recommended pairing of Lambeth and Southwark, the Assistant Commissioner considered that this had merit. The alternatives were not supported and would lead to constituencies with electorates significantly below the electoral quota. He therefore rejected the counter-proposals for alternative pairings for Lambeth and Southwark.

Constituency names

15. The Assistant Commissioner reported that there was considerable objection to the name of North Southwark and Bermondsey BC and he considered that there was a lack of local identity with North Southwark. He did not accept the proposal to include Rotherhithe in the constituency name. He considered that, as Rotherhithe formed part of the former Metropolitan Borough of Bermondsey, a new constituency name that combined Old

Southwark with Bermondsey had merit. He rejected alternative names for Camberwell and Peckham BC and Streatham BC.

Revised Recommendations

16. We agreed with the Assistant Commissioner's recommendations that the only change should be to the name of the provisionally recommended North Southwark and Bermondsey BC.

17. We accordingly published the following revised recommendations for the name of the Bermondsey and Old Southwark constituency, and confirmed our provisional recommendations as final for the four other constituencies. Our revised recommendations were:-

2000 Electorate

Bermondsey and Old Southwark BC	66,206
Camberwell and Peckham BC	67,764
Dulwich and West Norwood BC	66,856
Streatham BC	69,355
Vauxhall BC	65,759
	<hr/>
	335,940

Representations

18. Following publication of our revised recommendations, we received 410 representations, all of which objected to the revised recommendations. One objected to the revised name of Bermondsey and Old Southwark BC, whilst the remainder were proformas, all objecting to the inclusion of the Southwark Borough ward of Livesey in Camberwell and Peckham BC. The representations suggested that the Livesey ward should be divided between Bermondsey and Old Southwark BC and Camberwell and Peckham BC, which is against our well-established policy of not dividing wards between constituencies. We considered that both of these points had been fully discussed at the local inquiry, that there was no new evidence and that there was no compelling reason to alter our policy of not dividing wards.

Recommendation

19. We therefore recommend the adoption of the following constituencies containing the wards as listed in Appendix C:-

2000 Electorate

Bermondsey and Old Southwark BC	66,206
Camberwell and Peckham BC	67,764
Dulwich and West Norwood BC	66,856
Streatham BC	69,355
Vauxhall BC	65,759
	<hr/>
	335,940

MERTON

The Number of Electors

1. There are currently two constituencies in the London Borough of Merton:-

	2000 electorate
Mitcham and Morden BC	65,946
Wimbledon BC	<u>64,524</u>
	<u><u>130,470</u></u>

The Number of Constituencies

2. Merton had a 2000 parliamentary electorate of 130,470, which gave a theoretical entitlement to 1.87 constituencies. We decided that the borough should continue to be reviewed separately and that it should continue to be allocated two constituencies. With two constituencies, the average constituency electorate in the borough would be 65,235, which is 4,700 below the electoral quota. The electorates of the two existing constituencies produced a disparity of 1,422 which our provisional recommendations decreased.

Provisional Recommendations

3. As a result of changes to the borough ward boundaries, seven of the new wards are partly in one constituency and partly in another. Our provisional recommendations realigned the constituency boundaries with the new ward boundaries. We provisionally decided that the three divided wards of Colliers Wood, Lavender Fields and St Helier should be included in Mitcham and Morden BC and that the four divided wards of Cannon Hill, Trinity, West Barnes and Wimbledon Park should be included in Wimbledon BC. The disparity between the constituency electorates would be reduced to 788.

4. Our provisional recommendations were:-

	2000 electorate
Mitcham and Morden BC	65,629
Wimbledon BC	<u>64,841</u>
	<u><u>130,470</u></u>

Representations

5. Following publication of our provisional recommendations we received just nine representations, all of which approved of them.

Recommendation

6. No local inquiry was required. As no argument against our provisional recommendations had been put forward, we decided not to use our discretion to hold one. Given the support received for our proposals, we recommend that the borough should continue to have the following two constituencies containing the wards as listed in Appendix C:-

2000 electorate

Mitcham and Morden BC	65,629
Wimbledon BC	64,841
	<hr/> <hr/>
	130,470

REDBRIDGE AND WALTHAM FOREST

The Number of Electors

1. There are currently five constituencies in the paired London Boroughs of Redbridge and Waltham Forest:-

	2000 electorate
Chingford and Woodford Green BC	63,910
Ilford North BC	68,948
Ilford South BC	75,294
Leyton and Wanstead BC	61,537
Walthamstow BC	<u>64,314</u>
	<u><u>334,003</u></u>

The Number of Constituencies

2. Redbridge had a 2000 parliamentary electorate of 176,195, which gave a theoretical entitlement to 2.52 constituencies. We noted that if the borough were reviewed separately and three constituencies allocated, the borough average would be 58,732, which is 11,203 below the electoral quota and 1,203 over our 10,000 threshold.

3. Waltham Forest had a 2000 parliamentary electorate of 157,808, which gave a theoretical entitlement to 2.26 constituencies. We noted that if the borough were reviewed separately and two constituencies allocated, the borough average would be 78,904, which is 8,969 above the electoral quota.

4. The paired boroughs had a 2000 parliamentary electorate of 334,003, which gave a theoretical entitlement to 4.78 constituencies. With five constituencies retained, the average constituency electorate would be 66,801, which is 3,134 below the electoral quota. We noted that this was closer to the electoral quota than both the individual borough averages. We decided therefore that Redbridge and Waltham Forest should continue to be paired and retain five constituencies. The electorates of the five existing constituencies ranged from 75,294 in Ilford South BC to 61,537 in Leyton and Wanstead BC, a disparity of 13,757, which our provisional recommendations reduced to 12,334.

Provisional Recommendations

5. As a result of changes to ward boundaries in Redbridge and Waltham Forest, three of the new wards are divided between the existing constituencies. We decided to realign the constituency boundaries by including the Redbridge Borough wards of Snaresbrook and Wanstead in Leyton and Wanstead BC and the Waltham Forest Borough ward of Higham Hill in Walthamstow BC. We considered whether to recommend further changes to improve the electoral figures, so as to bring them closer to the electoral quota and the combined borough average, but concluded that any further change would involve unnecessary disruption.

6. Our provisional recommendations were:-

2000 electorate

Chingford and Woodford Green BC	63,910
Ilford North BC	67,525
Ilford South BC	75,294
Leyton and Wanstead BC	62,960
Walthamstow BC	64,314
	<hr/>
	334,003

Representations

7. Following publication of our provisional recommendations, we received twenty-eight representations, of which twenty-three supported all or parts of our proposals and five objected to all or parts of them.

8. The main issues raised in the objections were contained in three counter-proposals:-

- a) the first counter-proposal was that the pairing of Redbridge and Waltham Forest should be disbanded, that Redbridge should be paired with Havering, and Waltham Forest paired with Hackney;
- b) the second counter-proposal was that there should only be one cross-borough boundary constituency between the paired boroughs, which would lead to the alteration of each of the existing constituencies and reduce the disparity to 8,360. It suggested that the Redbridge Borough ward of Cranbrook should be moved from Ilford South BC to Ilford North BC; that the Redbridge Borough ward of Roding should be moved from Ilford North BC to a renamed Woodford and Leytonstone BC; that the Redbridge Borough wards of Church End and Monkham should be moved from Chingford and Woodford Green BC to Woodford and Leytonstone BC; that the Waltham Forest Borough wards of Forest and Leyton should be moved from Leyton and Wanstead BC to a renamed Leyton and Walthamstow BC; and that the Waltham Forest Borough wards of Chapel End and Higham Hill should be moved from Walthamstow BC to a renamed Chingford BC; and
- c) the third counter-proposal also proposed that there should only be one cross-borough boundary constituency between the paired boroughs, which would lead to the alteration of each of the existing constituencies and reduce the disparity to 6,239. It suggested that the three Redbridge Borough wards of Bridge, Clayhall and Roding should be moved from Ilford North BC to a renamed Woodford and Chingford Green BC; that the Redbridge Borough wards of Chadwell, Newbury and Seven Kings should be moved from Ilford South BC to Ilford North BC; that the Redbridge Borough wards of Snaresbrook and Wanstead should be moved from Leyton and Wanstead BC to a renamed Ilford South and Wanstead BC; that the Waltham Forest Borough wards of Lea Bridge, Markhouse and Wood Street should be moved from Walthamstow BC to a re-named Leyton BC; and that the Waltham Forest Borough wards of Endlebury, Larkswood and Valley should be moved from Chingford and Woodford Green BC to a renamed Walthamstow and Chingford Mount BC.

9. The name of the proposed Ilford North BC was also an issue in the representations.

Local Inquiry and Assistant Commissioner's Report

10. Although we were not statutorily required to hold a local inquiry, we decided to exercise our discretion to hold one. Following the announcement of the inquiry a further twenty-five representations were received, of which nineteen supported all or parts of our provisional recommendations, two supported parts whilst objecting to other parts and four objected to them. One of the objections suggested alternative pairings of Redbridge and Waltham Forest with other boroughs.

11. The Assistant Commissioner reported that the main issues raised at the inquiry were the same as those listed above. He also noted that the first counter-proposal was abandoned at the inquiry as the person who suggested the alternative pairings had also suggested the second counter-proposal.

12. He considered that the second counter-proposal presented certain advantages, particularly in the lowering of the disparity to 8,360, the strengthening of certain boundaries and a partial re-unification of the Woodford area, albeit without the Bridge ward. He was, however, concerned about the separation of the Bridge ward from both Roding and the other Woodford wards and the lack of community link between the two parts of the proposed Woodford and Leytonstone constituency. He considered that placing the Leyton and Leytonstone wards into separate constituencies would divide a community down its middle. He also considered that this counter-proposal resulted in too high a level of disruption to local ties across all the existing constituencies and noted the high level of criticism it had received from the many who considered it was unacceptable.

13. The third counter-proposal resulted in a significant improvement in the electoral disparity between constituencies, led to the creation of only one cross-borough boundary constituency, which reunited the Woodford area, created an Ilford South BC with boundaries similar to those prior to 1997 and produced a much lower disparity. However, he noted that it implemented major change across all the constituencies and that it was difficult to justify the gains at the cost of such major change and disruption to local ties. He noted that there was no support for the third counter-proposal and accordingly rejected it.

14. The Assistant Commissioner reported that the alternative name of Ilford North and Woodford BC had been suggested for Ilford North BC to reflect the history of the communities in the area. He considered that confusion between the alternative name and that of the Chingford and Woodford Green constituency was not likely to arise. He noted that the loss of Woodford's separate identity remained keenly felt and that the strength of the views for a clear recognition of the Woodford community was also apparent in both the second and third counter-proposals. He accordingly recommended that the name of Ilford North BC should be changed to Ilford North and Woodford BC.

15. Additionally, the Assistant Commissioner considered how the growth in electorate in Ilford South BC might be addressed. He reported that the Redbridge Borough ward of Cranbrook, as in the second counter-proposal, appeared to be the most practical ward to move in order to address the issue.

16. He noted that, in our provisional recommendations, we had considered whether to move the Cranbrook ward from Ilford South BC to Leyton and Wanstead BC in order to reduce the disparity in their electorates, but that we had decided against this because the River Roding, Wanstead Flats and the North Circular Road separated Cranbrook ward from Leyton and Wanstead BC. He also noted that moving the Cranbrook ward to Ilford North BC left the ward isolated as the A12 road (Eastern Avenue) presented a significant boundary and that such a move would necessitate further changes elsewhere to address the resulting disparity. He concluded that the resulting disruption to local ties in neighbouring constituencies could not be justified and he did not support moving the Cranbrook ward.

Recommendation

17. We agreed with the Assistant Commissioner's recommendation that the counter-proposals would be too disruptive to the existing community links and that the provisional recommendations should be implemented.

18. However, we rejected his recommendation to change the name of Ilford North BC to Ilford North and Woodford BC. It is our policy not to change an existing constituency name unless boundary changes make that name inappropriate and we considered that the minor changes to the ward boundaries in this area did not make the existing constituency name any less appropriate. We further noted that the Woodford area is effectively divided between three constituencies and considered that the name Ilford North and Woodford may result in some confusion in the Woodford area. We also noted that alternative names for the constituency had been canvassed at the inquiry, but that no consensus had emerged. We decided not to alter our provisional recommendations.

19. We therefore recommend the adoption of the following constituencies containing the wards listed in Appendix C:-

	2000 electorate
Chingford and Woodford Green BC	63,910
Ilford North BC	67,525
Ilford South BC	75,294
Leyton and Wanstead BC	62,960
Walthamstow BC	<u>64,314</u>
	<u>334,003</u>

SUTTON

The Number of Electors

1. There are currently two constituencies in the London Borough of Sutton:-

	2000 electorate
Carshalton and Wallington BC	67,671
Sutton and Cheam BC	<u>64,086</u>
	<u>131,757</u>

The Number of Constituencies

2. Sutton had a 2000 parliamentary electorate of 131,757, which gave a theoretical entitlement to 1.88 constituencies. We decided that the borough should continue to be reviewed separately and that it should continue to be allocated two constituencies. With two constituencies, the average constituency electorate in the borough would be 65,879, which is 4,056 below the electoral quota. The electorates of the two existing constituencies produced a disparity of 3,585 which our provisional recommendations reduced to 537.

Provisional Recommendations

3. As a result of changes to ward boundaries in the borough, six of the new wards are partly in one constituency and partly in another. Our provisional recommendations realigned the constituency boundaries with the new ward boundaries. We proposed that the divided wards of Carshalton Central, St Helier and The Wrythe should be included in Carshalton and Wallington BC, and that the divided wards of Belmont, Sutton Central and Sutton South should be included in Sutton and Cheam BC.

4. Our provisional recommendations were:-

	2000 electorate
Carshalton and Wallington BC	65,610
Sutton and Cheam BC	<u>66,147</u>
	<u>131,757</u>

Representations

5. Following publication of our provisional recommendations we received eleven representations, all of which approved of the provisional recommendations, although one suggested alternative constituency names.

Recommendation

6. No local inquiry was required to be held. We were satisfied that no compelling argument against our provisional recommendations had been put forward and, in the circumstances, we decided not to use our discretion to hold an inquiry. In view of this, and

given the support received for our proposals, we recommend the adoption of the following constituencies containing the wards as listed in Appendix C:-

2000 electorate

Carshalton and Wallington BC	65,610
Sutton and Cheam BC	66,147
	<u>131,757</u>

WANDSWORTH

The Number of Electors

1. There are currently three constituencies in the London Borough of Wandsworth:-

	2000 electorate
Battersea BC	67,206
Putney BC	60,634
Tooting BC	<u>68,047</u>
	<u>195,887</u>

The Number of Constituencies

2. Wandsworth had a 2000 parliamentary electorate of 195,887 which gave a theoretical entitlement to 2.80 constituencies. We decided that the borough should continue to be reviewed separately and that it should continue to be allocated three constituencies. With three constituencies, the average constituency electorate in the borough would be 65,296, which is 4,639 below the electoral quota. The electorates of the three existing constituencies ranged from 68,047 in Tooting BC to 60,634 in Putney BC, a disparity of 7,413.

Provisional Recommendations

3. As a result of changes to the borough ward boundaries, two of the new wards are partly in one constituency and partly in another. Our provisional recommendations realigned the constituency boundaries with the new ward boundaries. In allocating the divided wards we provisionally placed the Fairfield ward in Battersea BC and the Wandsworth Common ward in Tooting BC.

4. The effect of these proposals would increase the disparity to 10,114. However, because there are twenty wards in Wandsworth, an allocation of three constituencies would mean that there could not be an even distribution of wards. Two constituencies would contain seven wards, whilst the third constituency would contain six wards. With an average ward electorate of 9,794, and with no ward being significantly above or below this figure, it was impossible to produce a distribution with a smaller disparity without causing unnecessary disruption to local ties.

5. Our provisional recommendations were:-

	2000 electorate
Battersea BC	67,111
Putney BC	59,331
Tooting BC	<u>69,445</u>
	<u>195,887</u>

Representations

6. Following publication of our provisional recommendations we received a total of sixteen representations, of which ten opposed all or part of our proposals. The main issues raised in the objections were principally contained in two counter-proposals:-

- a) the first counter-proposal included the divided ward of Wandsworth Common in Battersea BC instead of in Tooting BC, the Balham ward in Tooting BC instead of in Battersea BC, and suggested renaming the Battersea and Tooting constituencies should the changes be implemented; and
- b) the second counter-proposal, which covered all of South London, suggested pairing the London Boroughs of Wandsworth and Lambeth.

Local Inquiry and Assistant Commissioner's Report

7. We were required to hold an inquiry. Following the announcement of the inquiry a further nineteen representations were received. There was widespread support for the borough to retain three constituencies and for the borough boundary to be respected. The Assistant Commissioner reported that the issues raised at the inquiry were the same as those raised in the counter-proposals mentioned above.

The Balham and Wandsworth Common wards

8. The first counter-proposal submitted that the Balham ward should be transferred from Battersea BC to Tooting BC in exchange for the Wandsworth Common ward, so as to unite the ward with much of the rest of Balham which was contained in the Bedford and Nightingale wards in Tooting BC. Others also proposed that Tooting BC should consequently be renamed Balham and Tooting BC, and that Battersea BC should be renamed Battersea and Wandsworth BC.

9. The Assistant Commissioner reported that the proposal had merits, but concluded that it should be rejected because its merits were not sufficient to justify the transfer of some 18,000 electors or to outweigh the disruption that would be caused by the changes. It followed that the consequential name changes should also be rejected.

The pairing of the London Boroughs of Wandsworth and Lambeth

10. The second counter-proposal submitted that the London Boroughs of Wandsworth and Lambeth should be paired, with a total of five constituencies being allocated, in order to narrow the disparity between the electorates and to better reflect local and historical links. The Assistant Commissioner reported that there was no support for the counter-proposal and that there were objections to it. He acknowledged that the counter-proposal had some benefits but he considered that it would be unduly disruptive, because it would be necessary to create a constituency that straddled the boundary between the two boroughs, and he rejected it.

Recommendation

11. We decided to accept the Assistant Commissioner's recommendations in full. We therefore recommend the adoption of the following constituencies containing the wards as listed in Appendix C:-

	2000 electorate
Battersea BC	67,111
Putney BC	59,331
Tooting BC	<u>69,445</u>
	<u>195,887</u>

CHAPTER FOUR – THE METROPOLITAN COUNTIES

PART ONE – GENERAL CONSIDERATIONS

Rule 4 – Metropolitan County Boundaries

4.1 Rule 4 provides that, so far as is practicable, constituencies should be contained within the boundaries of counties. The Local Government Act 1985 abolished the councils of the six Metropolitan Counties but the counties remain for the purpose, *inter alia*, of the redistribution of Parliamentary constituencies. No Metropolitan County boundary has been crossed in any of our recommendations, although we did consider crossing the boundary between Merseyside and Cheshire before we published our provisional recommendations.

Metropolitan Borough Boundaries

4.2 However, the Rules do not restrict the crossing of the boundaries of Metropolitan Boroughs and, for the reasons set out in paragraph 2.32 above, we recommend thirteen constituencies which cross Metropolitan Borough boundaries. This is the same total as our predecessors recommended in the Fourth Periodical Report.

Theoretical entitlements to constituencies in the Metropolitan Counties

4.3 The 2000 electorates, theoretical entitlements and county and borough averages in the Metropolitan Counties and Boroughs are set out in Table 1 below, which also shows the deviations between the averages and the electoral quota. Strictly speaking, the concept of theoretical entitlements applies to Metropolitan Counties and not to Metropolitan Boroughs, but the information relating to the boroughs assisted us in deciding which borough boundaries to cross and how to pair or group boroughs where it was necessary to ensure the correct allocation of Parliamentary constituencies and/or to create constituencies with electorates closer to the electoral quota. Our decisions regarding the number of constituencies were based in each case on the county's 2000 theoretical entitlement. The reasons for the particular pairings or groupings of boroughs that we recommend are given in Part Two of this Chapter.

Rule 1 – Number of Constituencies

4.4 It will be noted from Table 1 that, if we had allocated Parliamentary constituencies to each individual Metropolitan Borough in a Metropolitan County, the total number of constituencies in that county would often be different to the number that we actually allocated on the basis of that county's theoretical entitlement. Where that situation occurs, both total allocations are shown in the table. For example, the allocation of constituencies individually to the ten boroughs in Greater Manchester would have produced a total of twenty-five constituencies, whereas Greater Manchester's theoretical entitlement is actually to twenty-seven constituencies.

4.5 We recommend a total allocation of 118 constituencies to the six Metropolitan Counties. This represents a reduction of six constituencies from the current allocation of 124. Each county has been reduced by one constituency.

Table 1 – county and borough electorates, theoretical entitlements, averages, and deviations from the electoral quota (69,935)

County/Borough	2000 Electorate	Theoretical Entitlement		County and Borough Average	Deviation between Average and Electoral Quota
		Exact	Rounded		
Bolton	202,743	2.90	3	67,581	- 2,354
Bury	138,652	1.98	2	69,326	- 609
Manchester	307,664	4.40	4	76,916	+ 6,981
Oldham	157,891	2.26	2	78,946	+ 9,011
Rochdale	151,843	2.17	2	75,922	+ 5,987
Salford	162,550	2.32	2	81,275	+ 11,340
Stockport	222,482	3.18	3	74,161	+ 4,226
Tameside	162,441	2.32	2	81,221	+ 11,286
Trafford	165,228	2.36	2	82,614	+ 12,679
Wigan	233,805	3.34	3	77,935	+ 8,000
Total of borough allocations			25	76,212	+ 6,277
Greater Manchester total	1,905,299	27.24	27	70,567	+ 632
Knowsley	109,792	1.57	2	54,896	- 15,039
Liverpool	346,702	4.96	5	69,340	- 595
St Helens	136,856	1.96	2	68,428	- 1,507
Sefton	217,320	3.11	3	72,440	+ 2,505
Wirral	247,183	3.53	4	61,796	- 8,139
Total of borough allocations			16	66,116	- 3,819
Merseyside total	1,057,853	15.13	15	70,524	+ 589
Barnsley	170,057	* 2.43	2 or 3	85,029 or 56,686	+ 15,094 or -13,249
Doncaster	220,653	3.16	3	73,551	+ 3,616
Rotherham	192,288	2.75	3	64,096	- 5,839
Sheffield	380,758	5.44	5	76,152	+ 6,217
Total of borough allocations			13 or 14	74,135 or 68,840	+ 4,200 or - 1,095
South Yorkshire total	963,756	13.78	14	68,840	- 1,095
Gateshead	152,145	2.18	2	76,073	+ 6,138
Newcastle upon Tyne	201,624	2.88	3	67,208	- 2,727
North Tyneside	143,265	2.05	2	71,633	+ 1,698
South Tyneside	118,365	1.69	2	59,183	- 10,752
Sunderland	218,063	3.12	3	72,688	+ 2,753
Total of borough allocations			12	69,455	- 480
Tyne and Wear total	833,462	11.92	12	69,455	- 480

Birmingham	721,183	10.31	10	72,118	+ 2,183
Coventry	222,683	3.18	3	74,228	+ 4,293
Dudley	239,467	3.42	3	79,822	+ 9,887
Sandwell	219,469	3.14	3	73,156	+ 3,221
Solihull	154,702	2.21	2	77,351	+ 7,416
Walsall	189,977	2.72	3	63,326	- 6,609
Wolverhampton	180,995	2.59	3	60,332	- 9,603
Total of borough allocations			27	71,425	+ 1,490
West Midlands total	1,928,476	27.58	28	68,874	- 1,061
Bradford	346,110	4.95	5	69,222	- 713
Calderdale	146,357	2.09	2	73,179	+ 3,244
Kirklees	296,959	4.25	4	74,240	+ 4,305
Leeds	538,599	7.70	8	67,325	- 2,610
Wakefield	245,227	3.51	4	61,307	- 8,628
Total of borough allocations			23	68,402	- 1,533
West Yorkshire total	1,573,252	* 22.496	22 or 23	71,511 or 68,402	+ 1,576 or - 1,533
Total of 36 borough allocations			116 or 117		
Total of 6 county allocations	8,262,098	118.14	118 or 119		

* Indicates a “Walton” theoretical entitlement – see paragraph 3.15 of Chapter 3

Local inquiries

4.6 We held ten local inquiries covering thirty of the thirty-six Metropolitan Boroughs. No local inquiries were held for those boroughs where our provisional recommendations met with general approval. They were Bury in Greater Manchester, Doncaster in South Yorkshire, Coventry, Solihull and Walsall in the West Midlands, and Calderdale in West Yorkshire.

4.7 In Greater Manchester, we received a large number of counter-proposals for different pairings or groupings of boroughs and we therefore decided to hold one local inquiry, in Manchester, covering the nine boroughs of Bolton, Manchester, Oldham, Rochdale, Salford, Stockport, Tameside, Trafford and Wigan. For similar reasons, in Merseyside we held one local inquiry covering all five boroughs in the county. This was held at two venues: in Liverpool and in Wallasey on the Wirral, where our proposals proved to be particularly controversial. In South Yorkshire, we held one inquiry, in Sheffield, for Barnsley, Rotherham and Sheffield. In Tyne and Wear, we held three inquiries: one for Gateshead and South Tyneside, one for Newcastle upon Tyne and North Tyneside, and one for Sunderland. All three inquiries were held by the same Assistant Commissioner. In the West Midlands, we held two inquiries: one for Birmingham and one covering Dudley, Sandwell and Wolverhampton. Both inquiries were held by the same Assistant Commissioner. In West Yorkshire, we also held two local inquiries: one for Bradford and one, in Wakefield, covering Kirklees, Leeds and Wakefield. These two inquiries were held by different Assistant Commissioners as the issues in Bradford were entirely internal to that borough.

Rule 5 – Constituency electorates

4.8 The result of pairing or grouping the Metropolitan Boroughs by applying the 10,000 threshold between the borough average and the electoral quota, as mentioned in paragraphs 2.30 to 2.32 above, is that more of the constituency electorates are closer to the electoral quota, as shown in Table 2 below. Of the 118 recommended constituencies, 105 (89%) have electorates that are within ten per cent of the electoral quota and all 118 have electorates within twenty per cent of the quota. This compares to the 124 existing constituencies where 96 (77%) have electorates within ten per cent of the electoral quota, and 119 (96%) have electorates within twenty per cent of the quota.

Table 2 – the effect of our recommendations

Deviation from the EQ	Fourth General Review			Fifth General Review		
	1991 Electorate	Existing Seats	Proposed Seats	2000 Electorate	Existing Seats	Proposed Seats
Over 30%	90,066 or more	—	—	90,916 or more	—	—
20% - 30%	83,138 - 90,065	2	—	83,922 - 90,915	—	—
10% - 20%	76,210 - 83,137	8	5	76,929 - 83,921	1	6
Within 10%	69,282 - 76,209	35	45	69,936 - 76,928	34	57
Electoral Quota (EQ)	69,281			69,935		
Within 10%	62,353 - 69,280	40	60	62,942 - 69,934	62	48
10% - 20%	55,425 - 62,352	30	13	55,948 - 62,941	22	7
20% - 30%	48,497 - 55,424	14	1	48,955 - 55,947	5	—
Over 30%	48,496 or less	—	—	48,954 or less	—	—
Total		129	124		124	118

4.9 Table 3 below shows the electoral disparity within each Metropolitan County (i.e. the difference between the highest and lowest constituency electorates in the county) and the effect that our recommendations have on those disparities. The table also shows the figures across the six counties. It is in the Metropolitan Counties where it can be most difficult to construct constituencies that are close to the electoral quota because of the large electorates of many of the wards, the largest being in Birmingham where the average electorate of the forty wards is 18,030. This difficulty created by large wards can be greatly exacerbated when the number of wards is not exactly divisible by the number of constituencies allocated.

4.10 Our recommendations reduce the disparity in four of the six counties. In Tyne and Wear, our recommendations slightly increase the disparity by 1,962, from 9,692 to 11,654. This disparity is due firstly to our decision not to recommend a constituency crossing the River Tyne and secondly to the number of wards in Newcastle upon Tyne, and in Sunderland, not being exactly divisible by the number of constituencies allocated to each borough.

4.11 In Merseyside, our recommendations increase the disparity by 5,768 from 17,246 to 23,014. This is the only significant worsening of an already high existing disparity included in our recommendations for the whole country. It is a consequence of our acceptance of the Assistant Commissioner's recommendations not to create a constituency across the River Mersey, and to treat Wirral separately with an allocation of four constituencies, because the estuary is considered to be a special geographical consideration (Rule 6) and because local

ties would be broken (Rule 7). Our provisional recommendations had included a constituency that crossed the Mersey and included part of Wirral with part of Liverpool. Our provisional recommendations had lowered the disparity in Merseyside to 8,580.

Table 3 – electoral disparities between the existing and recommended constituencies with the highest and lowest number of electors

Greater Manchester	Highest Electorate		Lowest Electorate		Disparity
Existing seats	Oldham East and Saddleworth CC	74,662	Salford BC	54,621	20,041
Recommended seats	Heywood and Middleton CC	78,036	Hazel Grove CC	63,519	14,517
Improvement		- 3,374		8,898	5,524

Merseyside	Highest Electorate		Lowest Electorate		Disparity
Existing seats	Liverpool, Riverside BC	73,533	Bootle BC	56,287	17,246
Recommended seats	Knowsley BC	79,099	Wirral West CC	56,085	23,014
Improvement		- 5,566		- 202	- 5,768

South Yorkshire	Highest Electorate		Lowest Electorate		Disparity
Existing seats	Sheffield, Hillsborough CC	74,663	Sheffield, Brightside BC	54,952	19,711
Recommended seats	Doncaster Central BC	74,388	Penistone and Stocksbridge CC	63,914	10,474
Improvement		275		8,962	9,237

Tyne and Wear	Highest Electorate		Lowest Electorate		Disparity
Existing seats	Newcastle upon Tyne Central BC	69,151	Tyne Bridge BC	59,459	9,692
Recommended seats	Sunderland Central BC	76,457	Newcastle upon Tyne Central BC	64,803	11,654
Improvement		- 7,306		5,344	- 1,962

West Midlands	Highest Electorate		Lowest Electorate		Disparity
Existing seats	Solihull BC	78,741	Birmingham, Yardley BC	52,966	25,775
Recommended seats	Meriden CC	78,714	Aldridge-Brownhills BC	58,695	20,019
Improvement		27		5,729	5,756

West Yorkshire	Highest Electorate		Lowest Electorate		Disparity
Existing seats	Wakefield CC	76,096	Leeds East BC	57,256	18,840
Recommended seats	Leeds Central BC	78,941	Huddersfield BC	66,275	12,666
Improvement		- 2,845		9,019	6,174

Metropolitan Counties	Highest Electorate		Lowest Electorate		Disparity
Existing seats	Solihull BC	78,741	Birmingham, Yardley BC	52,966	25,775
Recommended seats	Knowsley BC	79,099	Wirral West CC	56,085	23,014
Improvement		- 358		3,119	2,761

PART TWO – DESCRIPTION OF THE REVIEWS

4.12 In Part One of this Chapter, we set out our approach to the allocation of constituencies to the Metropolitan Counties. In this part, we show in detail the progress of the review in each county.

GREATER MANCHESTER

The Number of Electors

1. There are currently twenty-eight constituencies in the Metropolitan County of Greater Manchester:-

	2000 electorate
Altrincham and Sale West BC	71,384
Ashton under Lyne BC	72,409
Bolton North East BC	69,213
Bolton South East BC	67,941
Bolton West CC	65,589
Bury North BC	71,113
Bury South BC	67,539
Cheadle BC	68,817
Denton and Reddish BC	69,043
Eccles BC	69,026
Hazel Grove CC	64,843
Heywood and Middleton CC	73,442
Leigh CC	70,864
Makerfield CC	67,944
Manchester, Blackley BC	60,101
Manchester Central BC	66,141
Manchester, Gorton BC	64,795
Manchester, Withington BC	67,743
Oldham East and Saddleworth CC	74,662
Oldham West and Royton BC	69,799
Rochdale CC	69,648
Salford BC	54,621
Stalybridge and Hyde CC	65,730
Stockport BC	66,264
Stretford and Urmston BC	70,635
Wigan CC	64,333
Worsley CC	69,567
Wythenshawe and Sale East BC	<u>72,093</u>
	<u><u>1,905,299</u></u>

The Number of Constituencies

2. Greater Manchester had a 2000 parliamentary electorate of 1,905,299, which gave a theoretical entitlement to 27.24 constituencies. We therefore decided that the county should be allocated twenty-seven constituencies, which would be a reduction of one. With twenty-seven constituencies the average constituency electorate would be 70,567, which is only 632 above the electoral quota. If we had reviewed each borough separately, twenty-five constituencies would have been allocated, which is two less than the county is entitled to. In order to allocate twenty-seven constituencies to the county as a whole, we decided to continue to pair or group the majority of the boroughs.

3. The electorates of the twenty-eight existing constituencies in Greater Manchester ranged from 74,662 in Oldham East and Saddleworth CC to 54,621 in Salford BC, a disparity of 20,041. The reduction from twenty-eight to twenty-seven constituencies was achieved by pairing the Boroughs of Bolton and Wigan and allocating six constituencies; by grouping the Cities of Manchester and Salford and the Borough of Trafford and allocating nine constituencies; and by grouping the Boroughs of Oldham, Rochdale and Tameside and allocating seven constituencies. The Borough of Bury was reviewed separately and allocated two constituencies. The Borough of Stockport was reviewed separately and allocated three constituencies.

4. The overall effect of the proposed changes in Greater Manchester reduce the disparity between the constituencies with the highest and lowest electorates from 20,041, for the existing twenty-eight constituencies, to 13,030 for the proposed twenty-seven constituencies.

Provisional Recommendations

The Boroughs of Bolton and Wigan

5. Bolton had a 2000 parliamentary electorate of 202,743, which gave a theoretical entitlement to 2.90 constituencies. If three constituencies were allocated, the borough average would be 67,581, which is 2,354 below the electoral quota. Wigan had a 2000 parliamentary electorate of 233,805, which gave a theoretical entitlement to 3.34 constituencies. If three constituencies were allocated, the borough average would be 77,935, which is 8,000 above the electoral quota. We noted that Bolton had twenty wards which, if we had allocated three constituencies to Bolton, would have resulted in one constituency that contained six wards and had an average electorate of 60,822, which would be 9,113 below the electoral quota. We also noted that Wigan had twenty-five wards which, if we had allocated three constituencies to Wigan, would have resulted in one constituency that contained nine wards and had an average electorate of 84,168, which would be 14,233 above the electoral quota and 4,233 over our 10,000 threshold. We considered that a 23,346 electoral disparity between neighbouring constituencies in the two boroughs would be unacceptably high.

6. The pairing of Bolton and Wigan had a 2000 parliamentary electorate of 436,548 which gave a theoretical entitlement to 6.24 constituencies. With six constituencies, the paired borough average would be 72,758, which is 2,823 above the electoral quota. We therefore provisionally decided to pair the boroughs, allocate six constituencies and include one Wigan Borough ward in a constituency with six Bolton Borough wards.

7. As a result of changes to ward boundaries, seven of the new wards in Bolton, and eleven of the new wards in Wigan are partly in one constituency and partly in another. Our provisional recommendations realigned the constituency boundaries with the new ward boundaries.

8. Bolton currently contains three whole constituencies. Our proposals would create two whole constituencies in the borough (Bolton North East BC and Bolton South East BC), both containing seven wards, and a cross-borough boundary constituency (Bolton West CC) that contained six Bolton wards and one Wigan ward. We proposed minimum change to the three constituencies by allocating the divided wards to the constituency that contained the majority of the electorate, with the exception of the Hulton ward, which we allocated to Bolton South East BC.

9. Wigan is currently paired with Salford and contains three whole constituencies and part of one other. Our proposals would create three whole constituencies in the borough (Leigh CC, Makerfield CC and Wigan CC), each containing eight wards. We recommended that the Atherton ward should be included in the cross-borough boundary constituency of Bolton West CC.

10. Apart from the changes we were required to make to realign ward and constituency boundaries, we proposed that the four wards of Astley Mosley Common, Leigh East, Leigh South and Tyldesley, which are either wholly or partly in the existing cross-borough Worsley CC, should be included in Leigh CC. We also proposed that the two wards of Hindley and Hindley Green, which are either wholly or partly in the existing Leigh CC, should be included in Makerfield CC, and that the Ince ward, which is divided between the existing Leigh CC, Makerfield CC and Wigan CC, should be included in Wigan CC.

11. Our provisional recommendations were:-

	2000 electorate
Bolton North East BC	71,024
Bolton South East BC	73,348
Bolton West CC	68,575
Leigh CC	74,231
Makerfield CC	72,903
Wigan CC	<u>76,467</u>
	<u>436,548</u>

Provisional and Final Recommendations

The Borough of Bury

12. We decided to continue to review the Borough of Bury separately and to continue to allocate two constituencies. Bury had a 2000 parliamentary electorate of 138,652, which gave a theoretical entitlement to 1.98 constituencies. Reviewing the borough separately and allocating two constituencies produced a borough average of 69,326, which is only 609 below the electoral quota.

13. We noted, however, that with seventeen wards in Bury it was inevitable that there would be an increase in the electoral disparity between the two constituencies, but we considered that the resulting disparity would be within acceptable limits. We provisionally decided that there was no need to alter the existing pattern of constituencies in Bury. We also decided that the whole of the divided Church ward should be included in Bury North BC, although this did not affect any electors.

14. We noted that the majority of the electorate of the divided Unsworth ward is in the existing Bury North BC, but we considered that the whole of the ward should be included in Bury South BC, so as not to divide the town of Whitefield between constituencies.

15. Our provisional recommendations were:-

	2000 electorate
Bury North BC	65,440
Bury South BC	73,212
	<hr/> <hr/>
	138,652

Representations

16. Following publication of our provisional recommendations, we received twenty representations, of which nineteen supported all or part of our proposals. One representation suggested an alternative name for Bury South BC. We decided to reject the proposed change of name and not to hold an inquiry. We therefore confirmed our provisional recommendations as our final recommendations.

Recommendation

17. We recommend the adoption of the following constituencies containing the wards as listed in Appendix C:-

	2000 electorate
Bury North BC	65,440
Bury South BC	73,212
	<hr/> <hr/>
	138,652

Provisional Recommendations

The Cities of Manchester and Salford and the Borough of Trafford

18. Manchester had a 2000 parliamentary electorate of 307,664, which gave a theoretical entitlement to 4.40 constituencies. If four constituencies were allocated, the borough average would be 76,916, which is 6,981 above the electoral quota. Salford had a 2000 parliamentary electorate of 162,550, which gave a theoretical entitlement to 2.32 constituencies. If two constituencies were allocated, the borough average would be 81,275, which is 11,340 above the electoral quota and 1,340 over our 10,000 threshold. Trafford had a 2000 parliamentary electorate of 165,228, which gave a theoretical entitlement to 2.36 constituencies. If two constituencies were allocated, the borough average would be 82,614, which is 12,679 above the electoral quota and 2,679 over our 10,000 threshold.

19. The combined grouping of Manchester, Salford and Trafford had a 2000 parliamentary electorate of 635,442, which gave a theoretical entitlement to 9.09 constituencies. With nine constituencies, the combined borough average would be 70,605, which is only 670 above the electoral quota and much closer to the quota than the three individual borough averages. We therefore provisionally decided to group the three boroughs and allocate nine constituencies to the combined area.

20. As a result of changes to ward boundaries, ten of the new wards in Manchester, seven in Salford, and one in Trafford are partly in one constituency and partly in another. Our provisional recommendations realigned the constituency boundaries with the new ward boundaries.

21. Manchester is currently paired with Trafford and contains four whole constituencies and part of one other. Our proposals would create three whole constituencies in Manchester (Manchester Central BC, Manchester, Gorton BC and Manchester, Withington BC), one constituency partly in Manchester and partly in Salford (provisionally named Blackley and Broughton BC), and one constituency partly in Manchester and partly in Trafford (Wythenshawe and Sale East BC). We considered that there was no need to alter the current pattern of constituencies in Manchester and only recommended that the wards of Moston and Whalley Range should be transferred between constituencies, with Moston included in Manchester Central BC and Whalley Range included in Manchester, Gorton BC.

22. Salford is currently paired with Wigan and contains two whole constituencies and part of one other. Our proposals would create two whole constituencies, each with nine wards, in Salford (Salford and Eccles BC and Worsley CC) and one constituency partly in Salford and partly in Manchester (Blackley and Broughton BC). We proposed that the Broughton and Kersal wards should be included in the cross-borough boundary constituency of Blackley and Broughton BC, thereby using the River Irwell as the constituency boundary. We also proposed that the Barton, Cadishead, Irlam and Winton wards, which are either wholly or partly in the existing Eccles constituency, should be included in Worsley CC. The remaining nine wards should be included in a constituency provisionally named Salford and Eccles BC, to reflect the fact that both Salford and Eccles have long histories as constituency names.

23. Trafford is currently paired with Manchester and contains two whole constituencies and part of one other. Our proposals retain two whole constituencies in the borough (Altrincham and Sale West BC and Stretford and Urmston BC) and one constituency partly in Trafford and partly in Manchester (Wythenshawe and Sale East BC). We proposed only minimum change in Trafford, so as to include the whole of the Bucklow-St Martins ward in Stretford and Urmston BC.

24. Our provisional recommendations were:-

	2000 electorate
Altrincham and Sale West BC	69,605
Blackley and Broughton BC	65,982
Manchester Central BC	69,600
Manchester, Gorton BC	70,845
Manchester, Withington BC	69,187
Salford and Eccles BC	73,162
Stretford and Urmston BC	72,414
Worsley CC	72,554
Wythenshawe and Sale East BC	<u>72,093</u>
	<u><u>635,442</u></u>

Provisional Recommendations

The Boroughs of Oldham, Rochdale and Tameside

25. Oldham had a 2000 parliamentary electorate of 157,891, which gave a theoretical entitlement to 2.26 constituencies. If two constituencies were allocated, the borough average would be 78,946, which is 9,011 above the electoral quota. Rochdale had a 2000 parliamentary electorate of 151,843, which gave a theoretical entitlement to 2.17 constituencies. If two constituencies were allocated, the borough average would be 75,922, which is 5,987 above the electoral quota. Tameside had a parliamentary electorate of 162,441, which gave a theoretical entitlement to 2.32 constituencies. If two constituencies were allocated, the borough average would be 81,221, which is 11,286 above the electoral quota and 1,286 over our 10,000 threshold.

26. The combined grouping of Oldham, Rochdale and Tameside had a parliamentary electorate of 472,175. This number of electors gave a theoretical entitlement to 6.75 constituencies. With seven constituencies, the combined borough average would be 67,454, which is 2,481 below the electoral quota and much closer to the quota than the three individual borough averages. We therefore decided to group the three boroughs and allocate seven constituencies to the combined area.

27. As a result of changes to ward boundaries, six of the new wards in Oldham, seven in Rochdale and seven in Tameside are partly in one constituency and partly in another. Our provisional recommendations realigned the constituency boundaries with the new wards.

28. Oldham is currently grouped with Rochdale, Stockport and Tameside, and contains one whole constituency and parts of two others. Our proposals would retain one whole constituency in the borough (Oldham West and Royton BC), one constituency partly in Oldham and partly in Rochdale (Oldham East and Saddleworth CC), and one constituency partly in Oldham and partly in Tameside (Ashton-under-Lyne BC). Apart from the changes we were required to make to realign ward and constituency boundaries, we proposed that the Alexandra and Medlock Vale wards should be included in Ashton-under-Lyne BC and that the St Mary's ward should be included in Oldham West and Royton BC.

29. Rochdale is currently grouped with Oldham, Stockport and Tameside and contains two whole constituencies and part of one other. Our proposals would retain two whole constituencies in the borough (Heywood and Middleton CC and Rochdale CC) and one constituency partly in Rochdale and partly in Oldham (Oldham East and Saddleworth CC). Apart from the changes we were required to make to realign ward and constituency boundaries, we proposed that the Bamford ward should be included in Rochdale CC. We also proposed that the Milnrow and Newhey ward should continue to be included in Oldham East and Saddleworth CC.

30. Tameside is currently grouped with Oldham, Rochdale and Stockport and contains one whole constituency and parts of two others. Our proposals would create two whole constituencies in the borough (Denton BC and Stalybridge and Hyde CC) and one constituency partly in Tameside and partly in Oldham (Ashton-under-Lyne BC). Apart from the changes we were required to make to realign ward and constituency boundaries, we proposed that the Droylsden East, Droylsden West and St Peter's wards should be included in Denton BC.

Stockport

31. Stockport is currently grouped with Oldham, Rochdale and Tameside. Having provisionally decided to group Oldham, Rochdale and Tameside, we were able to review Stockport separately. Stockport had a 2000 electorate of 222,482, which gave a theoretical entitlement to 3.18 constituencies. Reviewing the borough separately and allocating three constituencies produced a borough average of 74,161, which is 4,226 above the electoral quota.

32. We proposed that the Reddish North ward and the parts of the Reddish South ward, which are in the existing cross-borough boundary Denton and Reddish constituency, should be included in Stockport BC. We also proposed that the Manor ward should be included in Hazel Grove CC and that the Stepping Hill ward should be included in Cheadle BC.

33. Our provisional recommendations were:-

	2000 electorate
Ashton-under-Lyne BC	63,816
Cheadle BC	72,933
Denton BC	70,195
Hazel Grove CC	74,225
Heywood and Middleton CC	70,471
Oldham East and Saddleworth CC	64,061
Oldham West and Royton BC	63,437
Rochdale CC	73,632
Stalybridge and Hyde CC	66,563
Stockport BC	<hr/> 75,324
	<hr/> <hr/> 694,657

Representations

Bolton, Manchester, Oldham, Rochdale, Salford, Stockport, Tameside, Trafford and Wigan

34. Following publication of our provisional recommendations, we received 358 representations, of which twenty-eight supported all or parts of our proposals, twenty-six supported parts of our proposals whilst objecting to other parts and 301 objected to all or parts of our proposals. Three representations made other comments. The objections contained thirteen counter-proposals and included five petitions containing 464 names.

35. The main issues raised in the objections fell into four counter-proposals:-

- a) the first counter-proposal affected thirteen of the twenty-five constituencies. It submitted that Salford and Wigan should be kept together and should not be in separate groups or pairs, thereby minimising change to the existing pattern of constituencies in Salford.

In Manchester, the five wards of Ancoats and Clayton, Bradford, City Centre, Miles Platting and Newton Heath, and Moston were included in a renamed Manchester North BC, the five wards of Fallowfield, Levenshulme, Longsight, Rusholme and Whalley Range were included in Manchester Central BC, the Charlestown ward was included in Oldham West and Royton BC, the Cheetham ward was included in a renamed Salford BC, and the Gorton North and Gorton South wards were included in Denton BC.

In Oldham, it placed the St Mary's ward in Oldham East and Saddleworth CC.

In Salford, it included the eight wards of Barton, Cadishead, Eccles, Irlam, Pendlebury, Swinton North, Swinton South and Winton in a renamed Eccles BC and the Broughton and Kersal wards in a renamed Salford BC.

In Tameside, it placed the Dukinfield ward in Stalybridge and Hyde CC and the St Peter's ward in Ashton-under-Lyne BC.

In Wigan, it included the three wards of Astley Mosley Common, Leigh East and Tyldesley in Worsley CC, the Hindley and Hindley Green wards in Leigh CC and the Ince ward in Makerfield CC;

- b) the second counter-proposal affected twenty of the twenty-five constituencies. It proposed that Bolton should be treated separately and not be paired with Wigan, that Manchester should be grouped with Oldham and Tameside, that Salford should be grouped with Trafford and Wigan, and that Rochdale should be treated separately and not be in a group with Oldham and Tameside.

In Bolton, it placed the Hulton ward in Bolton West CC.

In Manchester, it placed the Didsbury East and Didsbury West wards in a renamed Wythenshawe and Didsbury BC, the Fallowfield and Levenshulme wards in Manchester, Withington BC, the three wards of Gorton North, Gorton South and Longsight in a renamed Denton and Gorton BC, the two wards of Miles Platting and Newton Heath, and Moston in a renamed Manchester, Blackley BC, and the Rusholme and Whalley Range wards in Manchester Central BC.

In Oldham, it placed the Alexandra and St Mary's wards in Oldham East and Saddleworth CC and the Hollinwood and Medlock Vale wards in Oldham West and Royton BC.

In Rochdale, it included the Bamford ward in Heywood and Middleton CC and the Milnrow and Newhey ward in Rochdale CC.

In Salford, it placed the four wards of Barton, Cadishead, Irlam and Winton in a renamed Eccles BC and the Broughton and Kersal wards in a renamed cross-borough boundary Salford and The Quays BC.

In Tameside, it placed the three wards of Droylsden East, Droylsden West and St Peter's in Ashton-under-Lyne BC.

In Trafford, it included the three wards of Brooklands, Priory and Sale Moor in a renamed Davyhulme BC, the Bucklow-St Martins ward in a renamed Altrincham BC and the three wards of Clifford, Gorse Hill and Longford in a renamed cross-borough boundary Salford and The Quays BC.

In Wigan, it included the three wards of Astley Mosley Common, Atherton and Tyldesley in a cross-borough boundary Worsley CC, the Hindley and Hindley Green wards in Leigh CC and the Ince ward in Makerfield CC;

- c) the third counter-proposal affected six constituencies in Oldham, Stockport and Tameside. It proposed that the existing grouping of Oldham, Rochdale, Stockport and Tameside be retained. In Oldham, it placed the Alexandra ward in Oldham West and Royton BC and the St Mary's ward in Oldham East and Saddleworth CC. In Stockport, it included the Manor ward in Stockport BC and the Reddish North and Reddish South wards in a renamed cross-borough boundary Denton and Reddish BC. In Tameside, it placed the three wards of Droylsden East, Droylsden West and St Peter's in Ashton-under-Lyne BC;
- d) the fourth counter-proposal affected the three constituencies in Stockport. It placed the Davenport and Cale Green ward in Cheadle BC, the Manor ward in Stockport BC and the Stepping Hill ward in Hazel Grove CC; and
- e) a number of the objections also suggested alternative names for the proposed constituencies in Manchester, Oldham, Tameside and Trafford.

Local Inquiry and Assistant Commissioner's Report

36. We were required to hold an inquiry for each of the nine boroughs. In view of the fact that some of the representations suggested alternative groupings of the nine boroughs, we decided to hold one inquiry into our provisional recommendations covering all these boroughs to allow for the full discussion of these alternative groupings. Following the announcement of the inquiry, a further 278 representations were received, of which 210 supported all or parts of our proposals, one supported parts of our proposals whilst objecting to other parts and sixty-seven objected to all or parts of our proposals. The representations included petitions and proformas containing 2,753 names. The objections contained three additional counter-proposals.

37. The Assistant Commissioner reported that one substantial counter-proposal was presented at the inquiry. He also reported that the main issues raised at the inquiry were contained in the principal counter-proposals. He noted that many of the other counter-proposals, which had been suggested by individuals, did not have other support.

The Boroughs of Bolton and Wigan

38. The Assistant Commissioner noted that there had been objections to our provisional decision to pair these two boroughs. He reported that alternative divisions of the two boroughs between constituencies had been suggested as well as alternative pairing or grouping arrangements with neighbouring boroughs. The main issues were the provisionally recommended inclusion of the Bolton Borough ward of Hulton in Bolton South East BC and of the Wigan Borough ward of Atherton in Bolton West CC.

39. It was claimed that the Bolton Borough ward of Hulton had closer ties with the wards in Bolton West CC than it did with the wards in Bolton South East BC. The Assistant Commissioner noted that the effect of the second counter-proposal would be that the electorate of Bolton South East BC would only be 62,829, making it the smallest constituency in Greater Manchester. He considered that this electorate was unnecessarily low and that the Hulton ward had close ties with the neighbouring wards of Harper Green and Rumworth in Bolton South East BC, which justified the Hulton ward's inclusion in that constituency.

40. There were objections to our division of the Borough of Wigan between constituencies and in particular to the inclusion of the Ince ward in Wigan CC instead of in Makerfield CC. He noted that, whilst it was argued that the Ince ward had close ties with the Makerfield area, the new ward included part of the town of Wigan and that it was justifiable to include the ward in Wigan CC so as not to divide the town of Wigan between constituencies. He concluded that the Wigan Borough ward of Ince should be included in Wigan CC. He also concluded that the Wigan Borough wards of Hindley and Hindley Green should be included in Makerfield CC rather than in Leigh CC.

41. The Assistant Commissioner rejected that element of the first and second counter-proposals that retained the existing Worsley CC so as to continue the pairing of the Borough of Wigan and the City of Salford. He concluded that our provisionally recommended pairing of the Boroughs of Bolton and Wigan was correct and that there should not be any alterations to our recommended constituencies in the two boroughs.

42. We agreed with the Assistant Commissioner's rejection of all of the counter-proposals that suggested alternative constituencies in the Boroughs of Bolton and Wigan. We decided to confirm our provisional recommendations as our final recommendations.

Recommendation

43. We recommend the adoption of the following constituencies containing the wards as listed in Appendix C:-

	2000 electorate
Bolton North East BC	71,024
Bolton South East BC	73,348
Bolton West CC	68,575
Leigh CC	74,231
Makerfield CC	72,903
Wigan CC	<u>76,467</u>
	<u><u>436,548</u></u>

Local Inquiry and Assistant Commissioner's Report

The Cities of Manchester and Salford and the Borough of Trafford

44. The Assistant Commissioner noted that, whilst there had been a significant level of support for our provisionally recommended grouping of the Cities of Manchester and Salford with the Borough of Trafford, there had also been a number of objections and that the first

and second counter-proposals had suggested alternative groupings involving these three authorities. He reported that there had been objections to our proposal to include the City of Manchester wards of Whalley Range and Moston in Manchester, Gorton BC and Manchester Central BC, respectively; to our proposed division of the town of Eccles between Salford and Eccles BC and Worsley CC; and to the inclusion of the three Trafford Borough wards of Brooklands, Priory and Sale Moor in Wythenshawe and Sale East BC.

45. He reported that the first counter-proposal objected to the inclusion of the City of Salford wards of Broughton and Kersal in the cross-borough boundary Blackley and Broughton BC and to the inclusion of the four City of Salford wards of Barton, Cadishead, Irlam and Winton in Worsley CC. Whilst this counter-proposal suggested only minimal change to the existing pattern of constituencies within the City of Salford, he noted that it resulted in more widespread change in the neighbouring boroughs, particularly in the City of Manchester.

46. The Assistant Commissioner considered that the River Irwell forms a clear and identifiable boundary between the City of Salford wards of Broughton and Kersal and the rest of the City of Salford. He saw no reason not to include the wards in a constituency with wards from the City of Manchester, because of the close ties between the wards on either side of the boundary between Manchester and Salford.

47. He reported that there had been a great deal of evidence concerning the ties that would be broken by dividing the town of Eccles between constituencies and by including the City of Salford wards of Cadishead and Irlam in Worsley CC, when that area had no physical links with that constituency. Whilst he was sympathetic to the case put forward by the objectors, he concluded that the first counter-proposal should be rejected because it would cause too much disruption throughout Greater Manchester as a whole.

48. The second counter-proposal created a constituency named Salford and The Quays BC which would contain wards from the City of Salford and from the Borough of Trafford and would cross the Manchester Ship Canal. The Assistant Commissioner noted that there had been a large number of representations in support of our provisional recommendations which also objected to this counter-proposal. He also noted that there had not been a significant level of objection from electors in the Trafford Borough wards of Brooklands, Priory and Sale Moor to the continued inclusion of these wards in Wythenshawe and Sale East BC and that the electors of this constituency had come to accept it, since its creation at the last general review.

49. He contrasted the low level of response from the three Trafford Borough wards of Brooklands, Priory and Sale Moor with the large numbers of representations from residents in the Trafford Borough wards of Clifford, Gorse Hill and Longford who objected to the counter-proposed inclusion of these three wards in Salford and The Quays BC. He noted that our proposals moved only the minimum number of electors in the Borough of Trafford and recognised that the Manchester Ship Canal is a clearly defined boundary between the City of Salford and the Borough of Trafford. He considered that there were few links between the two parts of the counter-proposed constituency and had no hesitation in rejecting this element of the second counter-proposal.

50. He reported that the second counter-proposal suggested changes to constituencies within the City of Manchester and that it proposed that the City of Manchester wards of Didsbury East and Didsbury West should be included in a renamed Wythenshawe and Didsbury BC. He considered that the Mersey Valley and the M60 motorway provided a clear boundary between Wythenshawe and the rest of the City of Manchester and therefore rejected this element of the second counter-proposal.

51. The Assistant Commissioner noted that there had been a number of objections to our provisionally recommended inclusion of the City of Manchester ward of Whalley Range in Manchester, Gorton BC, instead of in Manchester Central BC. It was argued that the Whalley Range ward had very close ties with the neighbouring City of Manchester wards of Hulme and Moss Side, which are in Manchester Central BC. However, he considered that there were also close ties between the Whalley Range ward and the City of Manchester ward of Fallowfield, which is in Manchester, Gorton BC and therefore justified Whalley Range's inclusion in Manchester, Gorton BC.

52. There had also been a number of objections to our provisionally recommended inclusion of the City of Manchester ward of Moston in Manchester Central BC, instead of in Blackley and Broughton BC. He accepted the evidence that the Moston ward had close ties with Blackley, but he considered that Moston was the most appropriate ward to be included in Manchester Central BC.

53. The Assistant Commissioner rejected all of the counter-proposals that affected Manchester, Salford and Trafford and he recommended that there should be no change to the boundaries of any of the nine constituencies allocated to the three Boroughs. However, he considered that it would be appropriate to recommend an alternative name for our provisionally recommended Worsley CC and concluded that the name Worsley and Eccles South CC would be a more appropriate name.

Revised Recommendations

54. We agreed with the Assistant Commissioner's rejection of all of the counter-proposals that suggested alternative constituencies in the Cities of Manchester and Salford and the Borough of Trafford. We accepted his recommendation that the name of our provisionally recommended Worsley CC should be altered to Worsley and Eccles South CC, to reflect the inclusion of part of the town of Eccles within that constituency.

55. We accordingly published revised recommendations for the name of the Worsley and Eccles South constituency and confirmed as final, our recommendations for the other eight constituencies. Our revised and final recommendations were:-

	2000 electorate
Altrincham and Sale West BC	69,605
Blackley and Broughton BC	65,982
Manchester Central BC	69,600
Manchester, Gorton BC	70,845
Manchester, Withington BC	69,187
Salford and Eccles BC	73,162
Stretford and Urmston BC	72,414

Worsley and Eccles South CC	72,554
Wythenshawe and Sale East BC	72,093
	<hr/>
	635,442

Further Representations

56. We received three representations, one of which supported our decision not to alter our provisionally recommended constituencies in the City of Manchester. The other two representations supported our decision to alter the name of Worsley CC to Worsley and Eccles South CC, but one also suggested that Salford and Eccles BC should be renamed Salford and Eccles North BC, to avoid confusion within the town of Eccles. We noted this representation was the only one to suggest a change of name to the constituency. Although we had some sympathy for the proposal, there was not enough evidence to justify a modification to the name of the Salford and Eccles constituency.

Recommendation

57. We were satisfied that our revised recommendations did not need to be modified. We therefore recommend the adoption of the following constituencies containing the wards as listed in Appendix C:-

	2000 electorate
Altrincham and Sale West BC	69,605
Blackley and Broughton BC	65,982
Manchester Central BC	69,600
Manchester, Gorton BC	70,845
Manchester, Withington BC	69,187
Salford and Eccles BC	73,162
Stretford and Urmston BC	72,414
Worsley and Eccles South CC	72,554
Wythenshawe and Sale East BC	72,093
	<hr/>
	635,442

Local Inquiry and Assistant Commissioner's Report

The Boroughs of Oldham, Rochdale, Stockport and Tameside

58. The Assistant Commissioner reported that the third counter-proposal suggested that all four boroughs should continue to be grouped and that Stockport should not be treated separately. He also reported that there were a large number of objections to our provisionally recommended inclusion of the Tameside Borough ward of St Peter's in Denton BC, instead of in Ashton-under-Lyne BC. He further reported that the second counter-proposal suggested that the Borough of Rochdale should be treated separately and that only the Boroughs of Oldham and Tameside should be treated together. He noted that the fourth counter-proposal suggested that the Borough of Stockport should be treated separately as provisionally recommended, but that three wards should be moved between constituencies.

59. He reported that the fourth counter-proposal placed the three Stockport Borough wards of Stepping Hill, Manor, and Davenport and Cale Green in Hazel Grove CC, Stockport

BC and Cheadle BC, respectively. He noted that, whilst there was evidence of close ties between the Stepping Hill ward and Hazel Grove CC and between the Manor ward and Stockport BC, there was very little evidence of any ties between the Davenport and Cale Green ward and Cheadle BC. He therefore rejected the fourth counter-proposal.

60. The Assistant Commissioner reported that the third counter-proposal retained the existing Denton and Reddish BC with the Stockport Borough wards of Reddish North and Reddish South being included in a cross-borough boundary constituency with wards from the Borough of Tameside. He considered that the Reddish North and Reddish South wards were self-contained and had ties with the Denton area in the Borough of Tameside. By retaining these two wards in Denton and Reddish BC, he would be able to make changes to the provisionally recommended constituencies in Oldham and Tameside which were justified by the evidence given at the inquiry. He therefore concluded that the existing constituency of Denton and Reddish should be retained. In order to compensate for the transfer of these two wards, he recommended that the Stockport Borough ward of Manor should be included in Stockport BC, instead of in Hazel Grove CC. He recommended that there be no change to our provisionally recommended Cheadle BC.

61. The Assistant Commissioner considered that there was an overwhelming case for the inclusion of the Tameside Borough ward of St Peter's in Ashton-under-Lyne BC, instead of in Denton BC. He accepted that the ward contained the heart of the town of Ashton-under-Lyne and should, therefore, be included in that constituency. He noted that the ward contained part of Audenshaw, but considered that this should not outweigh the evidence in support of the St Peter's ward being included in Ashton-under-Lyne BC. The third counter-proposal retained the Tameside Borough wards of Droylsden East and Droylsden West in Ashton-under-Lyne BC. He recommended that all three Tameside Borough wards of Droylsden East, Droylsden West and St Peter's should be included in Ashton-under-Lyne BC. He also recommended that there be no change to our provisionally recommended Stalybridge and Hyde CC.

62. He noted that the second counter-proposal placed the Oldham Borough wards of Hollinwood and Medlock Vale in Oldham West and Royton BC, instead of in Ashton-under-Lyne BC. He considered there was strong evidence that these two wards should be included in an Oldham constituency, rather than in the cross-borough boundary constituency of Ashton-under-Lyne BC. He also noted that the second counter-proposal included the Oldham Borough wards of Alexandra and St Mary's in Oldham East and Saddleworth CC, instead of, respectively, in Ashton-under-Lyne BC or Oldham West and Royton BC and further noted that there was strong evidence that the ties of both these wards were with neighbouring wards in Oldham East and Saddleworth CC. He therefore recommended that the Oldham Borough wards of Alexandra and St Mary's and of Hollinwood and Medlock Vale should be included in Oldham East and Saddleworth CC and Oldham West and Royton BC, respectively.

63. The Assistant Commissioner noted that the second counter-proposal also proposed that the Borough of Rochdale should not be included in a group with the Boroughs of Oldham and Tameside, but that it should be treated separately and allocated two constituencies. He heard evidence that the Rochdale Borough ward of Milnrow and Newhey had been in the same constituency as the Oldham Borough wards of Crompton and Shaw for many years but he considered that, whilst it would break these ties, there would be benefits from including the ward of Milnrow and Newhey in Rochdale CC.

64. The second counter-proposal included the Rochdale Borough ward of Bamford in Heywood and Middleton CC, so as to equalise the electorates of the two constituencies in Rochdale. Whilst he heard evidence that the eastern part of the Bamford ward was very close to the town centre of Rochdale, the Assistant Commissioner also heard evidence that the western part of the ward had very close ties with the Rochdale Borough ward of Norden, which is in Heywood and Middleton CC. He noted that the majority of the electorate of the Bamford ward was already in Heywood and Middleton CC and that to include the Bamford ward in Rochdale CC, along with the Rochdale Borough ward of Milnrow and Newhey, would result in a constituency with an electorate of 81,372. He therefore recommended that Rochdale Borough should not be paired or grouped with any other borough and that the Rochdale Borough wards of Bamford, and Milnrow and Newhey should be included in Heywood and Middleton CC and Rochdale CC, respectively.

65. He rejected all of the other minor counter-proposals, including one which proposed that a constituency should be created that crossed the county boundary between Greater Manchester and West Yorkshire, in contravention of Rule 4. He rejected them because they involved too much disruption to the existing constituencies and they did not have any support. He also rejected the suggestion that Oldham West and Royton BC be renamed to include reference to Chadderton. The Assistant Commissioner noted that Chadderton was the largest town in the constituency. However, the present name had existed for a period, the proposed name was long, and he had heard no general support for a change of name. He did not recommend a change to the constituency name.

Revised Recommendations

66. We agreed with the Assistant Commissioner's recommendations for changes to eight of the ten constituencies in the Boroughs of Oldham, Rochdale, Stockport and Tameside. We noted that there had been significant support for the changes he had proposed.

67. We accordingly published revised recommendations for the eight constituencies of Ashton-under-Lyne BC, Denton and Reddish BC, Hazel Grove CC, Heywood and Middleton CC, Oldham East and Saddleworth CC, Oldham West and Royton BC, Rochdale CC and Stockport BC, and confirmed our recommendations for the other two constituencies as our final recommendations. Our revised and final recommendations were:-

	2000 electorate
Ashton-under-Lyne BC	67,334
Cheadle BC	72,933
Denton and Reddish BC	65,855
Hazel Grove CC	63,519
Heywood and Middleton CC	78,036
Oldham East and Saddleworth CC	70,984
Oldham West and Royton BC	70,947
Rochdale CC	73,807
Stalybridge and Hyde CC	66,563
Stockport BC	64,679
	<hr/>
	<hr/>
	694,657

Further Representations

68. We received twenty-six representations, of which five supported all or part of our revised recommendations and twenty-one objected to parts of them. Five of the representations objected to the inclusion of the Rochdale Borough ward of Bamford in Heywood and Middleton CC, fourteen objected to our decision not to include reference to Chadderton in the name of Oldham West and Royton BC and one suggested alternative names for Heywood and Middleton CC and Rochdale CC. One representation reiterated the counter-proposal that suggested the creation of a constituency that crossed the county boundary with West Yorkshire.

69. We considered that the reasons given by the Assistant Commissioner in his report in support of his recommendation to include the Rochdale Borough ward of Bamford in Heywood and Middleton CC were valid. We noted that just over 60% of the electorate of the Bamford ward are currently in Heywood and Middleton CC. We also considered that his conclusion in relation to the Rochdale Borough ward of Milnrow and Newhey was correct, so that it was then essential to include the Bamford ward in Heywood and Middleton CC in order to create two constituencies in the Borough of Rochdale with electorates that were close to each other.

70. We noted that some objectors accused the Assistant Commissioner of bias in his report, claiming that he favoured the evidence from witnesses from one political party over the evidence of witnesses from another. We re-examined his report and reviewed the transcript of the inquiry and considered that he had handled the inquiry in an exemplary manner and had been very fair to the arguments of all the witnesses who had attended the inquiry. We therefore rejected any claims that he had shown bias against any political party.

71. We noted that our revised recommendations had generated more representations than our provisional recommendations in favour of the inclusion of reference to Chadderton in the name of Oldham West and Royton BC; only three representations had referred to this in response to our provisional recommendations. We further noted that Chadderton had not been included in the name of a constituency in any review since 1918, whereas Royton had been included at every review. We considered that the Assistant Commissioner had been correct in his rejection of the case and that, whilst there was now greater support for a name change, as there had been very little change to the existing Oldham West and Royton BC, the name was still appropriate.

72. We rejected the proposal to change the name of Heywood and Middleton CC and Rochdale CC to Rochdale West CC and Rochdale East CC, respectively. We noted that only one person had suggested these changes and that these two names for the constituencies wholly in the Borough of Rochdale had been unchanged since 1983. We also rejected the counter-proposal for a constituency that crossed the county boundary between Greater Manchester and West Yorkshire. We considered that the Assistant Commissioner had been entirely correct in his rejection of it and that it had no support at the inquiry and had also been strongly opposed.

Recommendation

73. We were satisfied that our revised recommendations did not need to be modified. We therefore recommend the adoption of the following constituencies containing the wards as listed in Appendix C:-

	2000 electorate
Ashton-under-Lyne BC	67,334
Cheadle BC	72,933
Denton and Reddish BC	65,855
Hazel Grove CC	63,519
Heywood and Middleton CC	78,036
Oldham East and Saddleworth CC	70,984
Oldham West and Royton BC	70,947
Rochdale CC	73,807
Stalybridge and Hyde CC	66,563
Stockport BC	<u>64,679</u>
	<u><u>694,657</u></u>

MERSEYSIDE

The Number of Electors

1. There are currently sixteen constituencies in the Metropolitan County of Merseyside:-

	2000 electorate
Birkenhead BC	60,048
Bootle BC	56,287
Crosby BC	57,246
Knowsley North and Sefton East CC	71,379
Knowsley South CC	71,656
Liverpool, Garston BC	65,467
Liverpool, Riverside BC	73,533
Liverpool, Walton BC	66,659
Liverpool, Wavertree BC	73,149
Liverpool, West Derby BC	67,894
St Helens North BC	71,133
St Helens South BC	65,723
Southport BC	70,544
Wallasey BC	64,672
Wirral South CC	60,452
Wirral West CC	<u>62,011</u>
	<u>1,057,853</u>

The Number of Constituencies

2. Merseyside had a 2000 parliamentary electorate of 1,057,853, which gave a theoretical entitlement to 15.13 constituencies. If we had reviewed each borough separately, sixteen constituencies would have been allocated, which is one constituency more than the county's entitlement. With fifteen constituencies the average constituency electorate would be 70,524, which is only 589 above the electoral quota. We therefore decided that the county should be treated as one review area and allocated fifteen constituencies, which would be a reduction of one. The electorates of the sixteen existing constituencies in Merseyside ranged from 73,533 in Liverpool, Riverside BC to 56,287 in Bootle BC, a disparity of 17,246.

3. We recommended that the reduction from sixteen to fifteen constituencies in Merseyside should be achieved by the grouping of the Boroughs of Knowsley and Wirral and the City of Liverpool, where we allocated ten constituencies. Currently the City of Liverpool and the Borough of Wirral are treated separately and have five and four constituencies respectively. The Boroughs of Knowsley and Sefton are currently paired and have five constituencies of which one is a cross-borough boundary constituency. In our provisional recommendations one constituency contained wards from both Liverpool and Wirral and spanned the River Mersey. The Boroughs of Sefton and St Helens were reviewed separately, with Sefton allocated three constituencies and St Helens retaining its current allocation of two constituencies.

Provisional Recommendations

4. The overall effect of the proposed changes in Merseyside would be to reduce the disparity between the constituencies with the highest and lowest electorates from 17,246 for the existing sixteen constituencies, to 8,580 for the proposed fifteen constituencies.

The Boroughs of Knowsley and Wirral, and the City of Liverpool

5. The combined area had a 2000 parliamentary electorate of 703,677, which gave a theoretical entitlement to 10.06 constituencies. We therefore decided to allocate ten constituencies to this grouping, which resulted in the required reduction of one constituency in Merseyside. With ten constituencies allocated to the Boroughs of Knowsley and Wirral and the City of Liverpool, the combined borough average would be 70,368, which is only 433 above the electoral quota. The reduction from sixteen to fifteen constituencies in Merseyside and the grouping of Knowsley, Liverpool and Wirral, made it necessary to create one constituency formed of wards from both sides of the River Mersey if we were to avoid creating Wirral constituencies with very low electorates.

6. As a result of changes to ward boundaries, three of the new wards in the Borough of Knowsley, nineteen new wards in the City of Liverpool and nine new wards in the Borough of Wirral are partly in one constituency and partly in another. Our provisional recommendations placed each ward wholly within a constituency.

7. The Borough of Wirral is currently divided into four constituencies. Our proposals created three whole constituencies in the borough (Birkenhead BC, Wirral South CC and Wirral West CC), and one constituency partly in the Borough of Wirral and partly in the City of Liverpool (Wallasey and Kirkdale BC). Changes to the boundaries of the four existing constituencies in the Borough of Wirral were necessary to allow for this new arrangement.

8. Most of the new wards in the Borough of Wirral were retained in their current constituency in our proposals, or in the constituency where the electorate of most of the new divided ward was currently situated. However, this was not the case for some wards. We included the two Borough of Wirral wards of Leasowe and Moreton East, and Moreton West and Saughall Massie in Wirral West CC, the Pensby and Thingwall ward in Wirral South CC, and the Prenton ward in Birkenhead BC.

9. Four Borough of Wirral wards (Liscard, New Brighton, Seacombe and Wallasey) were included with two City of Liverpool wards (Everton and Kirkdale) in the cross-borough boundary constituency, which we named Wallasey and Kirkdale BC. We considered it very important that any constituency spanning the River Mersey ought to include a river crossing. The two parts of the proposed Wallasey and Kirkdale constituency were linked by the Kingsway tunnel between the Borough of Wirral ward of Seacombe and the City of Liverpool ward of Kirkdale.

10. The City of Liverpool is currently divided into five constituencies. Our proposals created four whole constituencies in the City (Garston BC, Riverside BC, Walton BC and Wavertree BC), one constituency comprising part of the City of Liverpool and part of the Borough of Wirral (Wallasey and Kirkdale BC, as described above), and one constituency comprising part of the City of Liverpool and part of the Borough of Knowsley, which we named Kirkby and Croxteth BC. Changes to the boundaries of all the existing constituencies

in the City of Liverpool were necessary to allow for this new arrangement and to realign constituency and ward boundaries.

11. Most of the new wards in the City of Liverpool in our proposals were retained in their current constituency or in the constituency where most of the electorate of each new divided ward was currently situated. However, this was not the case for some wards. We included the Childwall ward in Liverpool, Garston BC, the Church ward in Liverpool, Riverside BC, the Tuebrook and Stoneycroft ward in Liverpool, Wavertree BC and the Clubmoor and Norris Green wards in Liverpool, Walton BC.

12. The three City of Liverpool wards of Croxteth, West Derby and Yew Tree were included with eight Borough of Knowsley wards in the cross-borough boundary constituency named Kirkby and Croxteth BC. The remaining thirteen Borough of Knowsley wards formed a revised Knowsley South CC, which included the Prescot East ward, but not the Prescot West ward, which was located in Kirkby and Croxteth BC.

13. We considered it necessary to place the two Borough of Knowsley wards that comprised Prescot in different constituencies. If the two Prescot wards were placed in Knowsley South CC, the six Borough of Knowsley wards to the north of Prescot would be detached from the remainder of the Kirkby and Croxteth constituency. Our arrangement created two constituencies based on the Borough of Knowsley with electorates close to each other, whilst allowing for the City of Liverpool wards of Croxteth, West Derby and Yew Tree to be incorporated in one of the constituencies.

The Borough of Sefton

14. The Borough of Sefton is currently paired with the Borough of Knowsley. Having decided to group the Boroughs of Knowsley and Wirral and the City of Liverpool together, so as to provide an allocation of fifteen constituencies to Merseyside with electorates close to the electoral quota, we were able to review the Borough of Sefton separately. The Borough of Sefton had a 2000 parliamentary electorate of 217,320, which gave a theoretical entitlement to 3.11 constituencies. Reviewing the borough separately, and allocating three constituencies, produced a borough average of 72,440, which is only 2,505 above the electoral quota.

15. We made no change to the existing Southport constituency, which, with an electorate of 70,544, was close to the electoral quota. We divided the rest of the Borough of Sefton into two constituencies with electorates as close to each other as was reasonably practicable. In order to achieve this, the three Borough of Sefton wards of Molyneux, Park and Sudell were included in Crosby BC (they are currently in the existing Knowsley North and Sefton East CC) and the Church and Victoria wards were included in Bootle BC. Although the Church and Victoria wards are currently in Crosby BC, we considered that they, rather than the Molyneux, Park and Sudell wards, should be included in Bootle BC in order to create constituencies with electorates that did not have an excessive disparity.

The Borough of St Helens

16. The Borough of St Helens had two constituencies and a 2000 parliamentary electorate of 136,856, which gave a theoretical entitlement to 1.96 constituencies. Reviewing the borough separately, and allocating two constituencies, produced a borough average of 68,428, which is only 1,507 below the electoral quota.

17. The two Borough of St Helens wards of Parr and Windle were divided between constituencies. The greater part of the Windle ward, in terms of electorate and area, was situated in St Helens North BC. The Parr ward had substantial parts of its electorate and area in both the St Helens North and the St Helens South constituencies. We decided to realign the constituency boundary so that the whole of the Windle ward would be in St Helens North BC and the whole of the Parr ward would be in St Helens South BC. As a result, the existing disparity between the two constituencies would be reduced to only 1,738.

18. Our provisional recommendations for the County of Merseyside were:-

2000 electorate	
Birkenhead BC	66,452
Bootle BC	75,032
Crosby BC	71,744
Kirkby and Croxteth BC	74,714
Knowsley South CC	69,477
Liverpool, Garston BC	70,734
Liverpool, Riverside BC	73,141
Liverpool, Walton BC	72,459
Liverpool, Wavertree BC	72,598
St Helens North BC	67,559
St Helens South BC	69,297
Southport BC	70,544
Wallasey and Kirkdale BC	68,740
Wirral South CC	68,648
Wirral West CC	66,714
	<hr/>
	1,057,853

Representations

19. Following publication of our provisional recommendations we received 120 representations, which included ten counter-proposals. Nine representations supported all or part of our proposals, twenty-three supported part of our proposals whilst also objecting to other parts, and eighty-seven objected to all or part of our proposals. One representation made other comments regarding the names of the constituencies. The objections included petitions and proformas containing over 12,000 names. The main issues raised in the objections were:-

- a) the number of constituencies to be allocated to the Metropolitan County of Merseyside;
- b) whether the five boroughs in Merseyside should be treated individually, or grouped for the allocation of constituencies;
- c) whether the Borough of Wirral should retain four constituencies;
- d) whether there should be a constituency spanning the River Mersey; and
- e) the composition of the constituencies, which were set out in ten counter-proposals. Six of these counter-proposals were for sixteen seat schemes, two dealt only with

specific areas – Wirral and Liverpool – and did not suggest solutions for difficulties elsewhere, and two were for fifteen seat schemes. The only changes one of these counter-proposals suggested was to two of the Sefton constituencies, and only one – the first – was for a fifteen seat scheme that also provided that Wirral should retain four constituencies:-

- i) the first counter-proposal allocated fifteen constituencies and affected the boundaries of eleven of them. It approved of the allocation of three whole constituencies to the Borough of Sefton but proposed that the Borough of Wirral should contain four whole constituencies and the City of Liverpool and the Boroughs of Knowsley and St Helens should be grouped together and allocated eight;
- ii) the second counter-proposal retained sixteen constituencies and proposed that the City of Liverpool should retain five whole constituencies, the Borough of Wirral four and the Borough of St Helens two. The Boroughs of Knowsley and Sefton would continue to be paired and allocated five constituencies with the continuation of one cross-borough constituency;
- iii) the third counter-proposal allocated fifteen constituencies and affected only two of the provisionally recommended constituencies. It was submitted that Bootle BC should be comprised of eight Borough of Sefton wards and Crosby BC seven wards, so placing the whole of the Crosby area in one constituency;
- iv) the fourth counter-proposal retained sixteen constituencies, was similar to the second counter-proposal and created one cross-borough constituency (between Knowsley and Sefton Boroughs) and treated each of the other three boroughs separately;
- v) the fifth counter-proposal was a variation on the fourth counter-proposal in respect of four constituencies in the Boroughs of Knowsley and Sefton. This proposal reflected the provisional recommendations in respect of Southport BC but not elsewhere in Knowsley and Sefton;
- vi) the sixth counter-proposal mirrored the second counter-proposal for the City of Liverpool which retained five whole constituencies in the City together with the existing constituency names;
- vii) the seventh counter-proposal affected the two constituencies of Bootle BC and Crosby BC in the Borough of Sefton only and allocated seven and eight wards respectively to those constituencies;
- viii) the eighth counter-proposal was a variation on the seventh counter-proposal and allocated eight wards to Bootle BC and seven wards to Crosby BC;
- ix) the ninth counter-proposal affected constituency boundaries in the Borough of Wirral only. It retained four whole constituencies and proposed that the Moreton and Saughall Massie ward be included in Wirral West CC and the Prenton ward be included in Wirral South CC; and

- x) the tenth counter-proposal affected the City of Liverpool only and retained five whole constituencies, two of which were identical to our provisional recommendations.

Local Inquiry and Assistant Commissioner's Report

20. We were required to hold an inquiry. Following the announcement of the inquiry, a further seventy-three representations were received. Of these, forty-nine approved of all or part of the provisional recommendations, eighteen objected to various parts, four approved of part whilst objecting to other parts, and two made other comments. The objections included one counter-proposal for the City of Liverpool only and three bundles of proformas and one petition, together totalling 753 signatures, opposing our proposals in various parts of the county. Three further representations, one approving and two objecting to our proposals, were received after the inquiry had closed but these raised no new issues.

21. The Assistant Commissioner reported that:-

- a) he considered that the number of constituencies to be allocated was a matter of policy for us to decide;
- b) nevertheless, it was his view that the electoral arithmetic and the 2000 theoretical entitlement to 15.13 constituencies, when considered against the declining electoral figures, indicated an allocation of fifteen, rather than sixteen, constituencies;
- c) the constituencies should be wholly distributed within the boundaries of Merseyside, but that they should not be allocated to boroughs on an individual basis, as was advocated by some at the inquiry;
- d) our proposed constituency across the River Mersey should be rejected because of the local ties that would be broken (Rule 7);
- e) the River Mersey should be regarded as a special geographical consideration (Rule 6) that permits a departure from Rule 5 (equality of electorates);
- f) if fifteen constituencies were to be allocated, the first counter-proposal, which he considered sensible and practicable, should be adopted;
- g) if sixteen constituencies were to be allocated, a hybrid of the second and fifth counter-proposals, which he considered sensible and practicable, should be adopted; and
- h) should we decide to reject his recommendation not to create a constituency across the River Mersey, then the provisionally recommended Wallasey and Kirkdale BC was generally recognised to be the least worst option.

The number of constituencies to be allocated to Merseyside

22. The Assistant Commissioner considered that, if sixteen constituencies continued to be allocated to Merseyside, with the Borough of Wirral retaining its present allocation of four

constituencies, the City of Liverpool and the Borough of St Helens would be able to continue to have their present allocation of five and two constituencies respectively. The Boroughs of Knowsley and Sefton would together have five constituencies. He also considered that, if fifteen constituencies were allocated, with the Borough of Wirral retaining its present allocation of four constituencies, the Borough of Sefton's electorate would allow it to be allocated three constituencies and the electorate of the Borough of Knowsley would require it to be grouped with the City of Liverpool and the Borough of St Helens.

23. He noted that the electorate of Merseyside had fallen from 1,088,884 in 1991 to 1,057,853 in 2000 (and that the downward trend had continued since 2000) and considered that the basic electoral arithmetic indicated a reduction of one constituency. He reported that a fifteen-constituency scheme was available. This was the first counter-proposal submitted which created one constituency (Knowsley BC) with a high, but acceptable, electorate of 79,099. He considered that, although the counter-proposal had two Borough of Wirral constituencies with low electorates (Wirral South CC at 57,801 and Wirral West CC at 56,085), this was inevitable whether fifteen or sixteen constituencies were allocated, if no constituency spanning the River Mersey were created and the Borough of Wirral were to retain four constituencies.

24. We noted that a submission had been made that the River Mersey constituted a special geographical consideration in terms of Rule 6 and that Merseyside should therefore retain its allocation of sixteen constituencies. Having considered the evidence in the written representations as well as that at the inquiry, we accepted that the River Mersey should be considered as a special geographical consideration. However we did not, against the background of a declining electorate and theoretical entitlement, consider it appropriate to allocate sixteen constituencies. We considered that an allocation of fifteen constituencies was wholly appropriate and consistent with Rule 1.

25. In concluding that an allocation of fifteen constituencies to Merseyside was wholly appropriate, we were very mindful that the Assistant Commissioner confirmed that, in his opinion, the first counter-proposal, which had fifteen constituencies, was both sensible and practicable.

A constituency across the River Mersey

26. The Assistant Commissioner reported that almost everyone on both sides of the Mersey opposed a cross-river constituency. The objections were based, in the main, on the grounds that Rule 7 would be breached or that Rule 6 applied in this case. He also noted that there was cross-party opposition to a constituency spanning the river. He considered that, whilst the weight of local opposition was a factor to be weighed, it was not in itself decisive, and considered that an objective judgement had to be made about the quality of the proposed constituency in the light of all the Rules. In forming his decision, he considered the statistical consequences of such a constituency, the significance of the crossing points, the difficulty of access, the lack of local ties and other advantages and disadvantages.

27. He reported that the Borough of Wirral is separated from the remainder of Merseyside by a wide tidal estuary. It is not a river of modest proportions running through the heart of an urban area which has a significant number of bridges, facilitating day-to-day movement of the communities on either side. He considered it impractical for a constituency to straddle the lower Mersey estuary. The proposed Wallasey and Kirkdale constituency would comprise

two, distinct, residential areas, separated from one another by a mile of estuary and a further half mile of docks. He considered that, in the context of a densely populated urban area such a constituency, consisting of two separated parts, would be unique.

28. He reported that the Wallasey community extended down to the riverside and that the Kirkdale community extended to the outskirts of the docks on the eastern side of the river. He noted that these areas are separated by this combination of two major physical features which lack sufficient crossings. He acknowledged the existence of the Kingsway tunnel and the ferries, but he considered that they could not be said to constitute the type of crossing needed if the communities on either side were to have regular, ordinary, day-to-day interchange. He reported that there was no area of continuous residential development spanning the river, no sharing of educational, health or recreational facilities and no direct local public transport links between the two areas. He found no reason to suppose that these two areas have, or could develop, any real localised affinity.

29. He agreed with the objectors who described the proposed constituency as an artificial or false creation, which would be deeply unpopular with electors on both sides of the River Mersey. It would operate in practice more as a “federation” of two semi-constituencies rather than as a single cohesive constituency. He considered that, if the proposed constituency were to be created, the Member of Parliament would represent all constituents and would be able to conduct constituency matters and hold surgeries with relative ease in both parts of the constituency. However, he considered that this was not a key issue and was not the determinative factor allowing for the creation of such a constituency in order to satisfy basic electoral arithmetic.

30. He considered that those who objected to the proposed Wallasey and Kirkdale constituency had a rational basis for their opposition. He agreed with the main thrust of the overlapping factual submissions which had been advanced. Having considered all that was written and said, and having visited each of the parts of the proposed constituency, his firm conclusion was that the City of Liverpool was not an appropriate borough to be paired with the Borough of Wirral. He unequivocally recommended that a cross-river constituency should not be created and that we should not proceed with this aspect of our provisional recommendations.

31. In considering his recommendation, we also noted that a number of those who opposed our provisional recommendations had confirmed that, if their own counter-proposal were not accepted, then their preferred fall-back position was that our provisional recommendations should be adopted. We also noted that the Assistant Commissioner considered that, if we still wished to create a constituency across the River Mersey, then our provisionally recommended Wallasey and Kirkdale BC was the least worst option. Nevertheless, on the basis of his recommendation and all the evidence, we accepted that a constituency should not cross the River Mersey.

The retention of four constituencies in the Borough of Wirral

32. The Assistant Commissioner reported that we had completed our review of Cheshire, Halton, and Warrington and that no counter-proposals for combining these areas with Merseyside had been submitted, either before or during the inquiry. He concluded that it was right for us to consider Merseyside separately.

33. He considered whether the Borough of Wirral, and the rest of Merseyside, should be treated separately in terms of the number of constituencies to be allocated. He concluded that we were not bound to treat Merseyside as two separate areas, but that we had the discretion to do so if we saw fit. However, he considered two factors as significant in coming to a decision: the continuing decline in the Merseyside electorate and the overall theoretical entitlement of the county, rather than the theoretical entitlement of any individual borough or combination of boroughs.

34. He noted that no counter-proposal for an allocation of three constituencies to the Wirral had been submitted at any stage, either before or during the inquiry. He reported that the new twenty-two ward structure in the borough effectively precluded the possibility of any sensible three-constituency solution being found, as any distribution of the wards would lead to the formation of at least one constituency with an unacceptably high electorate. He considered that both of the four-constituency counter-proposals accepted that there must be two constituencies with six wards and electorates close to the electoral quota, and two constituencies with five wards and electorates significantly below 60,000. On the basis that no cross-river constituency was to be created, and in the absence of any counter-proposals that allocated three constituencies, he recommended that four constituencies should continue to be allocated to the Borough of Wirral.

35. He considered the status and significance of Merseyside as a county, the weight to be given to the metropolitan borough boundaries and the problems caused by creating cross-borough boundary constituencies. He did not agree with those whose view was that, since the metropolitan borough councils were effectively unitary authorities, their boundaries should be considered to have almost as much administrative significance as county boundaries.

36. In considering the status of Merseyside and the five boroughs, we confirmed that the area to which constituencies should be allocated, like everywhere else in England (other than in London), is the county. In this respect, the allocation of fifteen constituencies to the county of Merseyside would be in accordance with Rule 4 as well as Rule 1.

The composition of the constituencies and the division of Crosby and Prescot between constituencies

37. The Assistant Commissioner considered the ten counter-proposals that had been submitted. On the basis that the River Mersey was not crossed and the Borough of Wirral retained four constituencies, he concluded that, if fifteen constituencies were to be allocated, the first counter-proposal produced a sensible and practicable option with electorates within acceptable parameters. In respect of the sixteen-constituency counter-proposals, he noted which wards were common ground in the various alternatives and formulated a hybrid scheme from other counter-proposals, which he considered would be the most acceptable.

38. He reported that, if the Borough of Sefton were to be allocated three constituencies, one of which was to be allocated to Southport, then in order to avoid a high electoral disparity within the borough it would be necessary for one of the three established communities of Bootle, Crosby or Maghull to be divided between constituencies. He concluded that the provisional recommendations and the first counter-proposal (which were identical in dividing Crosby) provided the least worst solution.

39. He considered that the provisional recommendations and the counter-proposal respected local ties to the greatest extent that was practicable and that, whilst the counter-proposal would separate the Prescot wards, it would not separate the Whiston wards. He considered that keeping Prescot together could not be sensibly achieved in the context of a practicable eleven-constituency allocation, and that the division of Prescot was no more or less desirable than the division of Bootle, Crosby or Maghull was in the context of Sefton.

40. We noted that his recommendation for the distribution of fifteen constituencies, which is the number of constituencies we consider appropriate for Merseyside, produced a solution in respect of both the Crosby and Prescot communities that, whilst not ideal, was the best that could be achieved in the circumstances.

The names and designations of constituencies

41. The Assistant Commissioner's recommendation for fifteen constituencies included five constituency names that were not existing or provisionally recommended names. Two of the names (Bootle and Waterloo BC and Sefton Central CC) were discussed at the inquiry. He reported that the name Bootle and Waterloo BC had found some support and he recommended its adoption. He considered that the name Crosby BC was not appropriate in name or designation and recommended Sefton Central CC in its place. He considered it had the merits of conciseness and accuracy, and was preferable to the alternatives submitted. This name was discussed at the inquiry and found some support.

42. He recommended three other new names: Garston and Halewood BC, North and Central Knowsley BC and St Helens South and Knowsley East BC. Garston and Halewood BC was suggested in the first counter-proposal. However, the names North and Central Knowsley BC and St Helens South and Knowsley East BC were his own suggestion and were not discussed at the inquiry. These constituencies, that were part of the first counter-proposal, had been named as Knowsley BC and St Helens South and Whiston BC respectively.

43. We considered his recommended names and decided to reject three of them: Bootle and Waterloo BC, North and Central Knowsley BC and St Helens South and Knowsley East BC. The latter two were not advanced by anyone at the inquiry and were not discussed. We decided to adopt the following names: Bootle BC, Knowsley BC and St Helens South and Whiston BC. Bootle BC is an existing name and all three names had been contained in the first counter-proposal which had been published before the inquiry and were not objected to when it took place. We concluded that they were appropriate and shorter than those recommended by the Assistant Commissioner. We agreed that the names Garston and Halewood BC and Sefton Central CC were appropriate and that Sefton Central should be designated as a County Constituency.

Revised Recommendations

44. We considered the Assistant Commissioner's report, the transcript of the inquiry, the written representations and all the evidence submitted. We noted that his recommendation for fifteen constituencies would increase the disparity from 8,580 in the provisional recommendations, to 23,014 in the counter-proposal, against the disparity for the existing constituencies of 17,246. Also, the disparity between the constituencies to the west of the River Mersey would be 10,760 and to the east of the river would be 8,555. We noted that the low electorates of Wirral West CC (56,085) and Wirral South CC, (57,801) and the high

electoral disparity were the result of not breaking local ties (Rule 7) on either side of the River Mersey and the importance attached to the presence of the estuary and its nature as a boundary.

45. In deciding to confirm the allocation of fifteen constituencies to Merseyside, we agreed that any counter-proposal adopted needed to provide a distribution that was both sensible and practicable in the particular circumstances that pertained to Merseyside. We noted that he considered that the first counter-proposal provided such a distribution and we agreed. We noted that he had recommended no change to our provisional recommendations for Birkenhead BC or Southport BC and we accepted his recommendation.

46. We accordingly published the following revised recommendations:-

2000 electorate	
Birkenhead BC	66,452
Bootle BC	75,032
Garston and Halewood BC	73,480
Knowsley BC	79,099
Liverpool, Riverside BC	72,873
Liverpool, Walton BC	72,182
Liverpool, Wavertree BC	72,256
Liverpool, West Derby BC	70,583
Sefton Central CC	71,744
St Helens North BC	76,263
St Helens South and Whiston BC	76,614
Southport BC	70,544
Wallasey BC	66,845
Wirral South CC	57,801
Wirral West CC	56,085
	<hr/>
	1,057,853

Further Representations

47. Following publication of our revised recommendations we received 150 representations including eight petitions and two sets of proformas totalling 9,681 names. Eighty-four representations approved of all or part of our revised recommendations and included a petition containing 111 names. Five representations approved of part of our revisions while objecting to another part and included a petition containing nineteen names in respect of the objections. Fifty-eight representations objected to various parts of our revisions and included six petitions and two sets of proformas totalling 9,551 names. Three representations made other comments.

48. Some of the objectors submitted a new counter-proposal for constituencies in the Borough of Sefton and some submitted counter-proposals for the allocation of sixteen constituencies to Merseyside. These raised issues that had already been fully considered by us and which we had rejected. Other objections carried minimal support.

Counter-proposal for the Borough of Sefton

49. Objection, specifically to the division of Crosby between constituencies, was made by eleven individuals and supported by petitions totalling 2,538 names. The counter-proposal submitted that the Sefton Borough wards of Church and Victoria should be included in Sefton Central CC instead of in Bootle BC and that the Sefton Borough wards of Molyneux and Sudell should be included in Bootle BC instead of in Sefton Central CC. This would allow all of the Crosby area to be together in one constituency. The disparity between the two constituencies would be increased from 3,288 in our recommendations to 8,208 in the counter-proposal. The counter-proposal was not submitted in advance of, or during, the inquiry.

50. The Assistant Commissioner had reported that, if the Borough of Sefton was to be allocated three whole constituencies, in order to avoid a high electoral disparity within the borough it would be necessary for one of three established communities (Bootle, Crosby or Maghull) to be divided between constituencies. He concluded that our provisional recommendations provided the “least worst solution”. We considered that this solution, whilst not ideal, was the best that could be achieved in the circumstances. We retain this view and considered that no further alteration should be made to constituencies in the Borough of Sefton. We also considered that the evidence submitted in respect of alternative names for Bootle BC and Sefton Central CC was not compelling and decided to adhere to our proposals in this respect also.

Sixteen constituency counter-proposals

51. Two counter-proposals were submitted allocating sixteen constituencies to Merseyside. These, which objected to our proposals as they affected Knowsley Borough, were received from numerous individuals and organisations and in the form of petitions and proformas containing over 7,000 names. We gave careful consideration to the counter-proposals but decided that neither of them, nor the supporting documentation, contained any new significant evidence that we considered to be compelling.

Recommendation

52. We noted that, with the exception of the new counter-proposal in the Borough of Sefton, the arguments presented in the objections had been discussed at length at the inquiry. We were satisfied that our revised recommendations did not need to be modified nor should we hold a second inquiry as had been requested. We therefore recommend the adoption of the following constituencies containing the wards as listed in Appendix C:-

	2000 electorate
Birkenhead BC	66,452
Bootle BC	75,032
Garston and Halewood BC	73,480
Knowsley BC	79,099
Liverpool, Riverside BC	72,873
Liverpool, Walton BC	72,182
Liverpool, Wavertree BC	72,256
Liverpool, West Derby BC	70,583

St Helens North BC	76,263
St Helens South and Whiston BC	76,614
Sefton Central CC	71,744
Southport BC	70,544
Wallasey BC	66,845
Wirral South CC	57,801
Wirral West CC	56,085
	<hr/>
	<u>1,057,853</u>

SOUTH YORKSHIRE

The Number of Electors

1. There are currently fifteen constituencies in the Metropolitan County of South Yorkshire:-

	2000 electorate
Barnsley Central BC	60,479
Barnsley East and Mexborough CC	66,722
Barnsley West and Penistone CC	65,352
Doncaster Central BC	67,754
Doncaster North CC	63,095
Don Valley CC	67,308
Rother Valley CC	69,471
Rotherham BC	58,539
Sheffield, Attercliffe BC	67,601
Sheffield, Brightside BC	54,952
Sheffield Central BC	61,092
Sheffield, Hallam CC	59,426
Sheffield, Heeley BC	63,024
Sheffield, Hillsborough CC	74,663
Wentworth CC	<u>64,278</u>
	<u>963,756</u>

The Number of Constituencies

2. South Yorkshire had a 2000 parliamentary electorate of 963,756, which gave a theoretical entitlement to 13.78 constituencies. We therefore decided that the county should be allocated fourteen constituencies, which would be a reduction of one. With fourteen constituencies the average constituency electorate would be 68,840, which is only 1,095 below the electoral quota. If we had reviewed each borough separately, either thirteen or fourteen constituencies could have been allocated. If we had allocated two constituencies to the Borough of Barnsley, the county as a whole would have been allocated thirteen constituencies and not the fourteen to which it is entitled.

3. The electorates of the fifteen existing constituencies in South Yorkshire ranged from 74,663 in Sheffield, Hillsborough CC to 54,952 in Sheffield, Brightside BC, a disparity of 19,711. The reduction from fifteen to fourteen constituencies in South Yorkshire would be achieved by grouping the Boroughs of Barnsley and Rotherham and the City of Sheffield and allocating eleven constituencies. One constituency would then contain wards from both Barnsley and Sheffield and another would contain wards from both Barnsley and Rotherham. The Borough of Doncaster would be reviewed separately and allocated three constituencies.

4. The overall effect of the proposed changes in South Yorkshire would be to reduce the disparity between the constituencies with the highest and lowest electorates from 19,711 for the existing fifteen constituencies, to 10,474 for the proposed fourteen constituencies.

Provisional Recommendations

The Boroughs of Barnsley and Rotherham and the City of Sheffield

5. Barnsley had a 2000 parliamentary electorate of 170,057, which gave a theoretical entitlement to 2.43 constituencies. If two constituencies were allocated, the borough average would be 85,029, which is 15,094 above the electoral quota. If three constituencies were allocated, the borough average would be 56,686, which is 13,249 below the electoral quota. Whether two or three constituencies were allocated, the borough average would be more than 10,000 from the electoral quota.

6. Rotherham had a 2000 parliamentary electorate of 192,288, which gave a theoretical entitlement to 2.75 constituencies. If three constituencies were allocated, the borough average would be 64,096, which is 5,839 below the electoral quota. Sheffield had a 2000 parliamentary electorate of 380,758, which gave a theoretical entitlement to 5.44 constituencies. If five constituencies were allocated, the borough average would be 76,152, which is 6,217 above the electoral quota.

7. The combined grouping of Barnsley, Rotherham and Sheffield had a 2000 parliamentary electorate of 743,103, which gave a theoretical entitlement to 10.63 constituencies. With eleven constituencies the combined borough average would be 67,555, which is only 2,380 below the electoral quota and much closer to the quota than all the individual borough averages. We therefore provisionally decided to review the three areas together and to allocate eleven constituencies.

8. As a result of changes to the ward boundaries, nine of the new wards in Barnsley, seven in Rotherham and twenty in Sheffield are partly in one constituency and partly in another. Our provisional recommendations realigned the constituency boundaries with the new ward boundaries.

9. Barnsley is currently paired with Doncaster and contains two whole constituencies and part of one other. Our proposals would create two whole constituencies in the borough (Barnsley Central BC and Barnsley East CC), one constituency partly in Barnsley and partly in Rotherham (to be named Wentworth and Dearne CC) and one constituency partly in Barnsley and partly in Sheffield (to be named Penistone and Stocksbridge CC). Changes to the boundaries of the three existing constituencies in Barnsley would be necessary to allow for realignment with new ward boundaries and for this new arrangement.

10. We proposed that the two Barnsley Borough wards of Dearne North and Dearne South should be included in the cross-borough boundary constituency of Wentworth and Dearne CC. We also proposed that Barnsley Central BC and the renamed Barnsley East CC should both contain eight Barnsley Borough wards. We further proposed that the three Barnsley Borough wards of Dodworth, Penistone East and Penistone West should be included in the cross-borough boundary constituency of Penistone and Stocksbridge CC.

11. Rotherham currently contains three whole constituencies. Our proposals would create two whole constituencies in the borough (Rother Valley CC and Rotherham BC), and one constituency partly in Rotherham and partly in Barnsley (Wentworth and Dearne CC). Changes to the boundaries of the three existing constituencies in Rotherham would be necessary to allow for realignment with new ward boundaries and for this new arrangement.

12. We proposed that the six Rotherham Borough wards of Hoober, Rawmarsh, Silverwood, Swinton, Wath and Wickersley should be included in the cross-borough boundary constituency of Wentworth and Dearne CC. We also proposed that Rother Valley CC and Rotherham BC should contain, respectively, eight and seven Rotherham Borough wards.

13. Sheffield currently contains six whole constituencies. Our proposals would create five whole constituencies in the city and one constituency partly in Sheffield and partly in the Borough of Barnsley (Penistone and Stocksbridge CC). Changes to the boundaries of the six existing constituencies in Sheffield would be necessary to allow for this new arrangement.

14. We proposed that the three City of Sheffield wards of East Ecclesfield, Stocksbridge and Upper Don, and West Ecclesfield should be included in the cross-borough boundary constituency of Penistone and Stocksbridge CC. We also proposed that the remaining twenty-five City of Sheffield wards should be divided equally between Sheffield Central BC, Sheffield, Hallam CC, Sheffield, Heeley BC and the renamed Sheffield South East BC and Sheffield, Brightside and Hillsborough BC.

15. Our provisional recommendations were:-

	2000 electorate
Barnsley Central BC	64,117
Barnsley East CC	65,237
Penistone and Stocksbridge CC	63,914
Rother Valley CC	72,237
Rotherham BC	65,305
Sheffield, Brightside and Hillsborough BC	73,619
Sheffield Central BC	65,404
Sheffield, Hallam CC	66,463
Sheffield, Heeley BC	69,376
Sheffield South East BC	66,218
Wentworth and Dearne CC	71,213
	<hr/>
	<hr/>
	743,103

Provisional and Final Recommendations

The Borough of Doncaster

16. Doncaster is currently paired with Barnsley. Having decided to group Barnsley, Rotherham and Sheffield together, we were able to review Doncaster separately. Doncaster had a 2000 parliamentary electorate of 220,653, which gave a theoretical entitlement to 3.16 constituencies. Reviewing the borough separately, and allocating three constituencies, would produce a borough average of 73,551, which is 3,616 above the electoral quota.

17. There are five divided wards in Doncaster. We proposed that the whole of the divided ward of Edenthorpe, Kirk Sandall and Barnby Dun should be included in Doncaster Central BC. We also proposed that the rest of the borough should be divided into two constituencies with electorates as close to each other as was reasonably practicable. In order to achieve this, we proposed that the three wards of Great North Road, Mexborough and Sprotbrough should

be included in Doncaster North CC and the ward of Thorne should be included in Don Valley CC

18. Our provisional recommendations were:-

	2000 electorate
Doncaster Central BC	74,388
Doncaster North CC	73,907
Don Valley CC	<u>72,358</u>
	<u>220,653</u>

Representations

19. We received thirteen representations, of which twelve supported all or part of our proposals. One representation suggested that the existing pairing of Barnsley and Doncaster should be preserved by including the Mexborough ward instead of the Barnsley Borough wards of Dearne North and Dearne South in the Wentworth constituency. In view of the level of support for our proposals and as an inquiry was not statutorily required, we decided to reject the counter-proposal and not hold an inquiry. We therefore confirmed our provisional recommendations as our final recommendations.

Recommendation

20. We recommend the adoption of the following constituencies containing the wards as listed in Appendix C:-

	2000 electorate
Doncaster Central BC	74,388
Doncaster North CC	73,907
Don Valley CC	<u>72,358</u>
	<u>220,653</u>

Representations

The Boroughs of Barnsley and Rotherham and the City of Sheffield

21. Following publication of our provisional recommendations we received forty-two representations, of which six supported all or parts of our proposals, six supported part of our proposals whilst also objecting to other parts and thirty objected to all or part of our proposals. The objections contained ten counter-proposals, some of which were unsupported or unviable and several of which duplicated what others had proposed. The objections also included petitions and proformas containing 546 names.

22. The main issues raised in the objections fell into two principal counter-proposals, whilst other representations suggested different names for constituencies:-

- a) the first counter-proposal, which affected all eleven proposed constituencies, was that Rotherham should be treated individually and not grouped with Barnsley and

Sheffield. In Rotherham it placed the Brinsworth and Catcliffe ward in Rother Valley CC, the Hellaby ward in Wentworth CC and the Sitwell ward in Rotherham BC.

In Barnsley it placed the Dearne North and Dearne South wards in Barnsley East CC, the Dodworth ward in Barnsley Central BC and the Hoyland Milton and Rockingham wards in a renamed Penistone and Upper Don CC.

In Sheffield it placed the Beauchief and Greenhill, and Richmond wards in Sheffield, Heeley BC, the Burngreave and Manor Castle wards in Sheffield Central BC, the Crookes and Nether Edge wards in Sheffield, Hallam CC, the Darnall ward in a renamed Sheffield, Attercliffe BC, the East Ecclesfield and West Ecclesfield wards in a renamed Sheffield, Brightside BC and the Hillsborough and Stannington wards in a renamed Penistone and Upper Don CC; and

- b) the second counter-proposal involved alterations to four of the proposed constituencies in Sheffield. It placed the Beauchief and Greenhill ward in Sheffield, Heeley BC, the Crookes and Nether Edge wards in Sheffield, Hallam CC, the Darnall ward in a renamed Sheffield, Brightside BC and the Hillsborough and Stannington wards in a renamed Sheffield Central and Hillsborough BC.

Local Inquiry and Assistant Commissioner's Report

23. We were required to hold an inquiry. Following the announcement of the inquiry a further forty-seven representations were received, of which one partly approved of our provisional recommendations and forty-six objected to them. The Assistant Commissioner reported that he considered a late counter-proposal presented at the inquiry by a witness who believed he could accommodate a majority of the various representations made. No additional issues were raised at the inquiry.

24. The late counter-proposal was that, in Sheffield, the Beauchief and Greenhill, and Richmond wards should be included in Sheffield, Heeley BC; the Broomhill and Crookes wards should be included in Sheffield, Hallam CC; the Burngreave and Manor Castle wards should be included in Sheffield Central BC; the Darnall ward should be included in a renamed Sheffield, Attercliffe BC; and the Stannington ward should be included in Sheffield, Brightside and Hillsborough BC.

The Borough of Rotherham

25. The Assistant Commissioner noted that our provisional recommendations resulted in a lower disparity than the counter-proposal which submitted that Rotherham should not be grouped with the other boroughs. He reported that the electorate of Rotherham had declined since the enumeration date. Whilst there was evidence that this trend would be reversed in the future, he did not take account of it in reaching his conclusion because he could not ignore the reductions that had occurred.

Rother Valley CC and Rotherham BC

26. The Assistant Commissioner considered that our proposed Rother Valley CC was well-shaped and combined the rural areas to the south of Rotherham. However, he noted that the Hellaby ward contained parts of the parishes of Wickersley and Maltby and that strong representations had been made against our proposal to include the ward in Rother Valley CC. However, there was also support for our proposals. He noted that the new Hellaby ward boundary divided continuous residential development in Maltby and the case was that it was preferable to include the Hellaby ward in Rother Valley CC. He considered that the A631 dual carriageway, which formed the boundary between the Wickersley and Hellaby wards, was more suitable as a constituency boundary.

27. The first counter-proposal also suggested the transfer of the Rotherham Borough ward of Brinsworth and Catcliffe to Rother Valley CC and the Sitwell ward to Rotherham BC. He reported that our proposals were well supported and that there was evidence that the Sitwell ward had close ties with Rother Valley CC. He also noted that both wards were divided between the two constituencies and that the River Rother formed a natural boundary to the south of the Brinsworth and Catcliffe ward.

Wentworth and Dearne CC

28. He heard evidence of the historical links between the Barnsley Borough wards of Dearne North and Dearne South and Barnsley East CC. However, he noted that there was support for our provisional recommendations, that there was a good boundary between these two wards and Barnsley East CC and that there were good rail communications to the north and south through Wath, which was in the Borough of Rotherham.

Barnsley Central BC and Barnsley East CC

29. The Assistant Commissioner reported that there was support for our proposed inclusion of the Barnsley Borough wards of Hoyland Milton and Rockingham in Barnsley East CC and that the arguments against moving them pointed to the inclusion of the two Dearne wards in the Wentworth seat. He noted that these two wards lay to the east of the M1 motorway, which formed the boundary between Barnsley East CC and Penistone and Stocksbridge CC in our provisional recommendations.

Penistone and Stocksbridge CC

30. The Assistant Commissioner reported that the issues relating to the divided Barnsley Borough ward of Dodworth arose as a result of the ward being divided by the M1 with the inclusion of the Pogmoor area, which is to the east of the motorway, within the ward. He noted that the majority of the electors of the Dodworth ward were in the existing Barnsley West and Penistone CC, that the ward had mainly been in the same constituency as the two Penistone wards since 1918 and that there were good rail and road links from Barnsley to Penistone, through Dodworth. In the south-east corner of the constituency he noted that there was support for the inclusion of the City of Sheffield wards of East Ecclesfield and West Ecclesfield in Penistone and Stocksbridge CC, due to the more rural nature of these two wards, in contrast to the more urban wards to the south.

Sheffield Central BC

31. The Assistant Commissioner considered that there should be a Sheffield Central constituency which formed the hub to the other Sheffield constituencies. He reported that there were objections to our proposals to include the three City of Sheffield wards of Broomhill, Crookes and Nether Edge in Sheffield Central BC. He noted evidence that the Crookes ward had particularly close links with the Fulwood ward in Sheffield, Hallam CC and that, whilst there was support for the counter-proposed inclusion of the Broomhill and Nether Edge wards in Sheffield, Hallam CC, there was also evidence that these wards had ties with Sheffield Central BC.

Sheffield, Brightside and Hillsborough BC

32. There was general agreement that the three City of Sheffield wards of Firth Park, Shiregreen and Brightside, and Southey should form the core of this constituency. There was evidence against the inclusion of the City of Sheffield wards of Burngreave and Hillsborough in the constituency, but the Assistant Commissioner noted that our proposed constituency contained more of the existing Sheffield, Brightside BC than did the first counter-proposal.

Sheffield, Hallam CC

33. There was general agreement to the inclusion of the three City of Sheffield wards of Dore and Totley, Ecclesall and Fulwood in Sheffield, Hallam CC and almost universal acceptance of the suggestion in both counter-proposals that the City of Sheffield ward of Beauchief and Greenhill should be in Sheffield, Heeley BC, although we had placed it in Sheffield, Hallam CC. The Assistant Commissioner also noted that, whilst there was support for our proposal to include the City of Sheffield ward of Stannington in Sheffield, Hallam CC, there was evidence that the Hillsborough and Stannington wards should be included in the same constituency, because they were closely linked.

Sheffield, Heeley BC

34. The Assistant Commissioner reported that our proposal to include the City of Sheffield wards of Darnall and Manor Castle in Sheffield, Heeley BC was strongly opposed and that there was substantial support for the inclusion of the Darnall ward in Sheffield South East BC and the Manor Castle ward in Sheffield Central BC.

Sheffield South East BC

35. It was suggested that the City of Sheffield ward of Darnall had stronger ties with this constituency than did the City of Sheffield ward of Richmond. The Assistant Commissioner noted the evidence that the boundary between the City of Sheffield wards of Darnall and Woodhouse divided the Handsworth area and considered that these two wards should be in the same constituency.

Constituency names

36. A number of alternative names were suggested, but save in the case of including Attercliffe in the name of the Sheffield South East seat, little evidence was presented at the inquiry in support of them.

Assistant Commissioner's recommendations

37. The Assistant Commissioner rejected all the alternatives that did not group Rotherham with Barnsley and Sheffield. He considered that the electorates of the three Rotherham constituencies would be too far from the electoral quota and that the borough should be included in the group with Barnsley and Sheffield. He supported the inclusion of the Rotherham Borough ward of Hellaby in Rother Valley CC, because it produced a much clearer boundary and preserved important ties within Maltby.

38. He considered that, following the ward boundary changes, the Rotherham Borough ward of Sitwell was now far more rural in nature than the Rotherham Borough ward of Brinsworth and Catcliffe. He also considered that the inclusion of the Sitwell ward in Rother Valley CC produced better shaped constituencies and that the ward was a better fit in Rother Valley CC than the Brinsworth and Catcliffe ward, which he considered was more suitably included in Rotherham BC, which was a well-shaped, urban constituency.

39. Having concluded that Rotherham should be included in a grouping with Barnsley and Sheffield, two wards from Barnsley needed to be included in the northern Rotherham constituency. He considered that the circumstances clearly pointed to the desirability of including the Barnsley Borough wards of Dearne North and Dearne South in Wentworth and Dearne CC. In his view, the ties between the two Dearne wards and Barnsley East CC were historical and he was unable to attach significant weight to them. He also considered that Barnsley Central BC was logical and well-shaped and included the central urban areas of Barnsley.

40. The Assistant Commissioner accepted evidence supporting the inclusion of the Dodworth ward in Penistone and Stocksbridge CC. He considered that the Barnsley Borough wards of Hoyland Milton and Rockingham should be included in Barnsley East CC and not in Penistone and Stocksbridge CC because the M1 motorway was a clear boundary between the two constituencies. He also considered that the City of Sheffield wards of East Ecclesfield and West Ecclesfield were significantly rural in character, that they did not look towards their urban neighbours to the south and that they should be included in Penistone and Stocksbridge CC.

41. Whilst the inclusion of the City of Sheffield ward of Manor Castle created a less compact shape to the central Sheffield constituency, the Assistant Commissioner considered that its inclusion maintained important ties between the ward and the city centre, and that it would be less disruptive to include the ward in Sheffield Central BC. He recommended the inclusion of the City of Sheffield ward of Crookes in Sheffield, Hallam CC to recognise the strong ties between that ward and Sheffield, Hallam CC. He concluded that, having rejected the proposal to include the City of Sheffield wards of East Ecclesfield and West Ecclesfield in Sheffield, Brightside BC, which was contained in the first counter-proposal, the City of Sheffield ward of Burngreave should continue to be included in our provisionally recommended Sheffield, Brightside and Hillsborough BC. He was not persuaded that the electorate of the urban Hillsborough ward looked to the west to the City of Sheffield ward of Stannington and considered that it should be placed in a constituency which better reflected its urban characteristics: its inclusion with the Burngreave ward in Sheffield, Brightside and Hillsborough BC would result in a well-shaped constituency.

42. The Assistant Commissioner considered that the Stannington ward should be included in Sheffield, Hallam CC. He noted that the road links between the wards of Stannington and Crookes were much better than the poor road access north from Stannington to Stocksbridge and that, whilst the Rivelin Valley formed a strong natural barrier, he considered that the rural nature of the west of the Stannington ward was very similar to that in the Fulwood ward. He recommended that the City of Sheffield wards of Beauchief and Greenhill, and Richmond should be included in Sheffield, Heeley BC and that the Darnall ward should be included in Sheffield South East BC to reflect the support expressed for the counter-proposals.

43. Having considered the representations for alternative names, the Assistant Commissioner supported all the constituency names proposed by us and agreed that the names accurately reflected their compositions. He noted that Sheffield, Attercliffe was the existing name of the constituency and that even though he recommended the inclusion of the Darnall ward, which contained the Attercliffe area, in Sheffield South East BC, the provisionally recommended name should not be changed because he considered that the alternative did not represent the area of the proposed constituency.

Revised Recommendations

44. We agreed with the Assistant Commissioner that our provisional recommendations for the Boroughs of Barnsley and Rotherham should be endorsed. We accepted his conclusion that our recommendations for four constituencies in Sheffield should be revised to include the Crookes ward in Sheffield, Hallam CC, the Beauchief and Greenhill, and Richmond wards in Sheffield, Heeley BC, the Manor Castle ward in Sheffield Central BC and the Darnall ward in Sheffield South East BC, noting that there had been significant support for these changes in the evidence presented to him. We also accepted his recommendation not to alter the name of any of the recommended constituencies.

45. We accordingly published revised recommendations for the four constituencies of Sheffield Central, Sheffield, Hallam CC, Sheffield, Heeley BC and Sheffield South East BC, and confirmed our provisional recommendations as final for the seven other constituencies.

46. Our revised recommendations were:-

	2000 electorate
Barnsley Central BC	64,117
Barnsley East CC	65,237
Penistone and Stocksbridge CC	63,914
Rother Valley CC	72,237
Rotherham BC	65,305
Sheffield, Brightside and Hillsborough BC	73,619
Sheffield Central BC	65,261
Sheffield, Hallam CC	65,594
Sheffield, Heeley BC	69,789
Sheffield South East BC	66,817
Wentworth and Dearne CC	71,213
	<hr/>
	<hr/> <hr/> 743,103

Further Representations

47. Following publication of our revised recommendations, we received fourteen representations, of which five approved of our revised recommendations and nine objected to them. Four of the objections reiterated the counter-proposal presented at the inquiry suggesting that the three City of Sheffield wards of Stannington, Burngreave and Broomhill, should be included in Sheffield, Brightside and Hillsborough BC, Sheffield Central BC and Sheffield, Hallam CC, respectively. One representation also objected to the inclusion of the Broomhill ward in Sheffield Central BC, and another objected to the inclusion of the Stannington ward in Sheffield, Hallam CC. One representation objected to the division of the parish of Bradfield between two of the proposed constituencies and one objected to the inclusion of the Rotherham Borough wards of Brinsworth and Catcliffe, and Sitwell in Rotherham BC and Rother Valley CC, respectively. An alternative name for Penistone and Stocksbridge CC was suggested in one representation.

48. We considered that there was no new evidence in the further representations and that they repeated arguments that had been fully considered by the Assistant Commissioner and rejected by him.

Recommendation

49. We were satisfied that our revised recommendations did not need to be modified. We therefore recommend the adoption of the following constituencies containing the wards as listed in Appendix C:-

	2000 electorate
Barnsley Central BC	64,117
Barnsley East CC	65,237
Penistone and Stocksbridge CC	63,914
Rother Valley CC	72,237
Rotherham BC	65,305
Sheffield, Brightside and Hillsborough BC	73,619
Sheffield Central BC	65,261
Sheffield, Hallam CC	65,594
Sheffield, Heeley BC	69,789
Sheffield South East BC	66,817
Wentworth and Dearne CC	<u>71,213</u>
	<u><u>743,103</u></u>

TYNE AND WEAR

The Number of Electors

1. There are currently thirteen constituencies in the Metropolitan County of Tyne and Wear:-

	2000 electorate
Blaydon BC	64,930
Gateshead East and Washington West BC	64,287
Houghton and Washington East BC	67,757
Jarrow BC	64,051
Newcastle upon Tyne Central BC	69,151
Newcastle upon Tyne East and Wallsend BC	62,375
Newcastle upon Tyne North BC	64,250
North Tyneside BC	63,350
South Shields BC	62,291
Sunderland North BC	61,769
Sunderland South BC	64,945
Tyne Bridge BC	59,459
Tynemouth BC	<u>64,847</u>
	<u><u>833,462</u></u>

The Number of Constituencies

2. Tyne and Wear had a 2000 parliamentary electorate of 833,462, which gave a theoretical entitlement to 11.92 constituencies. We therefore decided that the county should be allocated twelve constituencies, which would be a reduction of one. With twelve constituencies the average constituency electorate would be 69,455, which is only 480 below the electoral quota. The electorates of the thirteen existing constituencies in Tyne and Wear ranged from 69,151 in Newcastle upon Tyne Central BC to 59,459 in Tyne Bridge BC, a disparity of 9,692.

3. We noted that, if we had reviewed each borough separately twelve constituencies would have been allocated, but there would have been a large disparity. We therefore rejected that option and proposed that, north of the River Tyne, the Boroughs of Newcastle upon Tyne, with an allocation of three constituencies, and North Tyneside, with an allocation of two constituencies, should be reviewed separately. South of the Tyne we decided that the average electorate of the South Tyneside constituencies if unpaired would be unacceptably low at 59,183, which is 10,752 below the electoral quota and 752 over our 10,000 threshold.

4. We therefore provisionally decided to retain the pairing of the Boroughs of Gateshead and South Tyneside and allocate four constituencies which, with a combined borough average of 67,628, would be only 2,307 below the electoral quota. We provisionally decided to treat Sunderland separately and allocate three constituencies with a borough average of 72,688, only 2,753 above the electoral quota.

5. The overall effect of our proposed changes in Tyne and Wear would be the abolition of the cross-river Tyne Bridge BC, reflecting the fall in its electorate since our last review and, additionally, three of the five boroughs would be reviewed separately. By reviewing Newcastle and Sunderland separately there would be an increase in the disparity to 11,245 for the proposed twelve constituencies.

Provisional Recommendations

The Boroughs of Gateshead and South Tyneside

6. Gateshead had a 2000 parliamentary electorate of 152,145, which gave a theoretical entitlement to 2.18 constituencies. If two constituencies were allocated, the borough average would be 76,073, which is 6,138 above the electoral quota. One constituency is currently wholly included within the borough boundary. The other three constituencies also include wards from Newcastle upon Tyne, South Tyneside and Sunderland, respectively. There are twenty-two wards in Gateshead with an average electorate of 6,916. We noted that, after realignment of constituency boundaries with new ward boundaries, the existing constituencies in Gateshead Borough had electorates ranging from 59,302 in Tyne Bridge BC to 69,262 in Gateshead East and Washington West BC, a disparity of 9,960.

7. South Tyneside had a 2000 parliamentary electorate of 118,365, which gave a theoretical entitlement to 1.69 constituencies and if two constituencies were allocated, the borough average would be 59,183, which is 10,752 below the electoral quota. One constituency is currently wholly included within the borough boundary. The other constituency includes one Gateshead Borough ward. There are eighteen wards in South Tyneside with an average electorate of 6,576. After realignment of constituency and ward boundaries, the two existing constituencies in South Tyneside had electorates ranging from 59,496 in South Shields BC to 65,142 in Jarrow BC, a disparity of 5,646.

8. We proposed, therefore, to pair Gateshead with South Tyneside Borough and to allocate four constituencies. We noted that the combined area had a 2000 parliamentary electorate of 270,510, which gave a theoretical entitlement to 3.87 constituencies. If four constituencies were allocated, the combined borough average would be 67,628, which is 2,307 below the electoral quota. Twenty of the twenty-two wards of Gateshead Borough and all eighteen wards of South Tyneside Borough would be included in constituencies each within their respective borough boundaries. The disparity between the four constituencies in Gateshead and South Tyneside would be 3,831.

9. We proposed a revised Blaydon BC that included ten of the twenty-two Gateshead Borough wards. A new Gateshead BC was proposed, also with ten Gateshead Borough wards. The electoral disparity between the two Gateshead constituencies was reduced to 127. We proposed a revised Jarrow BC that included eight South Tyneside Borough wards and the remaining two Gateshead Borough wards. A revised South Shields BC included the remaining ten South Tyneside Borough wards. The disparity between the two South Tyneside constituencies was reduced to 179.

10. Our provisional recommendations were:-

	2000 electorate
Blaydon BC	69,530
Gateshead BC	69,403
Jarrow BC	65,878
South Shields BC	<u>65,699</u>
	<u>270,510</u>

Representations

11. Following publication of our provisional recommendations, we received seventy-five representations, including two counter-proposals, of which eleven supported all or part of our proposals, one supported part of our proposals whilst also objecting to other parts and sixty-three objected to all or part of our proposals. The objections included a petition containing 1,608 signatures and forty-seven proforma letters.

12. The main issues raised in the representations were contained in the counter-proposals:-

- a) the first included the South Tyneside Borough ward of Bede in Jarrow BC instead of in South Shields BC and the South Tyneside Borough ward of Whitburn and Marsden in South Shields BC instead of in Jarrow BC; and
- b) the second counter-proposal, as well as the exchange of the Bede and Whitburn and Marsden wards as proposed in the first counter-proposal, included the Simonside and Rekendyke ward in Jarrow BC and the Cleadon and East Boldon ward in South Shields BC.

Local Inquiry and Assistant Commissioner's Report

13. We were required to hold an inquiry. Following the announcement of the inquiry, a further forty-seven representations were received. Of these, forty-five objected to part of our provisional recommendations and two representations made other comments.

14. The Assistant Commissioner reported that he considered Rules 5 and 7 were of primary relevance when determining the issues raised in the counter-proposals.

Rule 5

15. He referred to the electoral figures for 2000 and 2005 that would result from our proposals and considered that the counter-proposals produced constituency electorates that differed little from ours. He concluded that Rule 5 of itself did not make any proposal more preferable to another.

Rule 7

16. He acknowledged the strength of feeling concerning the connection between the South Tyneside Borough ward of Bede and the town of Jarrow. He observed that Bede is geographically close to Jarrow town centre, with the western boundary of the ward close to Jarrow Town Hall where the inquiry was held, and noted that the historical association between Jarrow and the Venerable Bede clearly remained strong to this day. He concluded from the evidence he heard that our proposals would break the very strong ties between Bede and Jarrow.

17. He considered that to retain Bede in its current constituency would need a compensatory transfer to avoid an imbalance in electorates. He noted that the first counter-proposal, and a significant number of other representations, proposed that the South Tyneside Borough ward of Whitburn and Marsden should be the ward to be transferred. As this would result in little change to the electoral disparity he concluded that this should be done.

18. He noted that the second counter-proposal would also affect the two South Tyneside Borough wards of Cleadon and East Boldon, and Simonside and Rekendyke. Following his visits to the areas concerned he concluded that the counter-proposal appeared to have some merit but he decided that as there was no evidence of inconvenience, and so little evidence of local ties from which he could gauge the strength of feeling of a wider cross section of the electorate, he could not therefore recommend it to us. In summary, he recommended that the Bede ward should be retained in Jarrow BC and that the Whitburn and Marsden ward should be included in South Shields BC.

Revised Recommendations

19. We agreed with all of the Assistant Commissioner's recommendations. We therefore published revised recommendations:-

	2000 electorate
Blaydon BC	69,530
Gateshead BC	69,403
Jarrow BC	65,804
South Shields BC	<u>65,773</u>
	<u>270,510</u>

Further Representations

20. Following publication of our revised recommendations we received five representations, all of which approved of all or part of the revised recommendations.

21. We were satisfied that our revised recommendations did not need to be modified. We therefore recommend the adoption of the following constituencies containing the wards as listed in Appendix C:-

	2000 electorate
Blaydon BC	69,530
Gateshead BC	69,403
Jarrow BC	65,804
South Shields BC	65,773
	<hr/>
	270,510
	<hr/>

Provisional Recommendations

The City of Newcastle upon Tyne and the Borough of North Tyneside

22. Newcastle upon Tyne had a 2000 parliamentary electorate of 201,624, which gave a theoretical entitlement to 2.88 constituencies. If three constituencies were allocated, the borough average would be 67,208, which is 2,727 below the electoral quota. Two constituencies are currently wholly included within the city boundary. The other two constituencies also include wards of the Gateshead and North Tyneside Boroughs respectively. There are twenty-six wards in Newcastle upon Tyne with an average electorate of 7,755. We provisionally decided to review Newcastle upon Tyne separately and to allocate three constituencies.

23. After realignment of constituency boundaries with new ward boundaries, the three existing constituencies in Newcastle upon Tyne had electorates ranging from 61,092 in Newcastle upon Tyne East and Wallsend BC to 74,282 in Newcastle upon Tyne Central BC, a disparity of 13,190.

24. We proposed a revised Newcastle upon Tyne Central BC that included eight City of Newcastle upon Tyne wards, a new Newcastle upon Tyne East BC that included nine wards, and a revised Newcastle upon Tyne North BC which included the remaining nine wards. The disparity between the three constituencies would be reduced to 3,132.

25. Our provisional recommendations were:-

	2000 electorate
Newcastle upon Tyne Central BC	65,212
Newcastle upon Tyne East BC	68,068
Newcastle upon Tyne North BC	68,344
	<hr/>
	201,624
	<hr/>

26. North Tyneside had a 2000 parliamentary electorate of 143,265, which gave a theoretical entitlement to 2.05 constituencies. If two constituencies were allocated, the borough average would be 71,633, which is 1,698 above the electoral quota. Presently two constituencies with low electorates are wholly included within the borough boundary and two wards are in a constituency which also contains Newcastle upon Tyne wards. There are twenty wards with an average electorate of 7,163. We provisionally decided to allocate two constituencies.

27. After realignment of constituency boundaries with the new ward boundaries, the two existing constituencies in North Tyneside had electorates of 63,781 in North Tyneside BC and 65,699 in Tynemouth BC, an electoral disparity of 1,918.

28. We proposed a revised North Tyneside BC and a revised Tynemouth BC, each containing ten wards. The disparity between the two North Tyneside constituencies was reduced to 237.

29. Our provisional recommendations were:-

	2000 electorate
North Tyneside BC	71,751
Tynemouth BC	71,514
	<hr/>
	143,265
	<hr/>

Representations

30. We received twenty-five representations, including two counter-proposals, for the City of Newcastle upon Tyne and the Borough of North Tyneside. The second counter-proposal proposed the retention of the cross-borough constituency of Newcastle upon Tyne East and Wallsend BC. Of the representations, eleven supported all or part of our proposals, seven supported part of our proposals whilst objecting to other parts and seven objected to all or part of our proposals. The objections included a petition containing 910 signatures. The main issues raised in the objections were principally contained in the two counter-proposals:-

- a) the first proposed the inclusion of the City of Newcastle upon Tyne ward of Lemington in Newcastle upon Tyne North BC and the City of Newcastle upon Tyne wards of East Gosforth and West Gosforth in Newcastle upon Tyne Central BC; and
- b) the second also proposed the inclusion of the City of Newcastle upon Tyne ward of Lemington in Newcastle upon Tyne North BC and additionally the Newcastle upon Tyne wards of West Gosforth and North Jesmond in Newcastle upon Tyne Central BC, and the North Tyneside Borough wards of Wallsend and Valley in Newcastle upon Tyne East BC and North Tyneside BC, respectively.

Local Inquiry and Assistant Commissioner's Report

31. We were required to hold an inquiry. Following the announcement of the inquiry, a further sixteen representations were received. Of these, five approved of all or parts of our proposals, one supported part of our proposals whilst objecting to other parts and one objected to all or part of our proposals. Nine representations made other comments.

32. The Assistant Commissioner reported that the main issues raised at the local inquiry were the two counter-proposals and the names of the Newcastle upon Tyne North, North Tyneside and Tynemouth constituencies.

33. He confirmed that he had adopted the same approach to the balancing of Rules 5 and 7 in respect of both Newcastle upon Tyne and North Tyneside as he had in respect of Gateshead and South Tyneside.

Rule 5

34. He referred to the electoral figures for 2000 and 2005 that would result from our proposals and considered that on the 2000 figures, our proposals produced constituencies closer to the electoral quota than the first counter-proposal, but similar to those contained in the second counter-proposal. He noted the decline in the Newcastle upon Tyne electorate since 2000 and reported that this had made the two counter-proposals better than the provisional recommendations when considered on the 2005 figures.

Rule 7

35. The Assistant Commissioner reported that our inclusion of the City of Newcastle upon Tyne ward of Lemington in Newcastle upon Tyne Central BC, instead of in Newcastle upon Tyne North BC, had met with strong objection. He described the geographical location of the ward and noted that, with the City of Newcastle upon Tyne wards of Newburn, Denton and Westerhope, it had constituted Newburn Urban District Council until its demise in 1974 when the wards became part of Newcastle upon Tyne. He noted that several of the Council's services, especially housing, continued to be administered from Newburn Town Hall and he agreed that Lemington looked to Newburn for virtually all its services. He also observed that, if Lemington were to be moved, a replacement ward or wards must be found to avoid an electoral imbalance.

36. He reported that the first counter-proposal, which proposed that the replacement wards should be the City of Newcastle upon Tyne wards of East Gosforth and West Gosforth from Newcastle upon Tyne North BC, would have a significant effect on the electorates. He noted that if only the West Gosforth ward were moved, as proposed in the second counter-proposal, the numerical effect would be relatively minor. He accepted that it would be preferable to keep the two wards together but, after visiting the area, considered that this was not sufficient to justify the serious imbalance in the electorates resulting from the transfer of both wards. He considered that the High Street would provide a clear constituency boundary and concluded that the wards of Lemington and West Gosforth should be exchanged.

Wallsend

37. The Assistant Commissioner considered the element of the second counter-proposal that included the North Tyneside Borough ward of Wallsend in Newcastle upon Tyne East BC. He accepted that Wallsend was similar in character to the City of Newcastle upon Tyne wards of Walker and Walkergate, and noted that the boundary between Newcastle upon Tyne and North Tyneside at this location was not marked by any significant geographical feature. He accepted that there was a case for including the ward, but believed this depended on the weight attached to keeping constituencies within borough boundaries and the acceptability of the proposed consequential changes.

38. He noted that it was not necessary to cross the borough boundary to avoid an excessive disparity. He considered the second counter-proposal to be broadly similar to, and certainly no better than, our proposals in terms of disparities and deviation from the electoral quota on the basis of the 2000 electoral figures, but accepted that on the basis of the 2005 electorate, the second counter-proposal seemed to be better than our proposals. He decided that, whilst it was desirable to keep constituencies within borough boundaries, it should not carry so much weight as to be an overriding consideration. He reported that there would have

to be a compensatory transfer if Wallsend were to be included in Newcastle East BC. He noted that supporters of the second counter-proposal submitted that there was no single ward which could simply be exchanged with Wallsend. It proposed a more complicated arrangement which separated the North and South Jesmond wards and crossed the boundary formed by the A19 between the proposed North Tyneside and Tynemouth constituencies, thus involving three constituencies.

39. He stated a preference for our inclusion of the North Tyneside Borough ward of Valley in Tynemouth BC instead of in North Tyneside BC, adopting the A19 as the western boundary, which he considered would be a logical and clear boundary. However, he also considered that no significant ties would be broken were the ward to remain in North Tyneside BC, if required as a consequence of including the North Tyneside Borough ward of Wallsend in the Newcastle upon Tyne East constituency. He considered that there was not a clear boundary between the City of Newcastle upon Tyne wards of North Jesmond and South Jesmond and decided that it would not be satisfactory to have them in separate constituencies, as was counter-proposed, in order to accommodate the inclusion of Wallsend in Newcastle upon Tyne East BC. These considerations were finely balanced but led him, with some hesitation, to reject the second counter-proposal. He also decided to retain the existing constituency names in North Tyneside.

40. In conclusion, the Assistant Commissioner decided that the Lemington ward should be included in Newcastle upon Tyne North BC with the West Gosforth ward being included in Newcastle upon Tyne Central BC. He also considered that Newcastle upon Tyne North BC should be renamed Newcastle upon Tyne West BC. The Assistant Commissioner further considered that, whilst it would be acceptable to retain the North Tyneside Borough wards of Valley and Wallsend in their existing constituencies, it would not be acceptable to separate North Jesmond and South Jesmond and, accordingly, he rejected the second counter-proposal.

Revised Recommendations

41. We reviewed the Assistant Commissioner's report, the transcript of the inquiry, the written representations and all the evidence submitted at the inquiry. We decided that we would accept his recommendations in so far as they related to the composition of the constituencies. However, we decided to reject his recommended change of name for Newcastle upon Tyne North BC. We noted that there was little change to the composition of the existing constituency and considered that a change of name was neither necessary nor appropriate.

42. We therefore published revised recommendations:-

	2000 electorate
Newcastle upon Tyne Central BC	64,803
Newcastle upon Tyne East BC	68,068
Newcastle upon Tyne North BC	68,753
North Tyneside BC	71,751
Tynemouth BC	71,514
	<hr/>
	344,889

Further Representations

43. Following publication of our revised recommendations we received ten representations in respect of Newcastle upon Tyne, of which nine approved of all or parts of our revised recommendations and one objected.

44. The objection concerned the inclusion of the City of Newcastle upon Tyne ward of West Gosforth in Newcastle upon Tyne Central BC. The basis of the objection was that the East Gosforth and West Gosforth wards would be in separate constituencies, with the boundary between the two wards being the High Street. It was said that the transfer had been effected to accommodate the inclusion of the City of Newcastle upon Tyne ward of Lemington in Newcastle upon Tyne North BC because of its ties with the City of Newcastle upon Tyne ward of Newburn. It was also said that Lemington and Newburn were two distinct villages between which a line could be drawn and that the links between the two Gosforth wards should be respected by including them in the same constituency as we had provisionally recommended.

Recommendation

45. In considering the objection, we took into account the evidence the Assistant Commissioner had heard about the local ties of the wards in the two constituencies for which revised recommendations had been published, and we noted that he had visited the area in question. We concluded that he had correctly assessed the ties that existed between the various wards and we were content that, based upon the evidence, he had produced an acceptable alternative to our provisional recommendations.

46. We noted that there had been support for our revised recommendations and a lack of other objections. We concluded that there was no new, compelling evidence contained in the representation to justify the alteration of the revised recommendations.

47. We therefore recommend the adoption of the following constituencies containing the wards as listed in Appendix C:-

	2000 electorate
Newcastle upon Tyne Central BC	64,803
Newcastle upon Tyne East BC	68,068
Newcastle upon Tyne North BC	68,753
North Tyneside BC	71,751
Tynemouth BC	<u>71,514</u>
	<u>344,889</u>

Provisional Recommendations

The City of Sunderland

48. Sunderland had a 2000 electorate of 218,063, which gave a theoretical entitlement to 3.12 constituencies. If three constituencies were allocated, the borough average would be 72,688, which is 2,753 above the electoral quota. Three constituencies are wholly included within the borough boundary. Another constituency also includes six Gateshead Borough

wards. There are twenty-five wards in Sunderland with an average electorate of 8,723. We provisionally decided to allocate three constituencies comprising all twenty-five wards within the city boundaries. We noted that this would produce a high disparity between the constituencies in Sunderland because one constituency would contain an extra ward, making its electorate above the borough average.

49. We noted that after realignment of constituency and ward boundaries, the existing three constituencies in Sunderland had electorates ranging from 60,846 in Sunderland North BC to 68,438 in Sunderland South BC, an electoral disparity of 7,592.

50. We proposed a new Houghton and Sunderland South BC and a new Washington and Sunderland West BC, both of which included eight City of Sunderland wards, and a new Sunderland Central BC, which included the remaining nine wards. The disparity between the three Sunderland constituencies was reduced to 6,198.

51. Our provisional recommendations were:-

	2000 electorate
Houghton and Sunderland South BC	71,347
Sunderland Central BC	76,457
Washington and Sunderland West BC	<u>70,259</u>
	<u>218,063</u>

52. We received twenty-eight representations of which fifteen supported all or part of our proposals, one supported part of our proposals whilst objecting to other parts and twelve objected to all or part of our proposals.

53. The main issues raised in the objections were principally contained in two counter-proposals which received support at the inquiry:-

- a) the first placed all the wards west of the A19 into a revised Houghton and Washington constituency, with a 2000 electorate of 80,901 and divided Sunderland into north and south constituencies with nearly equal electorates of about 69,500; and
- b) the second was similar to the first, but reduced the size of its Houghton and Washington constituency by departing from the line of the A19 and placing the Copt Hill ward in a Sunderland South constituency and altering the boundary between the Sunderland constituencies.

Local Inquiry and Assistant Commissioner's Report

54. We were required to hold an inquiry. Following the announcement of the inquiry, a further six representations were received. Of these, three approved of all or parts of our proposals and one objected to all or part of our proposals. Two representations made other comments. The main issues raised at the local inquiry were the two counter-proposals.

55. The Assistant Commissioner confirmed that he had adopted the same approach to the balancing of Rules 5 and 7, in respect of Sunderland as he had in respect of Gateshead and South Tyneside, and Newcastle upon Tyne and North Tyneside.

Rule 5

56. He referred to the electoral figures for 2000 and 2005 that would result from our proposals and considered that they produced constituencies closer to the electoral quota than either of the counter-proposals. He noted the decline in electorate by 2005 and considered that this improved our proposals, while worsening those contained in the counter-proposals. He also referred to figures for new housing development where he considered that the figures for 2004 - 2011 were relevant but did not consider that they had any effect on the conclusions to which the 2000 and 2005 electoral figures led. After 2011, he saw no reason to attach weight to the prospect of future housing development except to note that the area was likely to be subject to continuing change.

57. He noted that the first counter-proposal would result in a constituency with an electorate of 80,901, which, apart from the Isle of Wight, would be the largest recommended in England during this review. He said he had no evidence of the factors which were considered to justify the creation of a constituency with an electorate of that size but the Rule 7 considerations that justified it would have to be substantial in nature and clearly supported by evidence.

Rule 7

58. The Assistant Commissioner noted the arguments of those opposing our proposals, that the A19 provided a logical boundary and that the wards to the east of it had ties with Sunderland, whereas those to the west of it had ties with Washington. In assessing the strength of this argument he considered that, by avoiding crossing the city boundary, our proposals reflected recognition of the mutual ties within all parts of the city.

59. He considered that the ties and associations put forward by those supporting the counter-proposals derived from the past, when coal mining and ship building were prosperous industries. He noted that the area had changed considerably over the last thirty years, with both industries having declined. He considered that Washington, a new town created in 1964, had developed and that major new employment sources had become established. Although he accepted that people in wards east of the A19 looked towards Sunderland, and many in wards west of the A19 looked towards Washington, the position was not clear cut. He noted that there are main roads and bus routes which cross the A19 and also evidence of links such as attendance at educational establishments. He reported that there was some evidence of ties which the counter-proposals might disturb.

60. He also considered that the small number of representations from members of the public suggested to him that the public did not see our proposals as a significant threat to their convenience or existing ties.

61. He decided that the inconveniences and breaking of local ties likely to result from our proposals would not be sufficient to justify rejecting them in favour of the counter-proposals. He also rejected the second counter-proposal because it would produce an illogically shaped constituency which departed from the argument that the A19 is a strong boundary. In conclusion, he supported our provisional recommendations.

Recommendation

62. We agreed with all of the Assistant Commissioner's recommendations. We therefore recommend the adoption of the following constituencies containing wards as listed in Appendix C:-

	2000 electorate
Houghton and Sunderland South BC	71,347
Sunderland Central BC	76,457
Washington and Sunderland West BC	<u>70,259</u>
	<u>218,063</u>

WEST MIDLANDS

The Number of Electors

1. There are currently twenty-nine constituencies in the Metropolitan County of West Midlands:-

	2000 electorate
Aldridge-Brownhills BC	62,189
Birmingham, Edgbaston BC	68,982
Birmingham, Erdington BC	66,310
Birmingham, Hall Green BC	58,616
Birmingham, Hodge Hill BC	55,857
Birmingham, Ladywood BC	71,297
Birmingham, Northfield BC	56,629
Birmingham, Perry Barr BC	71,661
Birmingham, Selly Oak BC	71,766
Birmingham, Sparkbrook and Small Heath BC	74,648
Birmingham, Yardley BC	52,966
Coventry North East BC	74,197
Coventry North West BC	76,552
Coventry South BC	71,934
Dudley North BC	69,866
Dudley South BC	66,410
Halesowen and Rowley Regis BC	66,352
Meriden CC	75,961
Solihull BC	78,741
Stourbridge BC	65,197
Sutton Coldfield BC	72,451
Walsall North BC	65,880
Walsall South BC	61,908
Warley BC	59,630
West Bromwich East BC	62,889
West Bromwich West BC	68,592
Wolverhampton North East BC	60,565
Wolverhampton South East BC	53,639
Wolverhampton South West BC	66,791
	<hr/>
	<hr/>
	1,928,476

The Number of Constituencies

2. West Midlands had a 2000 parliamentary electorate of 1,928,476, which gave a theoretical entitlement to 27.58 constituencies. With twenty-eight constituencies the average constituency electorate would be 68,874, which is only 1,061 below the electoral quota. We therefore decided that the county should be allocated twenty-eight constituencies, which would be a reduction of one.

3. We noted that if we had reviewed each borough separately, twenty-seven constituencies would have been allocated, which is one less than the county is entitled to. The overall reduction of one constituency would be achieved by allocating ten constituencies, instead of the existing eleven, to Birmingham to reflect the fall in its entitlement to 10.31. It would then be arithmetically possible to allocate the remaining eighteen constituencies to the rest of the county by respecting the existing allocation to boroughs, in which Dudley and Sandwell are paired with seven constituencies between them and Coventry, Solihull, Walsall and Wolverhampton are each treated individually, with Solihull having two constituencies and the other three boroughs each having three constituencies. However, the disparities between the electorates of some of the constituencies in those boroughs led us to recommend a revision to the existing pairing of Dudley and Sandwell by also adding Wolverhampton and allocating ten constituencies to the group of three boroughs. We then proposed reviewing the remaining three boroughs in West Midlands individually and allocating three constituencies to Coventry, two constituencies to Solihull and three constituencies to Walsall.

4. The electorates of the existing twenty-nine constituencies in West Midlands ranged from 78,741 in Solihull BC to 52,966 in Birmingham, Yardley BC, a disparity of 25,775. The overall effect of the proposed changes would be to reduce this disparity to 20,019 for the proposed twenty-eight constituencies.

Provisional Recommendations

The City of Birmingham

5. Birmingham had a 2000 parliamentary electorate of 721,183 which gave a theoretical entitlement to 10.31 constituencies. There are forty new wards in Birmingham with an average electorate of 18,030. We therefore provisionally decided to review Birmingham separately and to allocate ten constituencies, a reduction of one, each containing four wards. With ten constituencies the average electorate would be 72,118, which is only 2,183 above the electoral quota.

6. The eleven existing constituencies in Birmingham had electorates ranging from 52,966 in Birmingham, Yardley BC to 74,648 in Birmingham, Sparkbrook and Small Heath BC, a disparity of 21,682. The electorate of the existing Birmingham, Yardley BC was 16,969 below the electoral quota and 19,152 below the borough average. The electorates of Birmingham, Hall Green BC (58,616), Birmingham, Hodge Hill BC (55,857) and Birmingham, Northfield BC (56,629) were also below both the electoral quota and the borough average. Our proposals would address these low electorates and reduce the disparity in Birmingham to 11,421.

7. As a result of changes to the ward boundaries in Birmingham, twenty-four of the new wards are partly in one constituency and partly in another. Our provisional recommendations realigned the constituency boundaries with the new ward boundaries. In an attempt to keep change to a minimum, whilst reducing the allocation of constituencies by one, we proposed no change, other than that required for minimum change realignment, to the five constituencies of Birmingham, Edgbaston BC, Birmingham, Erdington BC, Birmingham, Ladywood BC, Birmingham, Perry Barr BC and Sutton Coldfield BC.

8. We further proposed that:-

- a) Birmingham, Hall Green BC should retain the Billesley and Hall Green wards, with the addition of the two divided wards of Acocks Green and Springfield;
- b) Birmingham, Hodge Hill BC should retain the Hodge Hill and Shard End wards, the divided ward of Washwood Heath and, additionally, the Sheldon ward;
- c) Birmingham, Northfield BC should retain the Longbridge ward and the two divided wards of Northfield and Weoley, with the addition of the divided ward of Kings Norton;
- d) Birmingham, Selly Oak BC should retain the three divided wards of Bournville, Moseley and Kings Heath, and Selly Oak, with the addition of the Brandwood ward; and
- e) Birmingham, Yardley BC should retain the two divided wards of South Yardley, and Stechford and Yardley North, with the addition of the two divided wards of Bordesley Green and Sparkbrook.

9. Our provisional recommendations were:-

2000 electorate

Birmingham, Edgbaston BC	71,523
Birmingham, Erdington BC	67,357
Birmingham, Hall Green BC	75,719
Birmingham, Hodge Hill BC	72,527
Birmingham, Ladywood BC	65,061
Birmingham, Northfield BC	73,731
Birmingham, Perry Barr BC	72,968
Birmingham, Selly Oak BC	73,796
Birmingham, Yardley BC	76,482
Sutton Coldfield BC	72,019
	<hr/>
	<u>721,183</u>

Representations

10. Following publication of our provisional recommendations we received twenty-nine representations, of which six supported all or part of our proposals, twelve supported part of our proposals whilst objecting to other parts and eleven objected to all or part of our proposals. There were no objections to our recommendations to continue to review Birmingham separately, to the allocation of ten constituencies, or to the configuration of any of the five north-western constituencies where we had recommended only minimum change to take account of ward boundary changes. There was a single objection to one of the constituency names we proposed.

11. The main issues raised in the objections were principally contained in three counter-proposals, which had common features:-

- a) the first affected each of the five constituencies which we had recommended should border the south-eastern boundary of the city. In those five constituencies, transfers of one or two wards (amounting in all to eight wards) between each constituency were proposed and centred principally on placing the Acocks Green ward in Birmingham, Yardley BC, on transferring both the Sparkbrook and Springfield wards from their provisionally recommended constituencies so that they joined the Moseley and Kings Heath, and Selly Oak wards in the same constituency and placing the Bournville ward in Birmingham, Northfield BC. There were other consequential transfers: the transfer of the Sheldon and Bordesley Green wards in the east and of the Brandwood and Kings Norton wards in the south. One new name was suggested for the differently constituted Birmingham, Selly Oak BC;
- b) the second affected only two of our recommended constituencies and accepted the remainder. It too supported the transfer of the Springfield ward to join the Moseley and Kings Heath ward, but did not move the Sparkbrook ward. It achieved the transfer by exchanging the Springfield and Brandwood wards between Birmingham, Hall Green BC and Birmingham, Selly Oak BC; and
- c) the third, which was not supported when the inquiry was held, also proposed that the Sparkbrook and Springfield wards should be in the same constituency, but that it could be achieved by transferring the Sparkbrook ward to Birmingham, Hall Green BC. It proposed the same alteration to Birmingham, Hodge Hill BC and Birmingham, Yardley BC, as in the first counter-proposal.

Local Inquiry and Assistant Commissioner's Report

12. We were required to hold an inquiry. Following the announcement of the inquiry, a further forty-three representations were received. Of these, thirty approved of all or part of the provisional recommendations, seven approved of part whilst objecting to other parts, three objected to parts of our proposals and three made other comments. The main issues raised at the local inquiry were the three counter-proposals and some other local issues.

Birmingham, Hodge Hill BC

13. The Assistant Commissioner noted the evidence and the written representations supporting our inclusion of the Sheldon ward in Birmingham, Hodge Hill BC. The evidence suggested that there were demographic and social links between the Sheldon and Shard End wards and that there was a single shared community and a shared economic future. It was submitted that it would be much easier to represent effectively a combined Sheldon and Hodge Hill constituency than any other combination suggested in the counter-proposals.

14. He reported that three principal factors appeared to point against the inclusion of the Sheldon ward in Birmingham, Hodge Hill BC instead of Birmingham, Yardley BC. First, the railway line and open space south of the railway, with consequential limited road access, provided a well-defined boundary between the Sheldon and Shard End wards. Secondly, he accepted there was a high degree of contiguity between the Sheldon and the Stechford and

Yardley North wards. Thirdly, strong and historical links existed between Sheldon and other parts of Yardley. He also reported that a case was made for the inclusion of the Bordesley Green ward in Birmingham, Hodge Hill BC instead of the Sheldon ward, largely on the grounds that the Bordesley Green ward had no cultural or historical links with Yardley, and that Bordesley Green was attached to the Washwood Heath ward, which is part of Birmingham, Hodge Hill BC.

Birmingham, Yardley BC

15. The first and third counter-proposals both included the Acocks Green ward in Birmingham, Yardley BC rather than the Sparkbrook ward, as we had proposed. These counter-proposals also submitted that the Sparkbrook and Springfield wards should be included in the same constituency, though the counter-proposals did not agree with which other wards they should be included. Other representations supported the inclusion of the Acocks Green ward in Birmingham, Yardley BC, though the Assistant Commissioner noted the support in the second counter-proposal for a Birmingham, Yardley BC, without the Sheldon ward but with the Bordesley Green ward, as in our provisional recommendations.

16. He reported that there was also a request for the name of Birmingham, Yardley BC to be changed to something more reflective of the geographical areas covered by the new constituency and the population within it, but no specific name was suggested.

Birmingham, Northfield BC

17. The Assistant Commissioner reported that part of the first counter-proposal submitted that the Bournville ward should replace the Kings Norton ward in Birmingham, Northfield BC as it would unite the whole of the estate of the Bournville Village Trust within one constituency. The residents of the estate were described as a very close community and reference was made to the links with the Weoley ward, which is in Birmingham, Northfield BC. It was claimed that there were weightier and more numerous links between the Kings Norton and Brandwood wards than there were between the Kings Norton and Northfield wards.

18. He also reported that supporters of the second counter-proposal opposed the inclusion of the Bournville ward in Birmingham, Northfield BC, citing the strong connections between the Selly Oak and Bournville wards. It was claimed that there was a clear boundary between the Kings Norton and Bournville wards and also between the Bournville and Weoley wards. He noted the support from residents of the area for our provisional recommendations for Birmingham, Northfield BC and Birmingham, Selly Oak BC. Our proposals were also supported in the third counter-proposal and there was support for the inclusion of the Kings Norton ward in Birmingham, Northfield BC, as it brought together in one constituency the area of West Heath.

Birmingham, Selly Oak BC

19. The Assistant Commissioner reported that the first and third counter-proposals maintained that the Sparkbrook and Springfield wards were inseparable and should be included in the same constituency, but the proponents did not agree on how this was to be achieved. The first counter-proposal, which renamed the constituency Birmingham, Selly Oak and Sparkbrook BC, included the two wards of Moseley and Kings Heath, and Selly Oak

with the Sparkbrook and Springfield wards, but it was criticised for the very peculiar shape of the proposed constituency and for the lack of direct access between the Selly Oak and Moseley and Kings Heath wards. The second counter-proposal included the Springfield ward rather than the Brandwood ward in Birmingham, Selly Oak BC. The third counter-proposal included the Sparkbrook and Springfield wards in Birmingham, Hall Green BC.

Birmingham, Hall Green BC

20. The Assistant Commissioner reported that in the first counter-proposal Birmingham, Hall Green BC contained the Billesley, Brandwood, Hall Green and Kings Norton wards. The second counter-proposal differed from the first counter-proposal only by including the Acocks Green ward rather than the Kings Norton ward. The third counter-proposal differed from our proposals only by including the Sparkbrook ward rather than the Acocks Green ward. Witnesses supporting both the first and second counter-proposals underlined the fact that the electors of the Billesley, Brandwood and Hall Green wards were currently within the same constituency and there was evidence of the local ties between the Brandwood and Billesley wards. It was also submitted that some of the electors of the Kings Norton ward were currently within the Birmingham, Hall Green constituency, unlike any of the electors within the Acocks Green ward.

The Assistant Commissioner's two proposals

21. During the inquiry, and with regard to the evidence he had heard, the Assistant Commissioner put forward two proposals of his own for the composition of Birmingham, Selly Oak BC and Birmingham, Hall Green BC, which he invited those present to consider, and, if appropriate, comment upon. His proposals were that:-

Proposal 1

- a) Birmingham, Selly Oak BC should include the Selly Oak, Bournville, Moseley and Kings Heath, and Sparkbrook wards; and
- b) Birmingham, Hall Green BC should include the Brandwood, Billesley, Hall Green and Springfield wards.

Proposal 2

- a) Birmingham, Selly Oak BC should include the Selly Oak, Bournville, Brandwood and Billesley wards; and
- b) Birmingham, Hall Green BC should include the Hall Green, Springfield, Moseley and Kings Heath, and Sparkbrook wards.

The Assistant Commissioner's general observations

22. The Assistant Commissioner reported that his impressions of the parts of Birmingham he had visited were that none of the wards were uniform in character. All contained residential areas of differing periods and character and, because the wards were so large, very often there was less similarity between parts of a ward than there was between adjacent parts of adjoining wards (although he considered Bournville to be the exception). It was therefore

possible, in many instances, to make out a case for attaching a ward to any of the adjoining wards. However, he considered that the evidence established sufficient local ties to make it desirable to place three pairs of wards in the same constituencies. These were:-

- a) the Sheldon, and the Stechford and Yardley North wards;
- b) the Sparkbrook and Springfield wards; and
- c) the Brandwood and Billesley wards.

Assistant Commissioner's recommendations

23. The Assistant Commissioner reported that our provisional recommendations did not give effect to any of the three pairs of wards that he thought should go together. He also reported that the second counter-proposal only contained one of the pairs, whereas the first counter-proposal gave effect to all three. However, he considered that he should not reach his conclusion on that ground alone and he examined in depth the consequences of implementing the above pairings in terms of the consequential alterations that would have to be made to the constituencies.

24. In conclusion, he decided to recommend adoption of the first and third counter-proposals in so far as they related to Birmingham, Hodge Hill BC and Birmingham, Yardley BC. He also recommended adoption of his Proposal 2 for Birmingham, Hall Green BC and Birmingham, Selly Oak BC. He considered that Birmingham, Hall Green BC should be renamed Birmingham, Hall Green and Sparkbrook BC as it would be a more suitable name for the constituency. He also endorsed our provisional recommendations for Birmingham, Northfield BC. Finally, he reported that, if we were unable to consider or accept his recommendations, then he would endorse the first counter-proposal in its entirety.

Revised Recommendations

25. We considered the Assistant Commissioner's report, the transcript of the inquiry, the written representations and the evidence submitted at the inquiry. We noted that, not only had he made a recommendation for alterations to be made to four of our provisionally recommended constituencies, but that he had also decided against adopting in their entirety any of the three counter-proposals considered by him at the inquiry. We also noted that he had instead recommended that we adopt one of his two alternative distributions of constituencies which he had outlined to those present towards the end of the inquiry and which he adjudged best took account of the evidence that he had been called upon to consider in respect of the local ties between the various wards.

26. We considered most carefully the evidence in respect of the local ties submitted to the Assistant Commissioner and agreed with his assessment of the linkages between the various pairs of wards that he had identified. We noted that he had visited each of the areas in question in order to assist with his understanding of the evidence and further noted the late introduction of his two alternatives shortly before closing submissions were made. However, we also noted that there had been sufficient time available, before the inquiry was due to close, for those present to have requested a short adjournment if they had considered that was necessary to enable them to respond in more detail to his alternatives in their closing submissions.

27. We considered that the Assistant Commissioner had used his judgement in respect of the evidence he had heard and had made recommendations to us based on his assessment of that evidence. It was our view that the purpose of a local inquiry was to do just that: to consider all the evidence and to make recommendations to us. It did not have to result in the acceptance by an Assistant Commissioner of a counter-proposal submitted to the inquiry whether in its entirety or in part, but could quite properly result in a different distribution of constituencies based upon all the evidence that had been submitted. We concluded that he had correctly assessed the ties that existed between the various wards and we were content that his alternative recommendation (Proposal 2) produced an acceptable alternative to our provisional recommendations within the terms of the Rules. We decided to accept his recommendation for changes to be made to the boundaries of four of our provisionally recommended constituencies.

28. We also considered his recommendation that the constituency he had recommended comprising the Hall Green, Moseley and Kings Heath, Sparkbrook and Springfield wards should be called Birmingham, Hall Green and Sparkbrook BC. We noted that the nine recommended constituencies prefixed with Birmingham had a name that reflected just one area within them. We were not persuaded that it was necessary to refer also to Sparkbrook in the constituency name and, for conciseness, decided that the constituency should be called Birmingham, Hall Green BC.

29. We accordingly published revised recommendations for Birmingham, Hall Green BC, Birmingham, Hodge Hill BC, Birmingham, Selly Oak BC and Birmingham, Yardley BC and confirmed our provisional recommendations as final for the other six constituencies. Our revised recommendations were:-

	2000 electorate
Birmingham, Edgbaston BC	71,523
Birmingham, Erdington BC	67,357
Birmingham, Hall Green BC	74,814
Birmingham, Hodge Hill BC	75,563
Birmingham, Ladywood BC	65,061
Birmingham, Northfield BC	73,731
Birmingham, Perry Barr BC	72,968
Birmingham, Selly Oak BC	74,283
Birmingham, Yardley BC	73,864
Sutton Coldfield BC	<hr/> 72,019 <hr/>
	721,183

Further Representations

30. Following publication of our revised recommendations we received thirteen representations, three of which approved of all or part of our revised recommendations, two approved of part whilst objecting to other parts and eight objected.

31. The issues raised were principally contained in two counter-proposals affecting Birmingham, Hall Green BC and Birmingham, Selly Oak BC. The first focussed on keeping together the three wards of the existing Birmingham, Hall Green BC, which was achieved by the two revised constituencies retaining respectively only their Hall Green and Selly Oak

wards and exchanging the other three with each other. The second counter-proposal focussed on the existing Birmingham, Selly Oak BC, so that three of its wards were retained in the new seat. This was achieved by exchanging the Billesley ward and the Moseley and Kings Heath ward between the two revised constituencies. This reinstated the Birmingham, Selly Oak BC which we had provisionally recommended.

32. Supporters of the first counter-proposal said the wards of the existing Birmingham, Hall Green BC had many ties which should not be divided. In their Birmingham, Selly Oak BC they said strong links between the Moseley and Kings Heath, and Selly Oak wards would be retained and they would be joined by the demographically similar Sparkbrook and Springfield wards. It was also said that there had been little time to respond to the Assistant Commissioner's proposals. It was claimed his proposals were inconsistent as they included the inner-city Moseley and Kings Heath, Sparkbrook and Springfield wards with the outer-city Hall Green ward and he had rejected a counter-proposal to join the Sparkbrook and Springfield wards with the two outer-city Hall Green and Billesley wards on the basis they were areas of different character.

33. Supporters of the second counter-proposal principally wanted to preserve as far as possible the well-established and strong ties which they said existed between the wards of the existing Birmingham, Selly Oak constituency by retaining three of its four wards, rather than two, in the new constituency, in the same way as our provisional proposals had done. It was also said this arrangement kept most of the Kings Heath community united, and would move fewer electors, whereas the revised constituency had an extended shape, and a short, divisive and unsatisfactory boundary between the Brandwood and Bournville wards. They also criticised the Assistant Commissioner's unwillingness to put inner-city and outer-city wards together in a constituency and said that there had only been a limited opportunity to make representations about his proposals. A re-opened or a new inquiry was sought.

34. A more general objection, received from someone who had not attended the inquiry, claimed the constituency boundaries did not reflect the reality of local community interaction and, without suggesting an alternative configuration, asked for a new inquiry or for it to be re-opened. There was also objection to the name we had given to the revised Birmingham, Hall Green BC. It was said that because the inner city areas around Sparkbrook had no connection with Hall Green, the name Sparkbrook or Springfield should be included in the constituency name. Suggestions were Birmingham, Springfield BC; Birmingham, Hall Green and Sparkbrook BC; and Birmingham, Sparkbrook and Hall Green BC. A variant was Birmingham, Hall Green and Moseley BC.

Recommendation

35. In considering the representations, we recalled that, in reaching a view on the Assistant Commissioner's report, we had read the transcript and had taken note of the representations submitted and of the evidence given about the local ties of the wards in the four constituencies for which revised recommendations had been published. We had also noted that the Assistant Commissioner had visited the wards discussed at the inquiry to assist him in reaching his decisions and we had concluded that his assessment of the ties had been correct. Neither of the latest counter-proposals had been placed before the inquiry had commenced.

36. We noted that some representations had commented upon the late introduction by the Assistant Commissioner of his two proposals and had suggested that there had been little time to respond at the inquiry or for public consultation on them. In considering this aspect, we noted that our statement, which had been issued some weeks before the inquiry, had given notice that “.... were it to be counter-proposed at the inquiry that a change should be introduced to a boundary which has not been proposed by the Commission, nor by any of the counter-proposals published before the inquiry commenced, it is nevertheless possible that the Commission would recommend such changes”, and had warned that “... those who are content with the provisional recommendations of the Commission or with any of the counter-proposals submitted, should take the opportunity to attend the inquiry and make their views known. It should be noted that the Commission rarely arrange a further inquiry”. We had explained in paragraph 40 of the revised recommendations news release that there had been sufficient time available at the local inquiry for the Assistant Commissioner’s two proposals to be considered. That was still our view. We decided that we would neither re-open the original inquiry nor hold a second inquiry.

37. The latest suggestions for the name of Birmingham, Hall Green BC had not been proposed either prior to, or during the inquiry, and no other representations had been received suggesting the proposed name was inappropriate. We had not adopted the Assistant Commissioner’s recommended name of Birmingham, Hall Green and Sparkbrook BC as the nine recommended constituencies prefixed with Birmingham had a name that reflected just one area within them. We were still not persuaded that it was necessary to refer to Sparkbrook in the constituency name and reaffirmed that it be called Birmingham, Hall Green BC.

38. We noted the very low level of objection to our revised recommendations, particularly when considered against the electoral size of the area under consideration and the complexity of the issues about local ties that were involved, as well as the level of support they had attracted. We concluded that there was no, new, compelling evidence in any of the representations to justify the alteration of the revised recommendations or the conduct of a second inquiry.

39. We were satisfied that our revised recommendations did not need to be modified. We therefore recommend the adoption of the following constituencies containing wards as listed in Appendix C:-

	2000 electorate
Birmingham, Edgbaston BC	71,523
Birmingham, Erdington BC	67,357
Birmingham, Hall Green BC	74,814
Birmingham, Hodge Hill BC	75,563
Birmingham, Ladywood BC	65,061
Birmingham, Northfield BC	73,731
Birmingham, Perry Barr BC	72,968
Birmingham, Selly Oak BC	74,283
Birmingham, Yardley BC	73,864
Sutton Coldfield BC	<u>72,019</u>
	<u><u>721,183</u></u>

Provisional Recommendations

The City of Coventry

40. Coventry had a 2000 parliamentary electorate of 222,683 which gave a theoretical entitlement to 3.18 constituencies. The continued allocation of three constituencies to Coventry would result in a borough average of 74,228, which is 4,293 above the electoral quota. We therefore provisionally decided that Coventry should continue to be reviewed separately and retain its current allocation of three constituencies.

41. The three existing constituencies in Coventry had electorates ranging from 71,934 in Coventry South BC to 76,552 in Coventry North West BC, a disparity of 4,618. As a result of changes to the ward boundaries in Coventry, eight of the new wards are partly in one constituency and partly in another. Our provisional recommendations realigned the constituency boundaries with the new ward boundaries. With minimum change realignment the disparity was reduced to 3,282. We therefore proposed that no further change be made to the three constituencies in Coventry.

42. Our provisional recommendations were:-

	2000 electorate
Coventry North East BC	76,185
Coventry North West BC	73,595
Coventry South BC	<u>72,903</u>
	<u>222,683</u>

Representations

43. We received eight representations, which supported all or part of our proposals. We were not required to hold an inquiry and we therefore confirmed our provisional recommendations as our final recommendations.

Recommendation

44. We recommend the adoption of the following constituencies containing the wards as listed in Appendix C:-

	2000 electorate
Coventry North East BC	76,185
Coventry North West BC	73,595
Coventry South BC	<u>72,903</u>
	<u>222,683</u>

Provisional Recommendations

The Boroughs of Dudley and Sandwell and the City of Wolverhampton

45. Dudley had a 2000 parliamentary electorate of 239,467 which gave a theoretical entitlement to 3.42 constituencies. If three constituencies were allocated, the borough average would be 79,822, which is 9,887 above the electoral quota. Sandwell had a 2000 parliamentary electorate of 219,469 which gave a theoretical entitlement to 3.14 constituencies. If three constituencies were allocated, the borough average would be 73,156, which is 3,221 above the electoral quota.

46. To provide for the allocation of twenty-eight constituencies to the West Midlands, we considered retaining the pairing of Dudley and Sandwell. The combined area had an electorate of 458,936 which gave a theoretical entitlement to 6.56 constituencies. An allocation of seven constituencies would result in a borough average of 65,562, which is 4,373 below the electoral quota. Both Dudley and Sandwell currently have three whole constituencies each and part of a fourth, and the electoral disparity between those constituencies was 10,236. With minimum change realignment, the electoral disparity would be reduced to 9,587 and the electorate of each of the seven constituencies would be close to the combined borough average.

47. Wolverhampton had a 2000 parliamentary electorate of 180,995 which gave a theoretical entitlement to 2.59 constituencies. The continued allocation of three constituencies would produce a borough average of 60,332, which is 9,603 below the electoral quota. There was an electoral disparity of 13,152 between the existing three constituencies. Realigning constituency boundaries with the new wards would decrease the disparity to 9,065. However, Wolverhampton has twenty wards with an average electorate of 9,050 and with an allocation of three constituencies, two would have seven wards and a third would necessarily have a low electorate due to it having only six wards. The electorate of Wolverhampton South East BC would be 54,576, which is 15,359 below the electoral quota. It would also be the lowest electorate in England recommended by us and we considered that such a low electorate would not be acceptable in the circumstances of the West Midlands. We considered various options for producing constituencies with better electorates within Wolverhampton. However, with an allocation of three constituencies and twenty wards it was not possible to find a distribution of constituencies that did not contain one with an electorate that was considerably below the electoral quota.

48. We therefore considered that it would be necessary to pair or group Wolverhampton with another borough. Its neighbouring boroughs are Dudley, Sandwell and Walsall. We noted that the combined borough average resulting from the pairing of Wolverhampton with Walsall, whilst retaining six constituencies, would be 61,829. The combined borough average resulting from grouping Wolverhampton with the existing pairing of Dudley and Sandwell, whilst retaining ten constituencies, would be 63,993, which is 5,942 below the electoral quota. We therefore provisionally decided to review Wolverhampton with the existing pairing of Dudley and Sandwell.

49. As a result of changes to the ward boundaries, ten of the new wards in Dudley, ten in Sandwell and six in Wolverhampton are partly in one constituency and partly in another. Our provisional recommendations realigned the constituency boundaries with the new ward boundaries.

50. We proposed that the Dudley Borough ward of Coseley East should be transferred from Dudley North BC to Wolverhampton South East BC. This would increase the electorate of Wolverhampton South East BC from 54,576 to 64,015, which is 5,920 below the electoral quota, and reduce the disparity between the existing three constituencies in Wolverhampton from 13,152 to 1,237. The electorate of Dudley North BC would be reduced from 70,431 to 60,992 and the electoral disparity within Dudley and Sandwell would be reduced from 10,236 to 8,106. The disparity of 16,227 between the ten existing constituencies in the three boroughs would be reduced to 8,106.

51. Our provisional recommendations were:-

	2000 electorate
Dudley North BC	60,992
Dudley South BC	60,844
Halesowen and Rowley Regis BC	66,579
Stourbridge BC	68,950
Warley BC	64,695
West Bromwich East BC	64,538
West Bromwich West BC	62,899
Wolverhampton North East BC	62,778
Wolverhampton South East BC	64,015
Wolverhampton South West BC	<hr/> 63,641 <hr/>
	639,931

Representations

52. We received forty-three representations, including seven counter-proposals. We noted that three of the counter-proposals included the Borough of Walsall, for which we had already announced our final recommendations. Eight representations supported all or part of our proposals, six supported part of our proposals whilst objecting to other parts and twenty-nine objected to all or part of our proposals. The objections included a petition containing 527 signatures and six proforma letters. There were four main issues to consider:-

- a) the first counter-proposal, suggested that the only changes should be those required to realign constituency boundaries with the new ward boundaries. It therefore proposed that no Dudley Borough ward should be included in a Wolverhampton constituency;
- b) the second counter-proposal, supported by a number of other objectors, recognised the low electorate in Wolverhampton South East BC and proposed the transfer of the Dudley Borough ward of Sedgley from Dudley North BC to Wolverhampton South East BC, instead of the Coseley East ward;
- c) the third counter-proposal, suggested a return to the former Dudley East BC and Dudley West BC instead of the current Dudley North BC and Dudley South BC; and

- d) a fourth suggestion proposed that the Dudley Borough ward of Quarry Bank and Dudley Wood should be included in Stourbridge BC rather than in Dudley South BC.

Local Inquiry and Assistant Commissioner's Report

53. We were required to hold an inquiry. Following the announcement of the inquiry, a further 143 representations were received. Of these, three objected to all or part of our proposals, and 132 objected to any proposal to transfer the Dudley Borough ward of Sedgley from Dudley North BC to Wolverhampton South East BC. The main issues raised at the inquiry were the counter-proposals and other local issues.

The first counter-proposal

54. The Assistant Commissioner reported that the first counter-proposal, which objected to the transfer of the Coseley East ward to Wolverhampton South East BC, was widely supported. It was submitted that the only changes that should be made were those required to realign constituency boundaries with the new ward boundaries and that no Dudley Borough ward should be included in a Wolverhampton constituency. The proposer described the problems and inconveniences that arose when a ward was transferred to a constituency in a different borough and also the many historical, community and economic ties between the Coseley East ward and Dudley which would be broken by transferring the ward.

55. The Assistant Commissioner accepted that inconveniences would be caused and that local ties would be broken by transferring the Coseley East ward. However, he rejected the counter-proposal and confirmed our recommendation that a Dudley Borough ward should be added to Wolverhampton South East BC in order to create a constituency with an electorate closer to the electoral quota.

The second counter-proposal

56. The Assistant Commissioner reported that this counter-proposal conceded that the electorate of Wolverhampton South East BC was too low and the proposer reluctantly accepted that a ward from a neighbouring borough had to be added to it. It was counter-proposed that the Dudley Borough ward of Sedgley, rather than the Coseley East ward, should be transferred, as Sedgley was a discrete entity with well-defined boundaries and limited ties with adjacent Dudley areas and wards. It could therefore be detached from Dudley North BC and transferred to Wolverhampton South East BC with less disturbance to local connections and with less inconvenience than would occur with the transfer of Coseley East.

57. The Assistant Commissioner noted that there was some support for this counter-proposal, but he reported that there was voluminous and, in his view, some misguided opposition to it. Others supported our recommended transfer of the Coseley East ward and argued that there was a long common border and continuous residential development between it and the City of Wolverhampton wards of Spring Vale and Bilston East. It was also claimed that there were strong local ties between Coseley and Bilston and far fewer ties between Sedgley and Wolverhampton, which were separated mainly by open land. There were also local ties between the Sedgley and Gornal wards within Dudley North BC.

58. The Assistant Commissioner considered that the case for transferring the Sedgley ward had some attraction. However, it gave insufficient weight to two matters which had been established by the evidence. First, the Sedgley ward did have significant and long established ties with the Gornal ward, which would be broken if it were transferred. Secondly, the ward had no significant links with the adjacent wards of Blakenhall and Spring Vale in Wolverhampton South East BC, and it was naturally isolated from Wolverhampton. He considered that the Coseley East ward had greater links with Wolverhampton South East BC than did the Sedgley ward and was a better fit within that constituency. He concluded that we had made the correct selection of ward.

The third counter-proposal

59. A third counter-proposal, which was confined to the configuration of constituencies in Dudley Borough, restored the arrangement of the two Dudley constituencies that was in place before 1997. This amounted to an east/west divide instead of the present north/south divide. The Assistant Commissioner reported that the counter-proposal was pursued with little enthusiasm at the inquiry. He heard arguments that an east/west divide was more convenient and appropriate, but he concluded that the north/south divide had not proven unsatisfactory nor unpopular, and he rejected the counter-proposal.

The Quarry Bank and Dudley Wood ward

60. The Assistant Commissioner reported that concerns were raised on behalf of residents from the Saltwells Estate and the Dudley Wood area, which are in the Dudley Borough ward of Quarry Bank and Dudley Wood. Under our proposals they would become constituents of Stourbridge BC instead of Dudley South BC. The submission arose from the configuration of the new ward which brought together two areas which had previously been placed in different wards and different constituencies. It was also submitted that the ties of the ward were much greater with Stourbridge BC than with Dudley South BC. He reported that it was recognised that, whatever was decided, it was unlikely to be well received in both areas and he concluded that there was no reason to depart from our provisional recommendations in this respect.

Other counter-proposals

61. We rejected four other counter-proposals, which had not been considered in detail but had been rejected by the Assistant Commissioner because they either allocated ten constituencies, and not nine, to the combined area or they combined Wolverhampton with Walsall, for which we had already announced our final recommendations.

Counter-proposal for Wolverhampton

62. The Assistant Commissioner reported that it was counter-proposed for the first time at the inquiry that there should be two constituencies of ten wards for Wolverhampton, instead of three. He rejected this suggestion because, with a 2000 electorate of 181,000, it would produce two constituencies each with around 90,000 electors and it would, therefore, involve a major transgression of Rule 5.

The name of Wolverhampton South East BC

63. The Assistant Commissioner suggested that we should consider changing the name of Wolverhampton South East BC to Bilston and Coseley East BC. At least three of the wards were within an area locally known as Bilston and in times past there was a Bilston and Coseley constituency. However, he pointed out that this alternative name had not been proposed by any person making representations or attending the inquiry and had not been discussed at the inquiry.

Recommendation

64. After considering the Assistant Commissioner's report, the transcript of the inquiry and the written representations, we decided to accept his recommendation to confirm our provisional recommendations. However, we decided to reject his suggestion that the name of Wolverhampton South East BC should be changed to Bilston and Coseley East BC. We noted that there had been no objection to the existing name, which had been retained in the provisional recommendations, nor had the suggested name been proposed by any person making representations to us either before or during the inquiry. We therefore recommend the adoption of the following constituencies containing the wards as listed in Appendix C:-

	2000 electorate
Dudley North BC	60,992
Dudley South BC	60,844
Halesowen and Rowley Regis BC	66,579
Stourbridge BC	68,950
Warley BC	64,695
West Bromwich East BC	64,538
West Bromwich West BC	62,899
Wolverhampton North East BC	62,778
Wolverhampton South East BC	64,015
Wolverhampton South West BC	<u>63,641</u>
	<u><u>639,931</u></u>

Provisional Recommendations

The Borough of Solihull

65. Solihull had a 2000 parliamentary electorate of 154,702 which gave a theoretical entitlement to 2.21 constituencies. The continued allocation of two constituencies would result in a borough average of 77,351, which is 7,416 above the electoral quota. We provisionally decided that Solihull should continue to be reviewed separately and that it should retain its current allocation of two constituencies.

66. The two existing constituencies in Solihull had electorates of 75,961 in Meriden CC and 78,741 in Solihull BC, a disparity of only 2,780. As a result of changes to the ward boundaries in Solihull, four of the new wards are partly in one constituency and partly in another. Our provisional recommendations realigned the constituency boundaries with the new ward boundaries. With minimum change realignment, the disparity would have increased from 2,780 to 13,144. We therefore proposed that the divided ward of Blythe

should be located in Meriden CC rather than in Solihull BC. The disparity would then be reduced to 2,726.

67. Our provisional recommendations were:-

	2000 electorate
Meriden CC	78,714
Solihull BC	<u>75,988</u>
	<u><u>154,702</u></u>

Representations

68. We received eight representations, all of which supported all or part of our proposals. We were not required to hold an inquiry and we, therefore, confirmed our provisional recommendations as our final recommendations.

Recommendation

69. We recommend the adoption of the following constituencies containing the wards as listed in Appendix C:-

	2000 electorate
Meriden CC	78,714
Solihull BC	<u>75,988</u>
	<u><u>154,702</u></u>

Provisional Recommendations

The Borough of Walsall

70. Walsall had a 2000 parliamentary electorate of 189,977 which gave a theoretical entitlement to 2.72 constituencies. The continued allocation of three constituencies would result in a borough average of 63,326, which is 6,609 below the electoral quota.

71. The three existing constituencies in Walsall had electorates ranging from 61,908 in Walsall South BC to 65,880 in Walsall North BC, a disparity of 3,972. As a result of changes to the ward boundaries in Walsall, nine of the new wards are partly in one constituency and partly in another. Our provisional recommendations realigned the constituency boundaries with the new ward boundaries. We noted that with twenty new wards, two constituencies would have seven wards and the third constituency would have six wards. The average ward electorate is 9,499. The constituency with six wards would, therefore, have an electorate that was comparatively low. Nevertheless, after rejecting the option of pairing Walsall with the City of Wolverhampton, we decided that it should be reviewed separately with a continued allocation of three constituencies.

72. We concluded that no further change should be made to the existing three constituencies, even though with minimum change realignment the disparity would be increased from 6,609 to 7,592.

73. Our provisional recommendations were:-

	2000 electorate
Aldridge-Brownhills BC	58,695
Walsall North BC	66,287
Walsall South BC	64,995
	<hr/>
	189,977
	<hr/>

Representations

74. We received seven representations, of which six supported all or part of our proposals. One representation supported part of our proposals whilst submitting a counter-proposal which involved other boroughs. We were not required to hold an inquiry and we therefore confirmed our provisional recommendations as our final recommendations.

Recommendation

75. We recommend the adoption of the following constituencies containing the wards as listed in Appendix C:-

	2000 electorate
Aldridge-Brownhills BC	58,695
Walsall North BC	66,287
Walsall South BC	64,995
	<hr/>
	189,977
	<hr/>

WEST YORKSHIRE

The Number of Electors

1. There are currently twenty-three constituencies in the Metropolitan County of West Yorkshire:-

	2000 electorate
Batley and Spen BC	64,564
Bradford North BC	66,537
Bradford South BC	68,709
Bradford West BC	71,833
Calder Valley CC	75,478
Colne Valley CC	75,016
Dewsbury CC	63,082
Elmet CC	70,663
Halifax BC	70,879
Hemsworth CC	68,128
Huddersfield BC	66,212
Keighley CC	68,652
Leeds Central BC	66,245
Leeds East BC	57,256
Leeds North East BC	64,106
Leeds North West BC	72,861
Leeds West BC	64,538
Morley and Rothwell BC	71,253
Normanton CC	65,667
Pontefract and Castleford CC	63,421
Pudsey BC	71,677
Shipley CC	70,379
Wakefield CC	<u>76,096</u>
	<u>1,573,252</u>

The Number of Constituencies

2. West Yorkshire had a 2000 parliamentary electorate of 1,573,252, which gave a theoretical entitlement to 22.4959 constituencies. With a marginal theoretical entitlement we considered whether provisionally we should recommend retaining the existing allocation of twenty-three constituencies, or whether we should recommend a reduction of one to twenty-two.

3. If twenty-two constituencies were allocated to West Yorkshire, the average electorate would be 71,511 (1,576 above the electoral quota) whereas, if twenty-three constituencies were retained, the average electorate would be 68,402 (1,533 below the electoral quota). Although the twenty-three constituency average electorate would be closer to the electoral quota than the twenty-two constituency average electorate, the difference is only forty-three electors.

4. The reduction from twenty-three to twenty-two constituencies in West Yorkshire could be achieved by the pairing of the Cities of Leeds and Wakefield and the disbanding of the pairing of the Borough of Kirklees and the City of Wakefield. In the Cities of Leeds and Wakefield it would then be arithmetically possible to allocate eleven constituencies, one of which contained wards from both cities. The City of Bradford and the Boroughs of Calderdale and Kirklees would then be reviewed separately. The City of Bradford would retain its allocation of five constituencies, the Borough of Calderdale would retain its allocation of two constituencies and the Borough of Kirklees would be allocated four constituencies.

5. The electorates of the existing twenty-three constituencies in West Yorkshire ranged from 76,096 in Wakefield CC to 57,256 in Leeds East BC, a disparity of 18,840. The overall effect of these proposed changes in West Yorkshire would be to reduce the disparity to 12,666 for the proposed twenty-two constituencies. These changes would also bring constituency electorates within 9,006 of the electoral quota and within 7,430 of the county average.

6. We also considered whether a twenty-two constituency arrangement would be likely to produce better individual constituency electorates than would the retention of the twenty-three constituency option. We concluded there were likely to be significantly better electorates, with smaller disparities, with a twenty-two constituency arrangement, although it would inevitably transfer a large number of electors. We further looked at post enumeration date data to see whether or not this confirmed the proposed reduction to twenty-two constituencies, which it did. We accordingly decided provisionally to allocate twenty-two constituencies to the review area.

Provisional Recommendations

The City of Bradford

7. Bradford currently has five constituencies and a 2000 parliamentary electorate of 346,110, which gave a theoretical entitlement to 4.95 constituencies. Reviewing Bradford separately and allocating five constituencies produced a constituency average of 69,222 in the City, which is only 713 below the electoral quota.

8. We proposed, except in the case of the Little Horton ward which is currently divided between Bradford North BC, Bradford South BC and Bradford West BC, to make the minimum amount of change necessary to realign the constituency boundaries with the boundaries of the new wards. However, if we had merely recommended the minimum amount of change necessary to realign constituency and ward boundaries, the existing 5,296 disparity between constituency electorates would increase to 22,208. We therefore proposed that the whole of the Little Horton ward should be included in Bradford North BC in order to balance the constituency electorates and to produce an acceptable electoral disparity of 3,662 in the City. We also proposed that Bradford North BC should be named Bradford East BC to better reflect the new constituency's geographical location within the city.

9. Our provisional recommendations were:-

	2000 electorate
Bradford East BC	70,863
Bradford South BC	67,201
Bradford West BC	69,967
Keighley CC	68,652
Shipley CC	<u>69,427</u>
	<u><u>346,110</u></u>

Representations

10. Following publication of our provisional recommendations we received nine representations. Of these, one was a specific approval for our proposed Shipley CC and five gave general approval for constituencies in Bradford whilst making comments concerning Kirklees, Leeds and Wakefield. One representation objected to part of our proposals for Bradford whilst approving of other aspects and two objected to our proposals for Bradford. The main issues raised in the objections were:-

- a) a counter-proposal for the composition of Bradford East BC and Bradford South BC which exchanged the wards of Little Horton and Tong; and
- b) the names of Bradford East BC, Bradford South BC, Bradford West BC and Shipley CC.

Local Inquiry and Assistant Commissioner's Report

11. Although we were not statutorily required to hold a local inquiry concerning constituencies in Bradford, we decided to exercise our discretion to hold one. Following the announcement of the inquiry no further representations were received.

12. The Assistant Commissioner reported that the counter-proposal also retained the existing name of Bradford North BC in place of our proposed name of Bradford East BC and this latter aspect of the counter-proposal had some support from others at the inquiry. However, the proposers of the counter-proposal did not attend the inquiry.

13. He rejected the counter-proposal on the basis that the provisional recommendations had support and that no substantial reasons were given to alter the proposed constituency boundaries. He considered that the counter-proposal was unsupported by any clear evidence or reasoning and that the arguments against it were convincing. He therefore recommended the adoption of our provisionally recommended constituency boundaries.

14. He reported that he was also called upon to consider alternative names submitted for Bradford East BC. He rejected a number of alternatives that had been submitted, as he considered they did not have any merit. He noted that none of them were supported by any other person or organisation and considered that the adoption of any one of the names would be confusing. He also rejected the submissions that proposed that the name Bradford North BC should be retained. He considered that, given that he was endorsing the provisionally

recommended constituency boundaries, the counter-proposed name would not be geographically accurate.

15. He recommended that our provisional recommendations for the City of Bradford should be adopted in their entirety.

Recommendation

16. We noted the support for our provisional recommendations, the lack of opposition to them and decided to accept the Assistant Commissioner's recommendations that our provisional recommendations should be adopted. We accordingly recommend the adoption of the following constituencies which contain the wards as listed in Appendix C:-

2000 electorate

Bradford East BC	70,863
Bradford South BC	67,201
Bradford West BC	69,967
Keighley CC	68,652
Shipley CC	69,427
	<hr/>
	346,110
	<hr/>

Provisional Recommendations

The Borough of Calderdale

17. Calderdale currently has two constituencies and a 2000 parliamentary electorate of 146,357, which gave a theoretical entitlement to 2.09 constituencies. Reviewing the borough separately, and allocating two constituencies, produced a borough average of 73,179, which is 3,244 above the electoral quota.

18. We recommended the minimum amount of change necessary to realign the boundary between the two constituencies with the boundaries of the new wards. This reduced the existing disparity from 4,599 to 4,401.

19. Our provisional recommendations were:-

2000 electorate

Calder Valley CC	75,379
Halifax BC	70,978
	<hr/>
	146,357
	<hr/>

Representations

20. Following publication of our provisional recommendations, we received only two representations both of which supported our proposals for constituencies in Calderdale. We did not hold a local inquiry and confirmed our provisional recommendations as our final recommendations.

Recommendation

21. We recommend the adoption of the following constituencies containing the wards as listed in Appendix C:-

	2000 electorate
Calder Valley CC	75,379
Halifax BC	70,978
	<hr/>
	146,357
	<hr/>

Provisional Recommendations

The Borough of Kirklees

22. Kirklees is currently paired with Wakefield. Having decided to pair Leeds and Wakefield, so as to provide for an allocation of twenty-two constituencies to West Yorkshire, we were able to review Kirklees separately.

23. Kirklees had a 2000 parliamentary electorate of 296,959, which gave a theoretical entitlement to 4.25 constituencies. Reviewing the borough separately and allocating four constituencies produced a borough average of 74,240, which is 4,305 above the electoral quota.

24. We proposed, except in the case of the Kirklees Borough wards of Heckmondwike and Kirkburton, to make the minimum amount of change necessary to realign the constituency boundaries with the boundaries of the new wards. The Heckmondwike ward, which is partly in Batley and Spen BC and partly in Dewsbury CC, would be wholly included in Batley and Spen BC. The Kirkburton ward, which is partly in Huddersfield BC and partly in Wakefield CC, would be included in Dewsbury CC. In addition, the Denby Dale ward, which is currently in Wakefield CC, would be transferred to Dewsbury CC in order to balance the constituency electorates. Although the disparity between the four constituencies was high at 12,080, this was largely because the number of wards in the borough (twenty-three) is not exactly divisible by four.

25. Our provisional recommendations were:-

	2000 electorate
Batley and Spen BC	75,443
Colne Valley CC	78,355
Dewsbury CC	76,886
Huddersfield BC	66,275
	<hr/>
	296,959
	<hr/>

The Cities of Leeds and Wakefield

26. The combined area of Leeds and Wakefield had a 2000 parliamentary electorate of 783,826, which gave a theoretical entitlement to 11.21 constituencies. We therefore decided to allocate eleven constituencies to the area. The combined borough average was 71,257, which is only 1,322 above the electoral quota.

27. The Cities of Leeds and Wakefield were paired at the Third General Review when the cross-borough constituency of Normanton CC included the towns of Rothwell and Normanton. We considered that to recreate a similar Normanton constituency would be unnecessarily disruptive and that a cross-borough constituency that included Ardsley, Morley, Outwood and Wrenthorpe provided a better solution. We noted that, whilst the M1 and M62 motorways formed the boundary between Leeds and Wakefield at that point, the lines of communication were such that it was possible to travel from one part of the proposed constituency to the other.

28. In the City of Leeds, we created seven whole constituencies, which largely followed the existing constituency boundaries. We realigned the constituency boundaries with the boundaries of the new wards, but also made further changes. The realignments transferred the minimum number of electors between constituencies, except in respect of the two wards of Cross Gates and Whinmoor, and Middleton Park. The Cross Gates and Whinmoor ward, which is partly in Elmet CC and partly in Leeds East BC, was wholly included in Leeds East BC. The Middleton Park ward, which is partly in Leeds Central BC and partly in Morley and Rothwell BC, was wholly included in Leeds Central BC. The three City of Leeds wards of Ardsley and Robin Hood, Morley North and Morley South were included in the cross-boundary constituency of Morley and Outwood CC, together with the two City of Wakefield wards of Stanley and Outwood East, and Wrenthorpe and Outwood West.

29. The City of Leeds ward of Rothwell was included in a constituency with Elmet instead of in a constituency with Morley. We decided that the location of the Rothwell ward with Elmet and the inclusion of Outwood with Morley required two constituency names to be changed, with Elmet CC and Morley and Rothwell BC, respectively, being replaced by Elmet and Rothwell CC and Morley and Outwood CC.

30. In the City of Wakefield, three whole constituencies were created and our provisional recommendations, in the main, realigned the constituency boundaries with the new wards so as to transfer the minimum number of electors. There were, however, a number of exceptions to this, mainly resulting from the new pairing of Leeds and Wakefield following the disbanding of the pairing of Kirklees and Wakefield. The two City of Wakefield wards of Stanley and Outwood East, and Wrenthorpe and Outwood West, which are currently in Normanton CC, were included in the cross-borough boundary constituency of Morley and Outwood CC. The two City of Wakefield wards of Horbury and South Ossett, and Ossett, which are currently in Normanton CC, were included in the revised Wakefield CC. The City of Wakefield ward of Normanton, which is currently divided between Hemsworth CC, Normanton CC and Pontefract and Castleford CC, was wholly included in Pontefract and Castleford CC in order to balance the constituency electorates. The electoral disparity in the combined area was 12,475.

31. Our provisional recommendations were:-

	2000 electorate
Elmet and Rothwell CC	76,580
Hemsworth CC	71,988
Leeds Central BC	78,941
Leeds East BC	67,571
Leeds North East BC	66,930
Leeds North West BC	66,466
Leeds West BC	67,629
Morley and Outwood CC	69,583
Pontefract and Castleford CC	78,641
Pudsey BC	68,150
Wakefield CC	<u>71,347</u>
	<u>783,826</u>

Representations

The Borough of Kirklees and the Cities of Leeds and Wakefield

32. A total of eighty-eight representations were received. Of these, thirteen supported all or part of our proposals, twelve supported part of our proposals whilst also objecting to other parts and sixty-three objected to all or part of our proposals. The objections included six counter-proposals of which one also submitted a fall-back position and one submitted three fall-back options. In addition, the objections included three petitions containing 2,371 names. The main issues raised in the objections were principally contained in the counter-proposals:-

- a) the first allocated twenty-three constituencies to West Yorkshire with sixteen being allocated to Kirklees, Leeds and Wakefield. It retained the existing pairing of Kirklees and Wakefield and retained a constituency named Normanton. It treated Leeds separately with eight constituencies retained. In addition, it proposed alterations to two of the proposed constituencies in Kirklees. Those who submitted the counter-proposal included a fall-back option if West Yorkshire were to have twenty-two constituencies, with Leeds and Wakefield being paired and Kirklees being treated separately. In this option the Normanton constituency was abolished and the ward of Normanton was placed with Wakefield CC;
- b) the second allocated twenty-two constituencies to West Yorkshire and retained our proposed allocation of constituencies with fifteen being allocated to Kirklees, Leeds and Wakefield. It affected the boundaries of three constituencies in Leeds and the names of two of them;
- c) the third submitted that West Yorkshire should retain twenty-three constituencies, but should twenty-two be allocated, it included three fall-back positions for constituencies in Wakefield. In each of these options three constituencies were formed entirely of Wakefield wards and one constituency contained wards from Leeds and Wakefield;

- d) the fourth allocated twenty-three constituencies to West Yorkshire with sixteen being allocated to Kirklees, Leeds and Wakefield. It retained the existing pairing of Kirklees and Wakefield and the existing allocation of eight constituencies for Leeds. The City of Wakefield ward of Normanton was included in Hemsworth CC and the town of Huddersfield (Borough of Kirklees) was divided into East and West constituencies;
- e) the fifth concerned Kirklees only and allocated the area four constituencies. It created an east/west divide of the northern part of the borough, a Huddersfield constituency including the ward of Lindley but excluding the ward of Dalton, and a Colne Valley constituency comprising over half of the area of the borough; and
- f) the sixth allocated three constituencies in Wakefield and a cross-borough constituency with Wakefield and Kirklees. It created a Pontefract and Castleford constituency identical to that in the first counter-proposal and in one of the three options in the third counter-proposal, and it placed the Normanton ward in a Hemsworth constituency as in the fourth counter-proposal.

Local Inquiry and Assistant Commissioner's Report

33. We were required to hold an inquiry. As some counter-proposals paired Wakefield with Kirklees instead of Leeds, we held one inquiry covering all three areas. Following the announcement of the inquiry a further twenty-nine representations were received. Of these, three approved of all or part of the provisional recommendations, twenty-four objected to various parts, one approved of part whilst objecting to another part and one made other comments. No new issues were contained in these further representations.

34. The main issues before the local inquiry were:-

- a) whether twenty-two or twenty-three constituencies should be allocated to West Yorkshire and therefore whether Kirklees, Leeds and Wakefield should have fifteen or sixteen constituencies;
- b) the counter-proposals; and
- c) the names of some of the constituencies.

35. The Assistant Commissioner reported that the primary issue she was called upon to consider at the inquiry was whether Kirklees, Leeds and Wakefield should retain the current allocation of sixteen constituencies, as had been counter-proposed, or whether the number of constituencies should be reduced to fifteen, as we had provisionally recommended. Her decision would result in her recommending an allocation of either twenty-three or twenty-two constituencies to West Yorkshire.

36. She noted that our provisional recommendation for fifteen constituencies in Kirklees, Leeds and Wakefield would require the abolition of the Normanton constituency, disbanding the existing pairing of Kirklees and Wakefield and the creation of a new pairing of Leeds and Wakefield.

37. She reported that the two substantive arguments made by the supporters of the counter-proposals to retain twenty-three constituencies were numerical (Rule 5) and based on the breaking of local ties and the inconvenience that would be caused (Rule 7) by reducing the number of constituencies.

38. She noted that there had been a decrease in the theoretical entitlement to constituencies in West Yorkshire from 22.75 in 1991 to 22.4959 in 2000 and that by 2005 it had fallen further to 21.83. Whilst she considered that the 2000 figure was the most important, she did accept that the policy of having regard to post enumeration date data, as a factor to be taken into account when reaching a view about the pattern of constituencies to be recommended in any particular area, was perfectly valid. She therefore considered the overall trend of electoral decline to be a material consideration that we were entitled to take into account in West Yorkshire and was one that was supportive of an allocation of twenty-two constituencies.

39. She reported that the main thrust of the numerical arguments put to her at the inquiry was that the harmonic mean should override the use of the arithmetic mean and that we were therefore obliged to retain the allocation of twenty-three constituencies in West Yorkshire. It was also submitted that, where the theoretical entitlement was marginal, harm should not be caused to local communities. In this respect, she had been referred to the statement that the Home Secretary had made in the House of Commons in 1958 that there should be a presumption against making changes unless there was a very strong case for them.

40. She noted that, if twenty-three constituencies were to be retained, the average constituency electorate in the county would be 68,402, which is 1,533 below the electoral quota of 69,935. If twenty-two constituencies were to be allocated the average electorate would be 71,511 which is 1,576 above the electoral quota. She did not consider the difference of forty-three between the two figures to be of any real significance. She reported that the electorate of the Normanton constituency in the first twenty-three constituency counter-proposal would be 58,959 which, at 10,976 below the electoral quota, would make it one of the smallest constituencies in the country. However, in our provisional recommendations, the Pontefract and Castleford constituency had an electorate of 78,641, which would be 8,706 above the electoral quota, which would make it one of the largest in the country.

41. She also noted that our provisional recommendations for constituencies wholly or partly in Wakefield produced an electoral disparity of 9,058, compared to a disparity of 13,029 for this area in the third counter-proposal. The maximum deviation from the electoral quota in the provisional recommendations for Wakefield was 8,706 compared to 10,976 in the first counter-proposal and the maximum deviation from the twenty-two constituency county average (71,511) for Wakefield in the provisional recommendations was 7,130 compared to 9,443 for the twenty-three constituency county average (68,402) in the first and third counter-proposals.

42. She reported that she had found the numerical arguments made against the provisional recommendations to be unconvincing and that she did not accept them as the basis for retaining twenty-three constituencies in West Yorkshire.

43. She considered that Rule 7 required us to take account of the inconveniences caused by changes to constituency boundaries and the local ties that would be broken by such alterations. She reported that the strength of the community objections to the provisional

recommendations had been brought home strongly to her at the inquiry and she was impressed by the cogency of the submissions that were made.

44. She noted that sixty-seven wards in West Yorkshire were divided between constituencies (forty-four in Kirklees, Leeds and Wakefield) and, at the very least, there would need to be many changes to constituency boundaries to realign them with the new ward boundaries. Whether twenty-two or twenty-three constituencies were allocated, local ties would inevitably be broken and inconveniences caused just by the realignment of constituency and ward boundaries. However, she reported that the provisional recommendations would involve the movement of many more electors than those moved by the first counter-proposal.

45. She heard a large amount of evidence that the provisional recommendations to abolish the Normanton constituency and to pair Wakefield with Leeds instead of with Kirklees would cause great inconveniences and break strong local ties, particularly in Normanton. The abolition of the Normanton constituency would mark the demise of a historic constituency where the town, which had its own mayor, town council and numerous community groups, had been the centre of a parliamentary constituency since 1885. She also heard evidence that Normanton had ties with Altofts, Wakefield, Stanley, Outwood, Wrenthorpe, Ossett and Horbury which would be broken by the provisional recommendations. However, she considered that these towns and villages could be considered as a collection of towns each with an independent spirit and its own centre.

46. She heard other evidence at the inquiry about the lack of ties between Normanton and Pontefract, and Castleford. It was suggested that the inclusion of Normanton in the Pontefract and Castleford constituency had a very weak basis in terms of social, commercial, cultural and transport links and affinities. She also heard evidence of a lack of ties between Wakefield and Leeds. However, she noted that, although the M1 motorway is an obvious boundary between Leeds and Wakefield, there were two major roads linking the two cities and good bus services and transportation links between them.

47. She reported that the strong ties that existed between Normanton and Altofts would be broken by the twenty-three constituency counter-proposal but that, since these ties "have already been broken" by the existing constituency boundary, she could not have regard to them. However, she did consider that she should have regard to the breaking of local ties that would be caused by the provisional recommendations that would separate Wrenthorpe from Normanton and to the inconveniences attendant on alterations of the constituencies, in particular arising from the situation concerning Pinderfields Hospital which served the Normanton area. At the local inquiry she had heard, and had accepted, much undisputed evidence that the hospital would be included in a Leeds based constituency (Morley and Outwood CC) under the provisional recommendations.

48. She concluded that, due to the inconveniences that would be caused by the provisional recommendations and the scale of the local ties that the proposals would break, the balance of advantage came down in favour of the first counter-proposal. She also considered that, as the stronger arguments about the abolition of the Normanton constituency were based on post enumeration date data, it would be premature to abolish the constituency now in view of the additional number of electors that would be affected by the provisional recommendations.

49. She recommended that twenty-three constituencies should be retained in West Yorkshire. However, she recognised that it was a finely balanced decision, that the very low Normanton constituency electorate and the high electoral disparity within the county were, in the long term, untenable and that this matter should be looked at again at the next general review.

50. As she had recommended that twenty-three constituencies should be retained she rejected the fall-back position for twenty-two constituencies in the first counter-proposal. She also reported that if a twenty-two constituency scheme were to be pursued she saw “no merit in perpetuating an unsatisfactory situation of separation of Altofts and Normanton”.

51. The first counter-proposal (for twenty-three constituencies) was based on the existing constituency boundaries, realigned to take account of the new ward boundaries, with one exception. The counter-proposal placed the whole of the divided Kirklees Borough ward of Lindley in Huddersfield BC instead of in Colne Valley CC where the majority of the electors were already situated. She concluded that there was no convincing evidence that the Lindley ward should be included in the same constituency as the town of Huddersfield, because Lindley functioned as a largely separate township and the minimum change realignment of the constituency boundary with the ward boundary, as we had proposed, was the better course to follow. However, she agreed that the inclusion of the divided Kirklees Borough ward of Heckmondwike in the Dewsbury constituency, as in the first counter-proposal, was better than its inclusion in the Batley and Spen constituency, as proposed by us, because the majority of the electorate were already in the Dewsbury constituency.

52. She noted that the second counter-proposal supported our provisional recommendations for the allocation of twenty-two constituencies to West Yorkshire, but moved the three City of Leeds wards of Burmantofts and Richmond Hill, Rothwell and Temple Newsam between the three constituencies of Elmet and Rothwell, Leeds Central and Leeds East.

53. She considered that, whilst the second counter-proposal would produce a slightly smaller electoral disparity than our proposals (12,366 rather than 12,666), the ward of Burmantofts and Richmond Hill was clearly linked to the Leeds Central constituency. She did not consider that there was a lack of affinity between the Rothwell ward and Elmet, as had been claimed, and she considered that the Temple Newsam ward had more in common with Leeds East than with Elmet. She accordingly rejected this counter-proposal.

54. She reported that the three fall-back options in the third counter-proposal would result in Leeds and Wakefield being paired and that all three counter-proposals would result in the allocation of three whole constituencies within Wakefield and part of a fourth. This would be located in a cross-borough boundary constituency that contained wards from Leeds. She rejected all three of these options.

55. She reported that she had considered and rejected all the options contained in the various other counter-proposals as they had significant disadvantages and provided no particular advantages.

56. She recommended that the names proposed by us should be adopted where possible but that two new names, as in the first counter-proposal, should be adopted where the constituencies she recommended differed significantly from ours. These were Garforth and Rothwell CC and Morley and Leeds South BC. She also reported that if we did not accept her recommendations, but decided that twenty-two constituencies should be allocated, she would recommend that Pontefract and Castleford CC should be re-named Normanton, Pontefract and Castleford CC.

Revised Recommendations

57. We noted that, whilst the case for the allocation of twenty-three constituencies, based on rounding up at the harmonic mean, had been well argued at the local inquiry, the theoretical entitlement (22.4959) was below the arithmetic mean. We considered that this suggested that an allocation of twenty-two constituencies was appropriate, particularly in view of the continued decline in West Yorkshire's electorate since the enumeration date. Our policy during this general review had been not to round up the allocation of constituencies from below the arithmetic mean, as it would be desirable to limit the increase in the number of constituencies in accordance with Rule 1. However, we would have been prepared to do so where it would bring about a significant improvement in the closeness of constituency electorates to the electoral quota or to one another. This was clearly not the case in West Yorkshire as was demonstrated by the electorates that would result from the twenty-three constituency counter-proposal.

58. We noted that the Assistant Commissioner had also reported that there was a difference of just forty-three electors between the deviations from the electoral quota of the average constituency electorate resulting from the allocation of twenty-two constituencies and the average constituency electorate resulting from the allocation of twenty-three constituencies. She had noted that our provisional recommendations would produce an electoral disparity of 12,666 between the constituencies with the highest and lowest electorates in West Yorkshire, whilst her recommendations based on the first counter-proposal would produce an electoral disparity of 19,396. In this respect, we noted that the existing constituencies had an electoral disparity of 18,840. Her recommendations would also produce a Normanton constituency with an electorate of 58,959, which would be 10,976 below the electoral quota. We did not consider that such a high disparity was appropriate in the circumstances that applied to West Yorkshire and that steps should be taken to reduce it. We also noted that it was possible to avoid a constituency with such a low electorate if twenty-two constituencies were allocated. We noted that our provisional recommendations contained a Leeds Central constituency with an electorate of 78,941 but considered that it was acceptable as it was in an area with a declining electorate.

59. We noted that, during this review, it had often been necessary for us to pair boroughs to avoid excessive disparities between the electorates of neighbouring constituencies and to create constituencies with electorates closer to the electoral quota. In West Yorkshire, we had proposed that Leeds and Wakefield should be paired for that purpose and by doing so we had achieved a significant reduction in the electoral disparity. However, by maintaining the pairing of Kirklees and Wakefield the Assistant Commissioner's recommendations, which included the effects of the necessary realignment of constituency boundaries with the new ward boundaries, resulted in an increase rather than any reduction in the disparity.

60. We also recalled that in our information booklet “The Review of Parliamentary Constituencies in England” we had said that where it was necessary to do so in order to give effect to Rule 1, it would be proper in the exercise of the discretion given in Rules 5, 6 and 7 to seek to limit the scope of any further increase in the number of constituencies. We considered that the Assistant Commissioner had not given due weight to the requirements of Rule 1 in her report.

61. We also considered whether the very high electoral disparity across West Yorkshire and the very low electorate of the Normanton constituency recommended by the Assistant Commissioner, which were contrary to Rule 5 could, nevertheless, be accepted by applying the discretion in Rule 6 or Rule 7 to depart from Rule 5.

62. We noted that the Assistant Commissioner had reported that she took the view that the breaking of local ties caused by the provisional recommendations were such that Rule 7 considerations should outweigh those of Rule 5. We noted principally that she said her decision had been finely balanced, that it was untenable in the long term, and was based on the Rule 7 considerations of the scale of the breaking of the local ties and the inconveniences attendant on the proposed alterations. We also noted there may have been some misunderstanding during the inquiry about the scale of the inconveniences and the precise location of a hospital which created local ties.

63. We do not lightly reject the conclusions of an Assistant Commissioner who has had the advantage of hearing all the evidence, but in this instance we concluded that her finely balanced decision and her recommendations could not be supported in light of the Rules.

64. Accordingly, we decided to reject the Assistant Commissioner’s recommendation that West Yorkshire should retain twenty-three constituencies and confirm the allocation of twenty-two constituencies to the county. We noted the wide support, which the Assistant Commissioner described as significant, given to our proposal to allocate twenty-two constituencies and considered that the provisional recommendations better met the requirements of the Rules, particularly the interplay between Rules 1, 5 and 7, than the recommendations from the Assistant Commissioner.

65. In confirming the allocation of twenty-two constituencies to West Yorkshire, and the creation of a constituency that crosses the boundary between Leeds and Wakefield, we noted that the three fall-back options in the third counter-proposal each contained a cross-borough boundary constituency with parts of Leeds and Wakefield. We also noted that two of these options had proposed that the Wakefield City wards of Stanley and Outwood East, and Wrenthorpe and Outwood West should be included in the cross-borough boundary constituency. These are the same two wards that we proposed should be included in a cross-borough boundary constituency. The fall-back position in the first counter-proposal for twenty-two constituencies had also included the same two wards in the same cross-borough boundary constituency that we had provisionally recommended.

66. We also considered the second counter-proposal that would move the three City of Leeds wards of Burmantofts and Richmond Hill, Rothwell and Temple Newsam between the three constituencies of Elmet and Rothwell CC, Leeds Central BC and Leeds East BC. Having considered all the evidence, we decided to reject the counter-proposal for the same reasons given by the Assistant Commissioner in her report where she also rejected the counter-proposal.

67. We also considered the fall-back position in the first counter-proposal which would allocate twenty-two constituencies. We noted that the counter-proposal would create a Wakefield CC with a very high electorate of 82,458 and that the electoral disparity in the county would be 17,496. We decided that the counter-proposal should be rejected, as recommended by the Assistant Commissioner. We also considered all the other counter-proposals that had been submitted to the inquiry. We considered that our own recommendations provided a better solution for the county and decided that the counter-proposals should be rejected, again as the Assistant Commissioner had recommended.

68. Having decided upon the number of constituencies that should be allocated, and having rejected the counter-proposals considered at the inquiry, we decided to adopt our provisional recommendations. However, we considered that one change should be made. We noted that the Assistant Commissioner had recommended that, if we decided not to retain an allocation of twenty-three constituencies, she would recommend that the name of the provisionally recommended Pontefract and Castleford CC should be changed to include reference to Normanton, because that name had been a constituency name for many years.

69. We agreed with the Assistant Commissioner that some reference to Normanton should be retained but considered that the name Normanton, Pontefract and Castleford CC would be unnecessarily long. We therefore decided that the constituency should be called Normanton and Pontefract CC, as both names have been constituency names since the nineteenth century. We also considered that the name would adequately describe the extent of the constituency as the two towns are at opposite ends of it.

70. We accordingly published the following revised recommendations:-

	2000 electorate
Batley and Spen BC	75,443
Colne Valley CC	78,355
Dewsbury CC	76,886
Elmet and Rothwell CC	76,580
Hemsworth CC	71,988
Huddersfield BC	66,275
Leeds Central BC	78,941
Leeds East BC	67,571
Leeds North East BC	66,930
Leeds North West BC	66,466
Leeds West BC	67,629
Morley and Outwood CC	69,583
Normanton and Pontefract CC	78,641
Pudsey BC	68,150
Wakefield CC	<u>71,347</u>
	<u>1,080,785</u>

Further Representations

71. Following publication of our revised recommendations we received 312 representations including seven petitions containing 5,423 names, and ten sets of proformas containing in excess of 674 names (some of the forms contained more than one name).

Seventeen representations approved of all or part of our proposals and one approved of part while objecting to another part. The remaining representations, including all the petitions and proformas, objected to various parts of our proposals.

72. The majority of the objections received related to the number and composition of the constituencies allocated to Kirklees, Leeds and Wakefield. These consisted of 159 letters, 151 proformas, and petitions containing 3,352 names. The main issues raised in these representations were:-

- a) the abolition of the existing Normanton CC and the reduction of one constituency in the Kirklees, Leeds and Wakefield area (and, therefore, in West Yorkshire as a whole);
- b) the electoral size of the proposed constituency containing the towns of Normanton, Pontefract and Castleford;
- c) the creation of a constituency which included wards from the City of Leeds with wards from the City of Wakefield; and
- d) the claimed reduction in the representation in Parliament for the City of Wakefield.

The Kirklees Borough wards of Denby Dale and Kirkburton

73. Fifty objections were received about our proposal that the Denby Dale and Kirkburton wards should be included in Dewsbury CC. The objectors considered that:-

- a) the two wards had little in common with Dewsbury;
- b) transport links between the wards and Dewsbury were poor;
- c) the local ties of the two wards were with Huddersfield or Wakefield; and
- d) the two wards had been repeatedly transferred between constituencies at general reviews and so did not wish to be moved again.

74. Two representations were also received objecting to the town of Heckmondwike being located in a different constituency to Dewsbury.

The name of Normanton and Pontefract CC

75. Sixty-seven letters, 523 proformas, and petitions containing 2,071 names objected to the name of Normanton and Pontefract CC not containing any reference to the town of Castleford. The objectors considered that:-

- a) the name Castleford had been removed without public consultation;
- b) the inclusion of Castleford would not make the name too long;

- c) Castleford had a significant history and should be included in the constituency name;
- d) Castleford would lose its identity if it was not included in the constituency name; and
- e) Castleford is the largest town and commercial centre in our proposed constituency and second only to Wakefield in size within the district.

76. Various alternatives were submitted for the constituency name all of which included the names of the three towns in different orders.

77. We gave very careful consideration to all the representations received. We also referred back to the Assistant Commissioner's report, the transcript of the local inquiry, and all the evidence submitted to the inquiry. We decided that:-

- a) the number of constituencies allocated to Kirklees, Leeds and Wakefield should be fifteen. When taken with our decisions in respect of Bradford and Calderdale, this resulted in an overall allocation of twenty-two constituencies to West Yorkshire instead of twenty-three;
- b) the existing Normanton constituency should be abolished and the composition of the constituencies should be as previously recommended; and
- c) the name of Normanton and Pontefract CC should be modified to Normanton, Pontefract and Castleford CC.

The number and composition of the constituencies allocated to Kirklees, Leeds and Wakefield (and to West Yorkshire)

78. Our initial decision about the allocation of constituencies was based on the 2000 electorates. At that time, we noted that the theoretical entitlement for the county was 22.4920 and that this entitlement had declined since the previous general review in 1991 when it was 22.75. Following corrections to the total electorate for England and to the electoral quota, the theoretical entitlement in West Yorkshire increased very slightly to 22.4959. We noted that in 2006 the entitlement had reduced to 21.88 constituencies.

79. In some representations, it was claimed that we had predetermined the number of constituencies that would be allocated to West Yorkshire. We confirm that this was not the case. The Assistant Commissioner confirmed in her report that she had seen nothing in the evidence before her to indicate that we had approached our recommendations with anything other than an open mind and that we had not, as had been alleged, made the recommendations in a predetermined way.

80. In proposing to reduce the number of constituencies, we were aware that our provisional recommendations would break some local ties and cause inconvenience. When we considered the evidence from the local inquiry, this was confirmed. However, we noted that the Assistant Commissioner's recommendations would also break some local ties and cause inconvenience.

81. We noted that, in making her recommendation for the retention of twenty-three constituencies in West Yorkshire, the Assistant Commissioner had considered that, on balance, it would be premature to abolish the constituency (Normanton) in view of the additional numbers of electors that would be transferred under the provisional recommendations and the local ties that would be broken. She concluded that it was a finely balanced decision and it was a matter that should be reviewed at the next periodical review. We agreed that it was a finely balanced decision but considered it was a matter that we should address at this general review. Apart from the two apparent misunderstandings at the inquiry, we did not disagree with her regarding the factual conclusions about local ties. We considered that there was little distance between our position and that of the Assistant Commissioner and that the difference between the respective positions was one of judgement and not fact.

82. We considered that the reduction of one constituency in West Yorkshire, together with the reduction in the number of constituencies elsewhere, would assist us in meeting the requirements of Rule 1 and would help us to limit the increase in the overall number of constituencies throughout England. We also considered that our provisional recommendations better balanced the conflicting requirements of the Rules (1, 5 and 7) and significantly improved the electoral figures when compared both to the existing situation, which we considered could not be left unaltered, and the situation that would arise from the Assistant Commissioner's report, which would worsen the existing situation.

83. We considered that the reduction in the electoral disparity between the constituencies in Kirklees, Leeds and Wakefield, and the reduction in the electoral disparity between the constituency electorates and the electoral quota, as required by Rule 5, as a result of our recommendations was significant. We also considered that, whilst the breaking of some local ties was unfortunate, it was a necessary consequence of achieving the significant improvements to the electoral figures.

84. In taking the decision to reject the Assistant Commissioner's report, we were very aware of the sincere local opinion about the loss of the Normanton constituency and of the local ties that would be broken.

85. We did not accept, as had been claimed by some who made representations, that we had given wholly disproportionate weight to the apparent misunderstandings which found expression in the report by the Assistant Commissioner. We did not base our decision either solely, or principally, on misunderstandings concerning local ties, but considered that it was important that any misunderstandings should be pointed out. Claims were made in other representations that we had ignored the evidence at the inquiry and the Assistant Commissioner's recommendations. We considered all the evidence, including the large amount submitted about local ties, much of which was relevant to the matter in hand and, therefore, rejected that contention.

The Kirklees Borough wards of Denby Dale and Kirkburton

86. Many of the representations made in respect of the Denby Dale and Kirkburton wards submitted that the two wards should remain in the existing cross-borough boundary Wakefield CC. We recalled that, in considering our provisional recommendations, we were aware that the Kirklees Borough wards of Denby Dale and Kirkburton would be transferred to a new constituency again. This would be a consequence of reducing the number of

constituencies in West Yorkshire and by treating the Borough of Kirklees separately and allocating it four whole constituencies.

87. We noted that the two wards have previously been in a Dewsbury constituency and that they would now form over half of the area of the new Dewsbury constituency. We did not consider that the wards would be isolated from the rest of the constituency and we noted that the Dewsbury constituency would consist solely of Kirklees Borough wards. Also, the Assistant Commissioner had reported that she had heard little evidence to suggest that local ties would be broken or inconvenience caused by our proposals for the two wards.

Second local inquiry

88. Some of those making representations requested that a second local inquiry should be held. We considered that the inquiry was particularly thorough and covered all of the issues raised in respect of our provisional recommendations. Having considered all the representations submitted in respect of our revised recommendations we did not consider there were any grounds to justify the conduct of a second inquiry. We remained satisfied that our provisionally recommended constituency boundaries did not need to be modified.

The name of Normanton and Pontefract CC

89. We noted the representations made to us about the name of the proposed constituency. We decided that, whilst a name containing reference to the three towns would be long it would not be longer than some existing constituency names. We decided it would be possible to accommodate the wishes of those who wanted reference to Castleford to be included in the name.

Modified Recommendation

90. We decided to publish a modified recommendation for the name of the constituency to be Normanton, Pontefract and Castleford CC as had been recommended by the Assistant Commissioner. We also announced that we would not consider any further representations made about the number of constituencies to be allocated to West Yorkshire (and to Kirklees, Leeds and Wakefield in particular) and the composition of those constituencies as they were our final recommendations.

Representation on Modified Recommendation

91. Following publication of our modified recommendation we received one representation. This approved of the inclusion of Castleford in the constituency name, but submitted that the name should be Castleford, Normanton and Pontefract CC to reflect the size and alphabetical order of the three towns. We had considered various options for the name of the constituency before publishing our modified recommendation including this alternative.

Recommendation

92. We were satisfied that our modified recommendation did not need to be modified further. We therefore recommend the adoption of the following constituencies for the Borough of Kirklees and the Cities of Leeds and Wakefield containing the wards as listed in Appendix C:-

	2000 electorate
Batley and Spen BC	75,443
Colne Valley CC	78,355
Dewsbury CC	76,886
Elmet and Rothwell CC	76,580
Hemsworth CC	71,988
Huddersfield BC	66,275
Leeds Central BC	78,941
Leeds East BC	67,571
Leeds North East BC	66,930
Leeds North West BC	66,466
Leeds West BC	67,629
Morley and Outwood CC	69,583
Normanton, Pontefract and Castleford CC	78,641
Pudsey BC	68,150
Wakefield CC	<u>71,347</u>
	<u>1,080,785</u>

CHAPTER FIVE – THE NON-METROPOLITAN COUNTIES

PART ONE – GENERAL CONSIDERATIONS

Introduction

5.1 We initially considered the seventy-five non-metropolitan counties (the thirty-five “shire” counties and the forty new unitary authority counties) as separate entities, as required by Rule 4. We calculated both the theoretical entitlement to constituencies and the average electorate for each constituency in each of the seventy-five counties. The results are shown in Table 1 below.

Table 1 – individual county electorates, theoretical entitlements, county averages, and deviations from the electoral quota (69,935)

County	2000 Electorate	Theoretical Entitlement		County Average	Deviation between County Average and Electoral Quota
		Exact	Rounded		
Bath and North East Somerset	130,990	1.87	2	65,495	- 4,440
Bedfordshire	283,969	4.06	4	70,992	+ 1,057
Berkshire	581,241	8.31	8	72,655	+ 2,720
Blackburn with Darwen	101,866	* 1.46	1 or 2	101,866 or 50,933	+ 31,931 or - 19,002
Blackpool	111,924	1.60	2	55,962	- 13,973
Bournemouth	123,961	1.77	2	61,981	- 7,954
Brighton and Hove	190,924	2.73	3	63,641	- 6,294
Bristol	290,480	4.15	4	72,620	+ 2,685
Buckinghamshire	356,780	5.10	5	71,356	+ 1,421
Cambridgeshire	410,039	5.86	6	68,340	- 1,595
Cheshire	522,119	7.47	7	74,588	+ 4,653
Cornwall and the Isles of Scilly	385,490	5.51	6	64,248	- 5,687
Cumbria	384,332	* 5.4956	5 or 6	76,866 or 64,055	+ 6,931 or - 5,880
Darlington	75,705	1.08	1	75,705	+ 5,770
Derby	171,360	* 2.45	2 or 3	85,680 or 57,120	+ 15,745 or - 12,815
Derbyshire	575,843	8.23	8	71,980	+ 2,045
Devon	544,489	7.79	8	68,061	- 1,874
Dorset	309,634	4.43	4	77,409	+ 7,474
Durham	389,431	5.57	6	64,905	- 5,030
East Riding of Yorkshire	245,575	3.51	4	61,394	- 8,541
East Sussex	377,588	5.40	5	75,518	+ 5,583
Essex	1,005,343	14.38	14	71,810	+ 1,875
Gloucestershire	434,764	6.22	6	72,461	+ 2,526
Halton	92,157	1.32	1	92,157	+ 22,222
Hampshire	945,397	13.52	14	67,528	- 2,407
Hartlepool	68,262	0.98	1	68,262	- 1,673

Herefordshire	133,050	1.90	2	66,525	- 3,410
Hertfordshire	773,593	11.06	11	70,327	+ 392
Isle of Wight	103,480	* 1.48	1 or 2	103,480 or 51,740	+ 33,545 or - 18,195
Kent	997,157	14.26	14	71,226	+ 1,291
Kingston upon Hull	186,083	2.66	3	62,028	- 7,907
Lancashire	870,485	12.45	12	72,540	+ 2,605
Leicester	203,877	2.92	3	67,959	- 1,976
Leicestershire	474,745	6.79	7	67,821	- 2,114
Lincolnshire	492,419	7.04	7	70,346	+ 411
Luton	131,330	1.88	2	65,665	- 4,270
Medway	181,466	2.59	3	60,489	- 9,446
Middlesbrough	104,176	* 1.49	1 or 2	104,176 or 52,088	+ 34,241 or - 17,847
Milton Keynes	150,994	2.16	2	75,497	+ 5,562
Norfolk	617,236	8.83	9	68,582	- 1,353
Northamptonshire	468,632	6.70	7	66,947	- 2,988
North East Lincolnshire	118,504	1.69	2	59,252	- 10,683
North Lincolnshire	117,715	1.68	2	58,858	- 11,077
North Somerset	145,079	2.07	2	72,540	+ 2,605
Northumberland	243,223	* 3.48	3 or 4	81,074 or 60,806	+ 11,139 or - 9,129
North Yorkshire	438,743	6.27	6	73,124	+ 3,189
Nottingham	204,712	2.93	3	68,237	- 1,698
Nottinghamshire	581,211	8.31	8	72,651	+ 2,716
Oxfordshire	452,029	* 6.46	6 or 7	75,338 or 64,576	+ 5,403 or - 5,359
Peterborough	105,582	1.51	2	52,791	- 17,144
Plymouth	184,534	2.64	3	61,511	- 8,424
Poole	108,945	1.56	2	54,473	- 15,462
Portsmouth	142,645	2.04	2	71,323	+ 1,388
Redcar and Cleveland	105,042	1.5020	2	52,521	- 17,414
Rutland	25,415	0.36	1	25,415	- 44,520
Shropshire	221,624	3.17	3	73,875	+ 3,940
Somerset	380,651	5.44	5	76,130	+ 6,195
Southampton	163,481	2.34	2	81,741	+ 11,806
Southend-on-Sea	125,443	1.79	2	62,722	- 7,213
South Gloucestershire	186,555	2.67	3	62,185	- 7,750
Staffordshire	628,564	8.99	9	69,840	- 95
Stockton-on-Tees	136,035	1.95	2	68,018	- 1,917
Stoke-on-Trent	185,219	2.65	3	61,740	- 8,195
Suffolk	508,416	7.27	7	72,631	+ 2,696
Surrey	797,685	11.41	11	72,517	+ 2,582
Swindon	137,900	1.97	2	68,950	- 985
Telford and Wrekin	115,306	1.65	2	57,653	- 12,282
Thurrock	102,643	* 1.47	1 or 2	102,643 or 51,322	+ 32,708 or - 18,613

Torbay	94,447	* 1.35	1 or 2	94,447 or 47,224	+ 24,512 or - 22,711
Warrington	146,982	2.10	2	73,491	+ 3,556
Warwickshire	390,637	5.59	6	65,106	- 4,829
West Sussex	580,263	8.30	8	72,533	+ 2,598
Wiltshire	322,151	4.61	5	64,430	- 5,505
Worcestershire	420,832	6.02	6	70,139	+ 204
York	142,773	2.04	2	71,387	+ 1,452
Total	23,759,372	339.76	339 – 348	-	-

* Indicates a “Walton” theoretical entitlement – see paragraph 3.15 of Chapter 3

5.2 The right hand column of Table 1 above shows that if we had reviewed each county separately, there would have been many instances where the average constituency electorate would have been very distant from the electoral quota. In practice, some actual constituency electorates would have been even further from the electoral quota. Most of these instances occur in the unitary authorities and the others occur where Rule 6 (special geographical considerations) applies. Table 1 also shows that if we had treated each county individually it could have increased the number of constituencies in the non-metropolitan counties from the existing 331 to as many as 348, a potential increase of seventeen constituencies.

Rule 4 – County Boundaries

5.3 We therefore considered using the discretion in Rule 5 to breach Rule 4 by pairing or grouping counties (as we had done in the London boroughs) in order to reduce the large average deviations from the electoral quota and to limit the increase in the number of constituencies. Our final recommendations for the non-metropolitan counties are based on the arrangement shown in Table 2 below. In each case, a unitary authority has either been joined with the “shire” county of which it was previously part or it has been joined (or grouped) with another unitary authority. No “shire” county has been paired with another “shire” county. The reasons why counties were paired are set out in full in Part Two of this Chapter.

Table 2 – the recommended pairings or groupings, county electorates, theoretical entitlements, county averages and deviations from the electoral quota (69,935)

County	2000 Electorate	Theoretical Entitlement		County Average	Deviation between County Average and Electoral Quota
		Exact	Rounded		
Bath and North East Somerset	130,990	1.87	2	65,495	- 4,440
Bedfordshire and Luton	415,299	5.94	6	69,217	- 718
Berkshire	581,241	8.31	8	72,655	+ 2,720
Blackburn with Darwen, Blackpool and Lancashire	1,084,275	15.5040	16	67,767	- 2,168
Bournemouth, Dorset and Poole	542,540	7.76	8	67,818	- 2,117
Brighton and Hove and East Sussex	568,512	8.13	8	71,064	+ 1,129
Bristol	290,480	4.15	4	72,620	+ 2,685
Buckinghamshire	356,780	5.10	5	71,356	+ 1,421

Cambridgeshire and Peterborough	515,621	7.37	7	73,660	+ 3,725
Cheshire and Halton	614,276	8.78	9	68,253	- 1,682
Cornwall and the Isles of Scilly	385,490	5.51	6	64,248	- 5,687
Cumbria	384,332	* 5.4956	~ 6	64,055	- 5,880
Darlington and Durham	465,136	6.65	7	66,448	- 3,487
Derby and Derbyshire	747,203	10.68	11	67,928	- 2,007
Devon, Plymouth and Torbay	823,470	11.77	12	68,623	- 1,312
East Riding of Yorkshire, Kingston upon Hull, North East Lincolnshire and North Lincolnshire	667,877	9.55	10	66,788	- 3,147
Essex, Southend-on-Sea and Thurrock	1,233,429	17.64	18	68,524	- 1,411
Gloucestershire	434,764	6.22	6	72,461	+ 2,526
Hampshire and Southampton	1,108,878	15.86	16	69,305	- 630
Hartlepool	68,262	0.98	1	68,262	- 1,673
Herefordshire	133,050	1.90	2	66,525	- 3,410
Hertfordshire	773,593	11.06	11	70,327	+ 392
Isle of Wight	103,480	* 1.48	~ 1	103,480	+ 33,545
Kent and Medway	1,178,623	16.85	17	69,331	- 604
Leicester	203,877	2.92	3	67,959	- 1,976
Leicestershire and Rutland	500,160	7.15	7	71,451	+ 1,516
Lincolnshire	492,419	7.04	7	70,346	+ 411
Middlesbrough and Redcar and Cleveland	209,218	2.99	3	69,739	- 196
Milton Keynes	150,994	2.16	2	75,497	+ 5,562
Norfolk	617,236	8.83	9	68,582	- 1,353
Northamptonshire	468,632	6.70	7	66,947	- 2,988
North Somerset	145,079	2.07	2	72,540	+ 2,605
Northumberland	243,223	* 3.48	~ 4	60,806	- 9,129
North Yorkshire	438,743	6.27	6	73,124	+ 3,189
Nottingham	204,712	2.93	3	68,237	- 1,698
Nottinghamshire	581,211	8.31	8	72,651	+ 2,716
Oxfordshire	452,029	* 6.46	6	75,338	+ 5,403
Portsmouth	142,645	2.04	2	71,323	+ 1,388
Shropshire and Telford and Wrekin	336,930	4.82	5	67,386	- 2,549
Somerset	380,651	5.44	5	76,130	+ 6,195
South Gloucestershire	186,555	2.67	3	62,185	- 7,750
Staffordshire and Stoke-on-Trent	813,783	11.64	12	67,815	- 2,120
Stockton-on-Tees	136,035	1.95	2	68,018	- 1,917
Suffolk	508,416	7.27	7	72,631	+ 2,696
Surrey	797,685	11.41	11	72,517	+ 2,582
Swindon	137,900	1.97	2	68,950	- 985
Warrington	146,982	2.10	2	73,491	+ 3,556
Warwickshire	390,637	5.59	6	65,106	- 4,829

West Sussex	580,263	8.30	8	72,533	+ 2,598
Wiltshire	322,151	4.61	5	64,430	- 5,505
Worcestershire	420,832	6.02	6	70,139	+ 204
York	142,773	2.04	2	71,387	+ 1,452
Total	23,759,372	# 339.74	342	-	-

Rounding this different arrangement of theoretical entitlements to two decimal places produces a slightly different total than that in Table 1 above, which shows 339.76

* Indicates a “Walton” theoretical entitlement – see paragraph 3.15 of Chapter 3

~ Constituency retained for special geographical considerations under Rule 6

5.4 Apart from the exceptional case of the Isle of Wight where Rule 6 (special geographical considerations) applies, the right hand column of Table 2 above shows that all the average deviations produced by the pairing or grouping of counties are well within 10,000 of the electoral quota. The second highest deviation after the Isle of Wight occurs in Northumberland (9,129) where Rule 6 also applies.

Rule 1 – Number of Constituencies

5.5 Together with our decisions not to allocate an extra constituency in the Isle of Wight and in Oxfordshire, the other effect of pairing or grouping forty of the seventy-five non-metropolitan counties is that the increase in the number of constituencies has been limited to eleven compared to a possible increase of seventeen that could have occurred if each county had been reviewed separately (compare the bottom lines of Tables 1 and 2 above).

5.6 The increase of eleven constituencies in the non-metropolitan counties is offset by a reduction of one constituency in each of the six metropolitan counties and by one constituency in London. The effect of these changes is a net increase of only four constituencies (from 529 to 533) in this review.

Rule 5 – Constituency Electorates

5.7 If our recommendations for the non-metropolitan counties are accepted, the distribution of constituency electorates around the electoral quota will be improved as shown in Table 3 below. In our recommendations, 312 of the 342 constituencies (i.e. 91%) in the non-metropolitan counties have electorates within 10% of the electoral quota compared to 88% in our predecessors’ recommendations. Of the existing constituencies, 79% were within 10% of the 2000 electoral quota.

Table 3 – the effect of our recommendations

Deviation from the EQ	Fourth General Review			Fifth General Review		
	1991 Electorate	Existing Seats	Proposed Seats	2000 Electorate	Existing Seats	Proposed Seats
Over 30%	90,066 or more	6	1	90,916 or more	1	1
20% - 30%	83,138 - 90,065	23	-	83,922 - 90,915	3	-
10% - 20%	76,210 - 83,137	84	20	76,929 - 83,921	51	6
Within 10%	69,282 - 76,209	119	139	69,936 - 76,928	142	151
EQ	69,281			69,935		

Table 3 (continued)

EQ	69,281			69,935		
Within 10%	62,353 - 69,280	54	153	62,942 - 69,934	120	161
10% - 20%	55,425 - 62,352	23	17	55,948 - 62,941	13	23
20% - 30%	48,497 - 55,424	2	1	48,955 - 55,947	1	-
Over 30%	48,496 or less	-	-	48,954 or less	-	-
Total		311	331		331	342

5.8 Excluding the exceptional case of Isle of Wight CC, with a 2000 electorate of 103,480, our recommendations have also narrowed the gap between the constituencies with the highest and lowest electorates in the non-metropolitan counties, as shown in Table 4 below.

Table 4 – electoral disparities between the existing and recommended constituencies with the highest and lowest number of electors (excluding Isle of Wight CC)

	Highest 2000 Electorate		Lowest 2000 Electorate		Disparity
Existing seats	Daventry CC	85,568	Copeland CC	54,071	31,497
Recommended seats	Banbury CC	78,817	Berwick-upon-Tweed CC	57,571	21,246
Improvement		6,751		3,500	

Local Inquiries

5.9 We held local inquiries for all but seven of the seventy-five non-metropolitan counties. The seven where we were not required to hold a local inquiry under the Act, and decided not to use the discretion afforded to us by the legislation to hold one, were Hartlepool, Isle of Wight, North Somerset, Rutland, Shropshire, Swindon, and Telford and Wrekin. In these areas, our provisional recommendations met with general approval.

5.10 In those counties where local inquiries were held, some of the inquiries covered more than one county. Often a unitary authority county and the “shire” county of which it had previously been part were covered at one inquiry, for example, Staffordshire and Stoke-on-Trent. In other areas there were separate inquiries for the unitary authority and the “shire” county, for example, Buckinghamshire and Milton Keynes. A full list of all the local inquiries held during this general review is at Appendix I in Volume 2 of this report.

PART TWO – DESCRIPTION OF THE REVIEWS

5.11 In Part One of this Chapter, we set out our approach to the allocation of constituencies to the non-metropolitan counties. In the pages that follow, we show in detail the progress of the review in each county. In some instances, we have reported on individual counties. In others, we have reported on a pair or groups of counties where we considered them together.

BATH AND NORTH EAST SOMERSET

The Number of Electors

1. There is currently one constituency which is wholly in the unitary authority of the County of Bath and North East Somerset and another, Wansdyke CC, which is mostly within the area of the authority. The electoral figures set out below for Wansdyke CC relate only to those electors who are within the County of Bath and North East Somerset.

	2000 electorate
Bath CC	71,810
Wansdyke CC (part)	<u>59,180</u>
	<u><u>130,990</u></u>

The Number of Constituencies

2. Following the Avon (Structural Change) Order 1995, the County of Bath and North East Somerset became one of four unitary authorities created out of the former County of Avon, which was abolished on 31 March 1996. We provisionally considered reviewing each unitary authority separately. Bath and North East Somerset had a 2000 parliamentary electorate of 130,990 which gave a theoretical entitlement to 1.87 constituencies. With two constituencies, the average electorate in the county would be 65,495, which is 4,440 below the electoral quota. We decided, therefore, to recommend that Bath and North East Somerset should be allocated two constituencies.

Provisional Recommendations

3. As a result of changes to the ward boundaries, one of the new wards in Bath and North East Somerset is partly in one constituency and partly in another. Our provisional recommendations realigned the constituency boundaries with the new ward boundary. We decided to keep change to a minimum. However, in forming our proposals we recognised that making changes only to realign ward and constituency boundaries would have resulted in a high disparity (10,466) between the proposed constituencies. In order to reduce this disparity, we proposed that the Bathavon North ward should be included in our proposed North East Somerset CC. This would produce two constituencies, with distinctive features, with the whole of the urban area of Bath being incorporated into one (Bath BC) and being completely surrounded by the other. The electorates of both constituencies would be within 447 of the county average, and the disparity would be only 894. We also proposed renaming Wansdyke CC as North East Somerset CC because the existing name related to the former District, which had been abolished in 1996. The Bath constituency was designated as a borough constituency (BC), to reflect its more urban nature.

4. Our provisional recommendations were:-

	2000 electorate
Bath BC	65,048
North East Somerset CC	<u>65,942</u>
	<u><u>130,990</u></u>

Representations

5. Following publication of our provisional recommendations, we received forty representations, of which thirty-two expressed support for our proposals. One expressed general support whilst objecting to other parts of our proposals and seven objected to all or parts of our proposals. There was overall support for our proposal that constituencies should remain wholly within the unitary authority boundary, and to our allocation of two constituencies to Bath and North East Somerset.

6. The main issues raised in the objections were contained in two counter-proposals:

- a) the first and principal counter-proposal was that the Bathavon North ward should be included in Bath BC;
- b) the second counter-proposal was that sixteen rural parishes should be included in Bath BC; and
- c) a number of alternative names for the proposed North East Somerset constituency were submitted.

Local Inquiry and Assistant Commissioner's Report

7. We were required to hold an inquiry. Following the announcement of the inquiry, one further representation was received which was in support of our provisional recommendations. The Assistant Commissioner reported that the main issues raised at the inquiry were the same as those listed above.

The Bathavon North ward

8. The Assistant Commissioner reported that it was argued that, whilst the electorate of an enlarged Bath BC, as counter-proposed, would be much higher than the electorate of the new North East Somerset CC, this disparity would reduce over time due to a large number of new homes which were to be built in North East Somerset CC and which would lead to a consequential increase in the electorate of that constituency. He dismissed the argument that this disparity would reduce over time as he concluded it was based on speculative growth, which could not be taken into account. He also reported that the objectors to the provisional recommendations were largely from outside the Bathavon North ward and that most of the residents of the ward who had submitted representations had not objected to the provisional recommendations. He rejected the counter-proposal to include the ward in Bath BC because it would have resulted in North East Somerset CC having an electorate that was too far from the electoral quota and there would be too great a disparity between the electorates of the two constituencies.

The Rural Parishes

9. The Assistant Commissioner reported that the counter-proposal for an extended Bath constituency, which included sixteen rural parishes in Bath BC, would result in wards being divided between constituencies, which would be against our stated policy. He rejected the counter-proposal and reported that it would also have resulted in North East Somerset CC

having an electorate too far below the electoral quota and too great a disparity between the electorates of the two constituencies.

Constituency Names

10. The Assistant Commissioner reported that the name of the proposed North East Somerset CC was not a major issue at the inquiry and that there was considerable support for the proposed name. He therefore recommended no change to the name of the proposed North East Somerset CC.

Recommendation

11. We agreed with the Assistant Commissioner's findings and we accepted his recommendation not to alter the provisionally recommended Bath and North East Somerset constituencies, nor to alter the name of the North East Somerset constituency. We therefore recommend the adoption of the following constituencies containing the wards listed in Appendix C: -

	2000 electorate
Bath BC	65,048
North East Somerset CC	<u>65,942</u>
	<u><u>130,990</u></u>

BEDFORDSHIRE AND LUTON

The Number of Electors

1. There are currently six constituencies in the Counties of Bedfordshire and Luton:-

	2000 electorate
Bedford BC	68,302
Luton North BC	66,546
Luton South BC	69,587
Mid Bedfordshire CC	70,451
North East Bedfordshire CC	69,125
South West Bedfordshire CC	<u>71,288</u>
	<u><u>415,299</u></u>

The Number of Constituencies

2. Following the Bedfordshire (Borough of Luton) (Structural Change) Order 1995, the Borough of Luton ceased to form part of the County of Bedfordshire and became a new unitary authority. The remaining three districts in the county formed the County of Bedfordshire.

3. Bedfordshire had a 2000 parliamentary electorate of 283,969, which gave a theoretical entitlement to 4.06 constituencies. Luton had a 2000 parliamentary electorate of 131,330, which gave a theoretical entitlement to 1.88 constituencies. If Bedfordshire were reviewed separately, it would be allocated four constituencies, producing a county average of 70,992, which is 1,057 above the electoral quota. The county average of the two constituencies allocated to Luton would be 65,665 and 4,270 below the electoral quota. The electorates of the existing constituencies in Bedfordshire and Luton ranged from 71,288 in South West Bedfordshire CC to 66,546 in Luton North BC, a disparity of 4,742.

4. We noted that, whether the two authorities were reviewed separately or together, the overall allocation of constituencies would be six. If treated separately, the South Bedfordshire District ward of Caddington, Hyde and Slip End would have to be transferred from Luton South BC to South West Bedfordshire CC and would have resulted in the electorate of South West Bedfordshire CC increasing to 76,091. This is 6,156 above the electoral quota and, after minor realignment elsewhere, the disparity between this constituency and that of neighbouring Luton South BC would be 11,568. We considered this disparity would be excessive and could not be justified when compared with the existing situation and the option of minimum change realignment.

5. We further noted that, if the two authorities were treated as one review area, minimum change could be considered, whereby constituency boundaries would be realigned only to take account of the divided wards. South West Bedfordshire CC would remain the constituency with the largest electorate at 71,288 and there would be a disparity of only 4,481 with neighbouring Luton North BC. Luton North BC would remain the smallest constituency but with a slightly increased electorate of 66,807. We decided to review Bedfordshire and Luton together.

Provisional Recommendations

6. As a result of changes to the district and borough ward boundaries, six of the new wards in Bedfordshire, and three of the new wards in Luton, are partly in one constituency and partly in another. Our provisional recommendations realigned the constituency boundaries with the new ward boundaries, reduced the disparity slightly, and transferred significantly fewer electors between constituencies than if we had treated Bedfordshire and Luton separately. In every case the constituency boundaries were realigned so that the part of a divided ward with the fewer number of electors would be transferred to the constituency containing the part of the divided ward with the greater number of electors.

7. Our proposals transferred only 3,426 electors between constituencies, and reduced slightly the disparity between constituencies from 4,742 to 4,481.

8. Our provisional recommendations were:-

2000 electorate	
Bedford BC	68,867
Luton North BC	66,807
Luton South BC	69,326
Mid Bedfordshire CC	70,111
North East Bedfordshire CC	68,900
South West Bedfordshire CC	71,288
	<hr/>
	415,299

Representations

9. Following publication of our provisional recommendations, we received ten representations, of which three approved of our proposals and seven objected to all or part of them. The main issues raised in the objections were principally contained in three counter-proposals. There was also significant support for a suggestion that Bedford BC should be renamed Bedford and Kempston BC and there were suggestions that other names should be changed:-

- a) the first counter-proposal was that Luton should be reviewed separately by placing the South Bedfordshire District ward of Caddington, Hyde and Slip End in South West Bedfordshire CC. It was also submitted that if the disparity thus created was considered excessive the South Bedfordshire District ward of Heath and Reach should be placed in Mid Bedfordshire CC to balance electorates;
- b) the second counter-proposal placed the divided Mid Bedfordshire District ward of Langford and Henlow Village in Mid Bedfordshire CC. The counter-proposal increased the disparity from 4,481 to 8,649 and to address this, the South Bedfordshire District ward of Streatley was placed in Luton North BC; and
- c) the third counter-proposal placed the South Bedfordshire District ward of Toddington in South West Bedfordshire CC instead of in Mid Bedfordshire CC.

Local Inquiry and Assistant Commissioner's Report

10. We were required to hold an inquiry. Following the announcement of the inquiry a further twenty-eight representations were received, although none raised new issues. Two further representations were received after the inquiry closed, but these also contained nothing new.

Luton and the Caddington, Hyde and Slip End ward

11. The supporters of this counter-proposal to review Luton separately submitted that in this case Rule 4 should be given preference over Rule 5. However, the Assistant Commissioner considered that the South Bedfordshire District ward of Caddington, Hyde and Slip End had clear and substantial ties with Luton and that the counter-proposal produced an excessive disparity between the electorates of the neighbouring constituencies of Luton South and South West Bedfordshire. For these reasons he found no justification to remove the ward from Luton South BC and considered that we were justified in not following the county boundary. He therefore rejected this aspect of the first counter-proposal. Although this meant the issue of transferring the South Bedfordshire District ward of Heath and Reach in order to balance electorates did not arise, in any event the Assistant Commissioner considered that the transfer of that ward was not warranted. He reported that it had ties with South Bedfordshire, and particularly Leighton Buzzard, rather than with Mid Bedfordshire.

The Langford and Henlow Village ward and the Shillington, Stondon and Henlow Camp ward

12. The second counter-proposal was that the divided Mid Bedfordshire District ward of Langford and Henlow Village should be included in Mid Bedfordshire CC. It was additionally counter-proposed at the inquiry that Henlow Village (situated in the Langford and Henlow Village ward), and Henlow Military Camp (situated in the Mid Bedfordshire District ward of Shillington, Stondon and Henlow Camp) should both be included in either Mid Bedfordshire CC or North East Bedfordshire CC and not in separate constituencies. In support it was submitted that the two areas were a well-knit community, but this assertion was opposed at the inquiry.

13. The Assistant Commissioner found there was no evidence of substance against our proposal to place the Langford and Henlow Village ward in North East Bedfordshire CC. Nor did he find any case for the ward of Langford and Henlow Village and the ward of Shillington, Stondon and Henlow Camp to be located in the same constituency. He rejected this aspect of the second counter-proposal as well as the suggestion at the inquiry for a ward to be divided as a means of reuniting Henlow Village and Henlow Military Camp in the same constituency.

The Streatley ward

14. It was also part of the second counter-proposal that, if the Langford and Henlow Village ward were included in Mid Bedfordshire CC, the South Bedfordshire District ward of Streatley should be transferred from Mid Bedfordshire CC to Luton North BC in order to balance electorates.

15. The Assistant Commissioner reported that, in the light of his findings in respect of the Langford and Henlow Village ward and the Shillington, Standon and Henlow Camp ward, there was no need for the consequential alteration to place the Streatley ward in Luton North BC, which he therefore rejected. There was a further suggestion that the Streatley ward should be divided between Luton North BC and Mid Bedfordshire CC in order that the Bushmead Estate should be included in Luton North BC, which he also rejected.

The Toddington ward

16. The third counter-proposal placed the South Bedfordshire District ward of Toddington in South West Bedfordshire CC, where the majority of the South Bedfordshire District wards were situated, instead of in Mid Bedfordshire CC. It placed the ward in the same constituency as the towns of Dunstable and Leighton Buzzard, with which it was submitted it had close ties.

17. The Assistant Commissioner reported that the counter-proposal found little support. He considered that the disparity in electorates produced by the counter-proposal, and the resultant deviation from the electoral quota, were too great. Nor did he find any material advantage in such a transfer. He accordingly rejected this counter-proposal.

The name of Bedford BC

18. It was submitted that the name of the Bedford constituency should be changed to Bedford and Kempston BC. The Assistant Commissioner reported support for the alternative name which would represent the two main towns of the constituency. He considered that the alternative name was appropriate and fairly described the constituency. He therefore recommended that the name of Bedford BC should be changed to Bedford and Kempston BC to reflect better its composition and local wishes.

The name of Mid Bedfordshire CC

19. There was also a submission that the name of the Mid Bedfordshire constituency should be changed to Ampthill CC in order to differentiate between the district and the constituency, which had different boundaries. The Assistant Commissioner found no evidence that there was any confusion over the existing name or that a change of name was warranted. He accordingly rejected the suggestion.

The name of North East Bedfordshire CC

20. There were also submissions that the name of the North East Bedfordshire constituency should be changed to either North Bedfordshire CC or North and East Bedfordshire CC. The Assistant Commissioner reported that these alternative names had received no popular support and considered that the existing name was appropriate. He accordingly rejected the alternative suggestions.

Recommendation

21. After considering the Assistant Commissioner's report, the transcript of the inquiry and the written representations, we agreed with the Assistant Commissioner's conclusions regarding the boundaries of the provisionally recommended constituencies and the retention of the names

of Mid Bedfordshire CC and North East Bedfordshire CC. However, we rejected the Assistant Commissioner's recommendation to change the name of the Bedford constituency.

22. We had not proposed any change to the name of the constituency at the provisional recommendations stage because only very minor changes were made to it. Our provisional recommendations affected only 635 electors, less than 1% of the existing constituency's electorate. Where a recommended name has been objected to and a suitable alternative commands greater local support, we will usually revise our recommendations in favour of the alternative. However, we considered that a change of name in such circumstances would only be appropriate in the case of new constituencies, or where there are significant changes to constituencies, and not to the names of existing or barely changed constituencies. We also noted that the combined electorate of the three Kempston wards represented only 20% of the constituency's electorate and that, because the three wards are within the Borough of Bedford we considered that it was not confusing for the wards to be in a constituency named Bedford BC. We found no compelling reasons to depart from our stated policy in this instance and so decided to reject the Assistant Commissioner's recommendation to change the name of Bedford BC.

23. We therefore recommend the adoption of the following constituencies containing the wards as listed in Appendix C:-

	2000 electorate
Bedford BC	68,867
Luton North BC	66,807
Luton South BC	69,326
Mid Bedfordshire CC	70,111
North East Bedfordshire CC	68,900
South West Bedfordshire CC	<u>71,288</u>
	<u><u>415,299</u></u>

BERKSHIRE

The Number of Electors

1. There are currently eight constituencies in the County of Berkshire:-

	2000 electorate
Bracknell CC	81,843
Maidenhead CC	68,536
Newbury CC	75,997
Reading East BC	74,056
Reading West CC	70,848
Slough BC	70,072
Windsor CC	71,316
Wokingham CC	<u>68,573</u>
	<u>581,241</u>

The Number of Constituencies

2. Following the Berkshire (Structural Change) Order 1996, the county of Berkshire was abolished and the area divided into six unitary authorities. However, the unitary authorities do not have the legal status of counties and therefore do not fall within the scope of Rule 4.

3. Berkshire had a 2000 parliamentary electorate of 581,241, which gave a theoretical entitlement to 8.31 constituencies. With eight constituencies retained, the average electorate of 72,655 is 2,720 above the electoral quota. For the purpose of allocating constituencies, we considered whether we should treat each of the six authorities separately, or whether we should combine two or more of them. We noted that, if the six authorities were treated separately, a total of ten constituencies would be allocated and that the average electorate of the ten constituencies would be 58,124, which is 11,811 below the electoral quota.

4. We decided, therefore, provisionally to allocate eight constituencies to Berkshire. We noted that this would avoid the need to allocate two additional constituencies, thereby enabling us to have regard to Rule 1. It would also allow us to create constituencies with electorates nearer the electoral quota, thereby enabling us to have regard to Rule 5. It would also allow us to minimise the changes required to the existing constituencies, thereby having regard to Rule 7. The electorates of the eight existing constituencies ranged from 68,536 in Maidenhead CC to 81,843 in Bracknell CC, a disparity of 13,307, which our provisional recommendations reduced to 4,522.

Provisional Recommendations

5. As a result of changes to the district ward boundaries, ten of the new wards in the county are divided between constituencies. Our provisional recommendations realigned the constituency boundaries with the new ward boundaries. In forming our proposals we recognised that a certain degree of change was necessary across several constituencies in order to reduce the existing disparity and the high electorates in Bracknell CC and Newbury CC. However, we decided to keep these changes to a minimum.

6. We proposed that the electorate of Newbury CC should be reduced by including the West Berkshire District ward of Aldermaston and the whole of the divided West Berkshire District ward of Sulhamstead in Wokingham CC. We also proposed that the electorate of Wokingham CC should be increased by including in the constituency the West Berkshire District ward of Theale, with the M4 motorway forming a clear boundary between the two constituencies.

7. We proposed that the whole of the divided Reading Borough wards of Battle and Whitley should be included in Reading West CC. We also proposed that the whole of the divided Wokingham District ward of Loddon should be included in Reading East BC.

8. We proposed that the whole of the divided Bracknell Forest Borough wards of Crown Wood and Harmans Water should be included in Bracknell CC. We also proposed that the two Bracknell Forest Borough wards of Binfield and Warfield and of Warfield Harvest Ride, and the divided Winkfield and Cranbourne ward should be included in Windsor CC. We noted that it was possible that the wards of Binfield and Warfield and Warfield Harvest Ride had close ties with the town of Bracknell, but considered that their transfer was necessary to reduce the very high electorate of Bracknell CC.

9. In order to increase the electorate of Maidenhead CC we proposed that the Windsor and Maidenhead Borough ward of Bray should be transferred from Windsor CC. We also proposed that the whole of the three divided Slough Borough wards of Foxborough, Kedermister and Upton should be included in Slough BC.

10. Our provisional recommendations were:-

	2000 electorate
Bracknell CC	74,307
Maidenhead CC	73,868
Newbury CC	72,805
Reading East BC	72,834
Reading West CC	70,078
Slough BC	73,627
Windsor CC	69,785
Wokingham CC	<u>73,937</u>
	<u>581,241</u>

Representations

11. Following publication of our provisional recommendations, we received 175 representations, of which thirteen expressed support for all or part of our proposals, three expressed support for part of our proposals whilst objecting to other parts and 159 objected to our proposals. It was generally accepted that Berkshire should be reviewed as one area. The objections contained five counter-proposals, one of which had features that were not supported at the inquiry. A number of the objections suggested different names for the proposed Bracknell, Maidenhead, Newbury and Wokingham constituencies.

12. The main issues raised in the objections fell into four principal counter-proposals:-

- a) the first was that the West Berkshire District wards of Aldermaston and Theale should be included in Newbury CC and Reading West CC, respectively; the Bracknell Forest Borough wards of Crown Wood, and Harmans Water should be included in Windsor CC; and the Bracknell Forest Borough wards of Binfield and Warfield, and Warfield Harvest Ride should be included in Bracknell CC;
- b) the second also included the West Berkshire District ward of Theale in Reading West CC. Additionally, the Wokingham District ward of Maiden Erleigh was included in Reading East BC; the Wokingham District wards of Loddon and Wokingham Without were included in Maidenhead CC and Wokingham CC, respectively; the Bracknell Forest Borough ward of Ascot was included in Bracknell CC and the Windsor and Maidenhead Borough ward of Bray was included in Windsor CC;
- c) the third counter-proposal included the West Berkshire District wards of Aldermaston and Basildon in Newbury CC and Reading West CC, respectively; and
- d) the fourth counter-proposal included the Windsor and Maidenhead Borough ward of Bray in Windsor CC; the Bracknell Forest Borough ward of Warfield Harvest Ride in Bracknell CC; and the Wokingham District wards of Winnersh and Finchampstead South in Maidenhead CC and Wokingham CC, respectively. It also suggested an alternative name for Wokingham CC.

Local Inquiry and Assistant Commissioner's Report

13. We were required to hold an inquiry. Following the announcement of the inquiry a further seven representations were received, of which three approved of our provisional recommendations and four objected to them.

Slough BC

14. The Assistant Commissioner reported that there was universal support for our proposals for Slough BC and accordingly endorsed them.

Maidenhead CC

15. He reported that our proposal to include the Windsor and Maidenhead Borough ward of Bray in Maidenhead CC was strongly supported. He considered that the proposals which suggested the inclusion of either of the Wokingham District wards of Loddon or Winnersh in Maidenhead CC, were not ideal. He concluded that the boundary of Maidenhead CC under either proposal would not be improved, nor would the disparity. He also reported that the fourth counter-proposal, as it affected the Winnersh ward, was strenuously opposed. He accepted that the settlements within the Bray ward were closer to, and had more affinities with, the town of Maidenhead than the town of Windsor and accordingly supported our recommendations.

Bracknell CC and Windsor CC

16. The Assistant Commissioner reported that it was generally accepted that the electorate of Bracknell CC had to be reduced. He noted that Windsor CC already contained significant parts of Bracknell Forest Borough and would continue to do so under all the submitted counter-proposals. He considered that any changes to these two constituencies had to be consistent with changes made to constituencies elsewhere in Berkshire. He also noted that the proposed transfer of the Windsor and Maidenhead ward of Bray to Maidenhead CC necessitated some increase to the electorate of Windsor CC, which could only be achieved by adding wards from the existing Bracknell CC.

17. He considered that the first counter-proposal to include the two Bracknell Forest Borough wards of Binfield and Warfield and of Warfield Harvest Ride in Bracknell CC and the two Bracknell Forest Borough wards of Crown Wood and Harmans Water in Windsor CC was not without merit. It produced a lower disparity and maintained the strong ties and links that the wards of Binfield and Warfield, and Warfield Harvest Ride had with the town of Bracknell. Furthermore, fewer electors would be affected, the whole of the Winkfield Parish would remain in Windsor CC and he noted that the wards had always been within a Bracknell constituency. However, he also noted that Binfield Parish contained a substantial settlement which was clearly not part of Bracknell town and which was surrounded by countryside.

18. It was acknowledged that the issues were finely balanced and that it was a question of looking for the “least worst option”. He noted that all interested parties agreed that, ideally, all four wards under discussion should form a part of a Bracknell constituency and that all four wards had closer links to the town of Bracknell than they did with Windsor.

19. He concluded that the wards of Crown Wood and Harmans Water should be included in Bracknell CC and that the new ward boundaries “more closely reflect the limits of the town in reality than does the ancient Bracknell Town/Winkfield parish boundary”. He accordingly rejected this element of the first counter-proposal and endorsed our proposals.

Bracknell CC and Wokingham CC

20. It was counter-proposed that one of the three Wokingham District wards of Finchampstead North, Finchampstead South and Wokingham Without should be included in Wokingham CC. The principal argument advanced was of numerical advantage.

21. He reported that this element of the counter-proposals was strongly opposed and evidence was submitted that there were ties between the wards of Finchampstead North and Finchampstead South and that both these wards should be jointly included in Bracknell CC. He considered that there were no compelling reasons to implement change involving any of the three wards and rejected the counter-proposals.

Newbury CC and Wokingham CC

22. The Assistant Commissioner accepted the need to reduce the electorate of the existing Newbury CC. He noted that there was support for our proposal to include the whole of the divided West Berkshire District ward of Sulhamstead in Wokingham CC and that those who opposed the transfer focused on the perceived remoteness and the inconvenience of travelling to Wokingham. He reported that, whilst he sympathised with these concerns, he considered

that the size of the existing Newbury CC, coupled with the prospect of continued electoral growth, necessitated change and that the movement of the Sulhamstead ward was the least radical of the alternative options. He accordingly supported our proposal.

23. He reported that our proposal to move the West Berkshire District ward of Aldermaston was more controversial and that there was clear evidence of the close ties of the ward with the town of Newbury. He recommended that, in the absence of strong contrary compelling reasons, the Aldermaston ward should be included in Newbury CC. He noted that this would provide Newbury CC with an electorate 2,210 above the county average, but considered this to be within acceptable limits.

24. He considered the proposal to transfer the ward of Basildon to Reading West CC submitted in the third counter-proposal was not necessary and that the counter-proposal lacked merit. He accordingly rejected it.

Reading East BC, Reading West CC and Wokingham CC

25. The Assistant Commissioner reported that our proposal to include the divided Reading Borough wards of Battle and Whitley in Reading West CC was generally approved. He, therefore, supported our proposed division of the Borough of Reading between constituencies and he rejected any alternative division of Reading as he considered that there was insufficient evidence to warrant it.

26. Our proposal to include the West Berkshire District ward of Theale in Wokingham CC was strongly opposed. He noted that Theale was a compact village, almost a small town, separated by little more than the width of the M4 motorway from the south-western edge of Reading. He reported that those opposing the provisional recommendations argued that the Theale ward lacked any connection with Wokingham, and that, despite it being a West Berkshire District ward, its ties were with Reading.

27. He considered that the inclusion of the Theale ward in Wokingham CC would break local ties and that there were no compelling reasons for such a change. He noted that the inclusion of the Theale ward in Reading West CC brought that constituency very close to the county average at 72,250, and Wokingham CC very close to the electoral quota at 69,705. He accordingly recommended the inclusion of the West Berkshire District ward of Theale in Reading West CC.

The Mays Lane, Maiden Erlegh ward "Anomaly"

28. A local government ward boundary change between the two Wokingham District wards of Bulmershe and Whitegates and of Maiden Erlegh did not appear to have been taken into account in the figures for our provisional recommendations, resulting in forty-six electors from Mays Lane, who were currently in Reading East BC, being excluded from the electorate of the Maiden Erlegh ward. This issue was raised at the inquiry and the Assistant Commissioner recommended that this anomaly be corrected at the next stage of our review of Berkshire, which we were able to do.

Constituency names

29. The Assistant Commissioner reported that a very small number of representations raised the issue of name changes to the Newbury and Wokingham constituencies and that the issue did not attract widespread debate. He considered that the constituency at the western end of Berkshire would still be centred on the town of Newbury and concluded that there was no need to change the name of Newbury CC. He also reported that Wokingham town remained the focus within Wokingham CC and that the name of Wokingham had a longstanding history. He accordingly recommended that the proposed names should not be altered.

Revised Recommendations

30. We agreed with the Assistant Commissioner's recommendations that our provisional recommendations for three of the constituencies should be revised to include the Aldermaston ward in Newbury CC and the Theale ward in Reading West CC. We also agreed with his rejection of the counter-proposals affecting the other constituencies in Berkshire.

31. We accordingly published the following revised recommendations:-

2000 electorate	
Bracknell CC	74,307
Maidenhead CC	73,868
Newbury CC	74,865
Reading East BC	72,788
Reading West CC	72,250
Slough BC	73,627
Windsor CC	69,785
Wokingham CC	69,751
	<hr/>
	581,241
	<hr/>

Further Representations

32. Following publication of our revised recommendations we received six representations, of which four approved of our revised recommendations and two objected to them. One of the objections opposed the inclusion of the two wards of Binfield and Warfield and of Warfield Harvest Ride in Windsor CC. We considered that all the issues regarding these wards had been considered by the Assistant Commissioner and that the representation contained no new significant evidence.

33. The other representation objected to an incorrect description in the Assistant Commissioner's report of part of the fourth counter-proposal, relating to the two Finchampstead wards, which had been revised and then re-submitted at the inquiry. We considered that, although this description was unfortunate, the Assistant Commissioner had dealt fully in his report with the effects that the revised counter-proposal would have had, and that he would have rejected it in its entirety, having concluded that its elements had either very little, or no, support, other than from the proposer.

Recommendation

34. We noted the support for our revised recommendations and were satisfied that these did not need to be modified. We therefore recommend the adoption of the following constituencies containing the wards listed in Appendix C:-

	2000 electorate
Bracknell CC	74,307
Maidenhead CC	73,868
Newbury CC	74,865
Reading East BC	72,788
Reading West CC	72,250
Slough BC	73,627
Windsor CC	69,785
Wokingham CC	<u>69,751</u>
	<u>581,241</u>

BRISTOL

The Number of Electors

1. There are currently three whole constituencies and parts of two others in the unitary authority of the County and City of Bristol. The electoral figures set out below for the two parts of constituencies relate only to those electors who are within the County and City of Bristol:-

	2000 electorate
Bristol East BC	70,388
Bristol North West BC (part)	44,814
Bristol South BC	72,934
Bristol West BC	85,078
Kingswood BC (part)	<u>17,266</u>
	<u><u>290,480</u></u>

The Number of Constituencies

2. Following the Avon (Structural Change) Order 1995, the City and County of Bristol became one of four unitary authorities created out of the former County of Avon, which was abolished on 31 March 1996. We provisionally considered reviewing each unitary authority separately. Bristol had a 2000 parliamentary electorate of 290,480 which gave a theoretical entitlement to 4.15 constituencies. With four constituencies, the average constituency electorate would be 72,620, which is 2,685 above the electoral quota. We decided, therefore, to recommend that Bristol should be allocated four constituencies.

Provisional Recommendations

3. As a result of changes to the ward boundaries, four of the new wards in Bristol are partly in one constituency and partly in another. Our provisional recommendations realigned the constituency boundaries with the new ward boundaries.

4. We noted that there are thirty-five wards in Bristol, each with a similar electorate and, in forming our proposals, we recognised that Bristol would have three constituencies comprising nine wards and one constituency comprising eight wards.

5. We provisionally recommended that the three wards of Henleaze, Stoke Bishop and Westbury-on-Trym should be transferred from Bristol West BC to Bristol North West BC; the Easton and Lawrence Hill wards should be transferred from Bristol East BC to Bristol West BC; and the Frome Vale and Hillfields wards should be transferred from Kingswood BC to Bristol East BC. We further proposed that Bristol South BC should remain unchanged, apart from realigning the ward and constituency boundaries. As a result of our recommendations, the electorates of the four constituencies would be within 4,375 of the county average and the disparity would be 7,165.

6. Our provisional recommendations were:-

	2000 electorate
Bristol East BC	68,245
Bristol North West BC	72,563
Bristol South BC	75,410
Bristol West BC	<u>74,262</u>
	<u>290,480</u>

Representations

7. Following publication of our provisional recommendations, we received fifty-seven representations, of which thirty expressed support for our proposals. Four expressed general support whilst objecting to other parts of our proposals and twenty-three objected to our proposals. There was universal support for our proposal to retain the seats within the unitary authority boundaries and only a single objector suggested that Bristol should have more than four seats. The main issues centred on whether a central Bristol constituency should be created which included three of the wards south of the River Avon, which we had proposed should be included in Bristol South BC, and if our proposals were altered, what consequential alterations there should be to the adjoining seats. There were also proposals for different names for two of the constituencies we had proposed. These issues and two others which transferred single wards between our proposed constituencies were contained in four counter-proposals:-

- a) the first and principal counter-proposal affected three wards in three of the four proposed constituencies. It submitted that the Bedminster, Southville, and Windmill Hill wards should be transferred from Bristol South BC and included in Bristol West BC (which should be renamed Bristol Central BC) and that to balance the number of wards in the constituencies, the three wards of Brislington East, Brislington West and Stockwood should be included in Bristol South BC and the three wards of Ashley, Easton and Lawrence Hill should be included in Bristol East BC. It was also proposed that Bristol North West BC should be renamed Bristol North BC;
- b) the second counter-proposal was that the Bishopston ward should be included in Bristol West BC and that the Stoke Bishop ward should be included in Bristol North West BC;
- c) the third counter-proposal was that the Knowle ward should be included in Bristol East BC; the Stockwood ward should be included in Bristol South BC; Bristol West BC should be renamed Bristol Central BC; and that the constituency boundary between Bristol East BC and Bristol West BC should be re-aligned across the Lawrence Hill ward and by dividing this ward between constituencies; and
- d) the fourth counter-proposal was that the Easton ward should be included in Bristol East BC.

Local Inquiry and Assistant Commissioner's Report

8. We were required to hold an inquiry. Following the announcement of the inquiry a further twelve representations were received, eleven of which were in support of our provisional recommendations.

9. The Assistant Commissioner reported that the main issues raised at the inquiry were those raised in the counter-proposals mentioned above.

Bristol South BC

10. The Assistant Commissioner reported that the principal argument was that there was a need for a central Bristol constituency which united the city centre and included three wards south of the River Avon. He noted that there were twelve wards in Bristol which were south of the River Avon and that it was not possible for all twelve wards to be in one constituency because the electorate would be in excess of 100,000, and unacceptably above the electoral quota.

11. He was presented with evidence concerning which three south Bristol wards should be excluded from Bristol South BC. He reported that the first counter-proposal argued that the Bedminster, Southville and Windmill Hill wards should be included in a central constituency because these three wards were very close to the centre of Bristol and that there were adequate crossing points over the River Avon between these wards and central Bristol. It was also argued that the Brislington East, Brislington West and Stockwood wards should be included in Bristol South BC rather than Bristol East BC, because there was no link across the River Avon between these three wards and the rest of the proposed Bristol East BC.

12. He noted that there was considerable opposition to this counter-proposal and that there was evidence that, rather than being placed in a central Bristol constituency, the Bedminster, Southville and Windmill Hill wards formed the focal point of Bristol South BC. He considered that the River Avon, where it formed the New Cut, was a well understood and historic boundary and that a case for ignoring this boundary had not been made. He also considered that there had been no evidence to suggest that the River Avon formed an inconvenient barrier between the two parts of Bristol East BC. He therefore rejected the counter-proposal and recommended that the Bedminster, Southville and Windmill Hill wards should be included in Bristol South BC.

Bristol East BC

13. The Assistant Commissioner reported that, as part of the first counter-proposal for an alternative Bristol Central BC, it was proposed that the Ashley, Easton and Lawrence Hill wards should be included in Bristol East BC rather than in Bristol West BC. This was to be in place of the Brislington East, Brislington West and Stockwood wards which were to be included in Bristol South BC. Having rejected one part of the counter-proposal, he also rejected this part because he considered that the three wards had strong ties with the Bristol West constituency.

Bristol West BC

14. He reported that, having rejected the other counter-proposed changes to Bristol West BC, he also rejected the second counter-proposal to include the Bishopston ward in Bristol North West BC and the Stoke Bishop ward in Bristol West BC. He noted that this counter-proposal was not put forcefully at the inquiry by its proponents and that there was considerable objection to it. He considered that the counter-proposal had insufficient weight and decided not to recommend any change to Bristol West BC. He also reported that it was proposed that Bristol West BC be renamed Bristol Central BC, but he found that there was no compelling reason to alter the well established name of Bristol West BC.

Knowle and Stockwood wards

15. He also rejected the third counter-proposal which included the Knowle ward in Bristol East BC and the Stockwood ward in Bristol South BC, and noted that the A47 formed an effective boundary between Bristol East BC and Bristol South BC.

Easton ward

16. The fourth counter-proposal included the Easton ward in Bristol East BC to reduce the electorate of the proposed Bristol West BC. He noted the evidence that this constituency had the highest forecast growth in the electorate and reported that the proposed change would increase the disparity between the electorates of the four constituencies. He considered the forecasts of growth in the electorate to be speculative and rejected the counter-proposal.

Bristol North West BC

17. The Assistant Commissioner reported that, apart from the counter-proposal to include the Bishopston ward in the Bristol West constituency in place of the Stoke Bishop ward, which he had rejected, there was considerable support for the provisionally recommended Bristol North West BC, although it was suggested that the constituency be renamed Bristol North BC. He noted that the case for the alternative name was not put forcefully at the inquiry and that Bristol North West BC had been established as a constituency name for some time. He therefore rejected the counter-proposal and recommended no change be made to Bristol North West BC.

Recommendation

18. We fully accepted the Assistant Commissioner's recommendations not to alter the provisionally recommended constituencies in Bristol. We therefore recommend the adoption of the following constituencies containing the wards listed in Appendix C:-

	2000 electorate
Bristol East BC	68,245
Bristol North West BC	72,563
Bristol South BC	75,410
Bristol West BC	74,262
	<hr/>
	290,480

BUCKINGHAMSHIRE

The Number of Electors

1. There are currently five constituencies in the County of Buckinghamshire:-

	2000 electorate
Aylesbury CC	80,155
Beaconsfield CC	68,039
Buckingham CC	65,230
Chesham and Amersham CC	69,748
Wycombe CC	<u>73,608</u>
	<u><u>356,780</u></u>

The Number of Constituencies

2. Following the Buckinghamshire (Borough of Milton Keynes) (Structural Change) Order 1995, the Borough of Milton Keynes ceased to form part of the county of Buckinghamshire and became a new unitary authority. The remaining four districts in the county formed the County of Buckinghamshire.

3. Buckinghamshire had a 2000 parliamentary electorate of 356,780, which gave a theoretical entitlement to 5.10 constituencies. We decided that the county should continue to be allocated five constituencies. With five constituencies retained, the average constituency electorate in the county would be 71,356, which is 1,421 above the electoral quota. The electorates of the five existing constituencies ranged from 80,155 in Aylesbury CC to 65,230 in Buckingham CC, a disparity of 14,925.

Provisional Recommendations

4. As a result of changes to the district ward boundaries, seven of the new wards in Buckinghamshire are partly in one constituency and partly in another. Our provisional recommendations realigned the constituency boundaries with the new ward boundaries.

5. However, merely realigning constituency boundaries with the new ward boundaries would have resulted in the electorates of Aylesbury CC and Buckingham CC being 82,996 and 60,732 respectively, thus increasing the disparity from 14,925 to 22,264. We therefore proposed further changes to reduce the disparity and bring the five constituencies closer to the county average. The shape of the county, the position of Aylesbury and the size and shape of some wards limited our options.

6. We proposed that five of the seven divided wards in the county should be wholly included in the constituency where the majority of electors were situated and that the other two divided wards should be wholly included in the constituency where the minority of electors were situated. To reduce the electorate of Aylesbury CC and increase the electorate of Buckingham CC, we also proposed that the two Wycombe District wards of Icknield and The Risboroughs should be transferred from Aylesbury CC to Buckingham CC.

7. We further proposed that three north-western Chiltern District wards should be transferred from Aylesbury CC to Chesham and Amersham CC and that two eastern Wycombe District wards should be transferred from Chesham and Amersham CC to Wycombe CC. These changes meant that Chesham and Amersham CC would be coterminous with Chiltern District. Our proposals also placed the whole of the divided Wycombe District ward of Greater Hughenden in Aylesbury CC rather than in Wycombe CC.

8. To increase the electorate of Beaconsfield CC, and to improve the shapes of the Beaconsfield and Wycombe constituencies, we proposed that two southern Wycombe District wards should be transferred from Wycombe CC to Beaconsfield CC and that the Wycombe District ward of Tylers Green and Loudwater should be transferred from Beaconsfield CC to Wycombe CC.

9. Under our proposals, the electorates of all five constituencies would be within 1,796 of the county average and the disparity would be reduced from 14,925 to 3,044.

10. Our provisional recommendations were:-

	2000 electorate
Aylesbury CC	72,023
Beaconsfield CC	72,604
Buckingham CC	69,560
Chesham and Amersham CC	70,596
Wycombe CC	<u>71,997</u>
	<u>356,780</u>

Representations

11. Following publication of our provisional recommendations, we received fifty-nine representations, of which forty-three expressed support for all or part of our proposals, five expressed support whilst objecting to other parts of our proposals and eleven objected to our proposals.

12. The main issues raised in the objections were principally contained in two counter-proposals:-

- a) the first had similarities to our provisional recommendations but differed from them in two significant respects. The differences were that it proposed that the Aylesbury Vale District ward of Haddenham and the two Wycombe District wards of Icknield and the Risboroughs should be included in Aylesbury CC rather than in Buckingham CC; and that the three Aylesbury District wards of Aston Clinton, Quarrendon and Wendover should be included in Buckingham CC rather than in Aylesbury CC. It was also suggested that Wycombe CC should be renamed High Wycombe CC. Another counter-proposal was identical to parts of the counter-proposal; and
- b) the second proposed that Aylesbury CC should consist of nineteen Aylesbury Vale District wards and that Buckingham CC should consist of seventeen Aylesbury Vale District wards and six Wycombe District wards. It also suggested

that Beaconsfield CC should be renamed Marlow and Beaconsfield CC and that Chesham and Amersham CC should be renamed Chiltern CC. Another counter-proposal was identical to parts of this counter-proposal.

Local Inquiry and Assistant Commissioner's report

13. We were required to hold an inquiry. Following the announcement of the inquiry a further thirty-five representations were received, but no new issues were raised.

14. The main issues raised at the local inquiry were the counter-proposals and some other local issues. The Assistant Commissioner reported that the counter-proposals and our proposals achieved a significantly better balance between the constituencies than did the existing arrangements, with little to choose between them in terms of numbers. However, he accepted that none provided a perfect solution.

Counter-proposals

15. The Assistant Commissioner noted that the principal defect of the first counter-proposal would be the breaking of local ties between the two Aylesbury District wards of Aston Clinton and Wendover and the town of Aylesbury. He also noted that there had not been any support for the counter-proposal at the inquiry. As he could see no reason to prefer this counter-proposal to the other two options he rejected it.

16. In comparing our provisional proposals with the second counter-proposal he reported that the second counter-proposal had advantages in that the six northern Wycombe District wards currently in Aylesbury CC would be kept together in Buckingham CC; that Wycombe District would be divided between three constituencies instead of four; that Aylesbury CC would have a sensible shape; and that the concerns of electors in the areas of Princes Risborough and Stokenchurch would be accommodated. He noted that those opposed to the second counter-proposal objected to the six wards in the eastern part of the current Buckingham CC being transferred to Aylesbury CC, which he considered was a substantial objection to the counter-proposal.

17. He did not consider that these facts were decisive, given the general discretion in Rule 7, and this led him to consider that our proposals were preferable. In his view, the six northern Wycombe District wards did not have to be kept together. They could just as well be divided between Aylesbury CC and Buckingham CC, as the wards looked to different major towns, principally Aylesbury and Wycombe. He considered that, whilst it was desirable that all the wards in one District should be kept together, this must be balanced against other factors involved in establishing constituency boundaries, with numbers not being the only criterion.

18. He noted that support for our proposals was almost overwhelming. The counter-proposals involved more substantial changes than our proposals and he emphasized the importance of the relationship that a ward had with its constituency. He therefore recommended that our proposals for Buckinghamshire be made final.

Names of constituencies

19. He reported that, although there were some suggestions for possible alternative constituency names, these were few and largely unsupported. He recommended no change to the existing constituency names.

Recommendation

20. We agreed with all of the Assistant Commissioner's recommendations. We therefore recommend the adoption of the following constituencies containing the wards as listed in Appendix C:-

	2000 electorate
Aylesbury CC	72,023
Beaconsfield CC	72,604
Buckingham CC	69,560
Chesham and Amersham CC	70,596
Wycombe CC	<u>71,997</u>
	<u><u>356,780</u></u>

CAMBRIDGESHIRE AND PETERBOROUGH

The Number of Electors

1. There are currently seven constituencies in the Counties of Cambridgeshire and Peterborough:-

	2000 electorate
Cambridge BC	71,362
Huntingdon CC	79,551
North East Cambridgeshire CC	79,651
North West Cambridgeshire CC	69,082
Peterborough BC	64,893
South Cambridgeshire CC	71,314
South East Cambridgeshire CC	<u>79,768</u>
	<u>515,621</u>

The Number of Constituencies

2. Following the Cambridgeshire (City of Peterborough) (Structural, Boundary and Electoral Changes) Order 1996, the City of Peterborough ceased to form part of the County of Cambridgeshire and became a new unitary authority. The remaining five districts in the county formed the County of Cambridgeshire.

3. Cambridgeshire had a 2000 parliamentary electorate of 410,039, which gave a theoretical entitlement to 5.86 constituencies. Peterborough had a 2000 parliamentary electorate of 105,582, which gave a theoretical entitlement to 1.51 constituencies. If Cambridgeshire were reviewed separately it would be allocated six constituencies, producing a county average of 68,340, which is only 1,595 below the electoral quota. The county average of the two constituencies allocated to Peterborough would have been very low at 52,791, which is 17,144 below the electoral quota and 7,144 over our 10,000 threshold. We therefore decided to retain the allocation of seven constituencies and to review the two counties together. The combined county average is 73,660, which is only 3,725 above the electoral quota. The electorates of the existing constituencies in Cambridgeshire and Peterborough ranged from 64,893 in Peterborough BC to 79,768 in South East Cambridgeshire CC, a disparity of 14,875.

Provisional Recommendations

4. As a result of changes to the district and city ward boundaries, eight of the new wards in Cambridgeshire and two in Peterborough are partly in one constituency and partly in another. Our provisional recommendations realigned the constituency boundaries with the new ward boundaries. Our proposals went further than minimum change realignment in order to reduce the high electorates of the Huntingdon, North East Cambridgeshire and South East Cambridgeshire constituencies and to bring them closer to the electoral quota.

5. We proposed that the City of Peterborough ward of Eye and Thorney and the divided wards of East and Newborough should be included in Peterborough BC. These changes increased the low electorate of Peterborough BC from 64,893 to 70,640, resulted in a

constituency boundary which followed the eastern boundary of the City of Peterborough, and allowed for the City of Peterborough to be contained in two constituencies rather than in three as at present. The changes also reduced the high electorate of North East Cambridgeshire CC from 79,651 to 74,165.

6. We proposed that the Huntingdonshire District ward of Ellington and the three divided wards of Earith, Sawtry, and Upwood and The Raveleys should be transferred to North West Cambridgeshire CC. These changes, together with the change affecting the City of Peterborough ward of Newborough produced a North West Cambridgeshire constituency electorate of 73,648. The high electorate of Huntingdon CC was reduced from 79,551 to 74,724.

7. We proposed that the South Cambridgeshire District wards of Balsham and Linton and the adjacent divided ward of The Abingtons should be included in South Cambridgeshire CC and the divided ward of Cottenham should be included in South East Cambridgeshire CC. These changes reduced the high electorate of South East Cambridgeshire CC from 79,768 to 72,274. We also proposed, as a result of these changes, that South East Cambridgeshire CC should be renamed East Cambridgeshire CC.

8. We proposed that the constituency boundary between the Cambridge and South Cambridgeshire constituencies should be realigned so that the three divided City of Cambridge wards of Cherry Hinton, Coleridge and Trumpington should be included in Cambridge BC, although the latter change did not represent minimum change realignment. This allowed for all but one of the City of Cambridge wards to be included in Cambridge BC. These changes, together with the changes proposed in the preceding paragraph, produced a South Cambridgeshire constituency with an electorate of 73,264. The electorate of the Cambridge constituency would be 76,906. Our proposals reduced the disparity between constituencies from 14,875 to 6,266.

9. Our provisional recommendations were:-

	2000 electorate
Cambridge BC	76,906
East Cambridgeshire CC	72,274
Huntingdon CC	74,724
North East Cambridgeshire CC	74,165
North West Cambridgeshire CC	73,648
Peterborough BC	70,640
South Cambridgeshire CC	<u>73,264</u>
	<u>515,621</u>

Representations

10. Following publication of our provisional recommendations, we received 114 written representations, of which thirty-five expressed support for all or part of our proposals, eight expressed support for part of our proposals whilst objecting to other parts and sixty-nine objected to our proposals. Two other comments were received. The main issues raised in the objections were principally contained in four counter-proposals:-

- a) the first placed the South Cambridgeshire District wards of Balsham and Linton in East Cambridgeshire CC and, in exchange, included the divided South Cambridgeshire District ward of Cottenham wholly in South Cambridgeshire CC. The counter-proposal also retained the name South East Cambridgeshire CC (instead of East Cambridgeshire CC) and renamed South Cambridgeshire CC as South West Cambridgeshire CC. This counter-proposal was supported either wholly or in part by numerous individuals and organisations;
- b) the second counter-proposal also placed the South Cambridgeshire District ward of Balsham in East Cambridgeshire CC but in its place included the whole of the divided City of Cambridge ward of Trumpington in South Cambridgeshire CC. It also placed the four City of Peterborough wards of Eye and Thorney, Newborough, Werrington North and Werrington South in North West Cambridgeshire CC, and in exchange, placed the five City of Peterborough wards of Fletton, Orton Longueville, Orton with Hampton, Stanground Central and Stanground East in Peterborough BC. This counter-proposal was supported either wholly or in part by numerous individuals and organisations;
- c) the third counter-proposal placed the divided City of Cambridge ward of Cherry Hinton in South Cambridgeshire CC, the City of Cambridge ward of Queen Edith's in Cambridge BC, the South Cambridgeshire District wards of Fulbourn and Teversham in South Cambridgeshire CC, and the South Cambridgeshire District wards of Girton, Longstanton and Swavesey in East Cambridgeshire CC. The counter-proposal also renamed North East Cambridgeshire CC as Cambridgeshire Fens CC; and
- d) the fourth counter-proposal placed the Huntingdonshire District ward of Alconbury and The Stokeleys in North West Cambridgeshire CC and, in exchange, included the Huntingdonshire District ward of Ellington in Huntingdon CC.

Local Inquiry and Assistant Commissioner's Report

11. We were required to hold an inquiry. Following the announcement of the inquiry a further forty-two representations were received. Of these, twenty objected to our proposals, twenty-one approved of all or part of our proposals and a petition containing 202 names was received which submitted that the City of Cambridge ward of Cherry Hinton should be wholly included in Cambridge BC, as we had proposed. One further objection was received after the inquiry closed. None of these representations contained any new issues.

12. The Assistant Commissioner reported that there was unanimous support for the retention of seven constituencies in the combined area of Cambridgeshire and Peterborough and that there was no objection to our proposed North East Cambridgeshire CC. The main issue concerned which City of Cambridge ward(s), if any, to exclude from the Cambridge constituency, although other issues and the names of two constituencies were also discussed.

The City of Peterborough

13. It was widely accepted that the City of Peterborough should have one whole constituency and part of another constituency, rather than remain divided between three constituencies. The Assistant Commissioner considered the merits of our provisional

recommendations which kept the River Nene and the railway line as a constituency boundary and the second counter-proposal, which differed significantly, and placed five wards to the south of the river with eleven wards to the north of it in one constituency.

14. Whilst he accepted that the wards to the south of the river had close ties with the City, he considered that the counter-proposal would break ties between Werrington and Peterborough. Furthermore, he noted that the Orton Waterville ward would be separated from the Orton Longueville and Orton with Hampton wards. He considered that such a constituency would be hard to identify on the ground and its creation would be disruptive, as it would transfer a much larger number of electors than would be transferred under our proposals (37,432 as opposed to 5,747). He rejected this aspect of the second counter-proposal and approved our proposals for this area.

Huntingdon CC and North West Cambridgeshire CC

15. The Assistant Commissioner reported that the fourth counter-proposal would divide the Parish of Stukeley between constituencies and break local ties. There was strong opposition to this counter-proposal. He considered that there was nothing to commend it and he accordingly rejected it.

The City of Cambridge

16. The Assistant Commissioner considered whether the City of Cambridge wards of Cherry Hinton, Queen Edith's and Trumpington should be included in Cambridge BC or elsewhere. He considered that, ideally, the City of Cambridge should form one whole constituency, but accepted that the number of electors in the City (83,118) prevented this.

17. The third counter-proposal to remove the Cherry Hinton ward from Cambridge BC received widespread opposition and he did not support it. The second counter-proposal placed the Trumpington ward in South Cambridgeshire CC instead of in Cambridge BC. He considered that Trumpington was clearly part of Cambridge and was located within the ring road where much of the ward was linked to the centre of the City by a continuous line of development. He noted that it formed part of the City's conservation area and was very close to the Guildhall and main railway station.

18. However, whilst accepting that the Queen Edith's ward had close ties with the rest of the City, he considered that it should not be included in Cambridge BC at the expense of the Cherry Hinton or Trumpington wards as he considered that Trumpington's close ties with the city centre were of greater significance. He confirmed our proposals, which would result in the Queen Edith's ward being located in South Cambridgeshire CC and the Cherry Hinton and Trumpington wards being located in Cambridge BC.

East Cambridgeshire CC and South Cambridgeshire CC

19. The Assistant Commissioner heard persuasive evidence that the Balsham and Linton wards should be in the same constituency and that Cottenham had strong links with the Longstanton ward of South Cambridgeshire CC. While he accepted that the transfer of the Cottenham ward would result in poorly shaped constituencies, he considered that this disadvantage was outweighed by the advantages of including the ward in South Cambridgeshire CC. He accordingly recommended that our provisional recommendations be

revised, with the Balsham and Linton wards being located in East Cambridgeshire CC and the Cottenham ward being located in South Cambridgeshire CC. He rejected other counter-proposals for this area. The aspect of the third counter-proposal which transferred five South Cambridgeshire District wards between constituencies was not pursued at the inquiry and was not accepted by the Assistant Commissioner.

Constituency names

20. The Assistant Commissioner reported that the existing name of South Cambridgeshire CC had caused confusion and that there was considerable support for it to be renamed South West Cambridgeshire CC. He also considered that our provisionally recommended name of East Cambridgeshire CC would cause confusion and that there was support for the retention of the existing name of South East Cambridgeshire CC. He recommended that our provisional recommendations in respect of these two constituency names should, therefore, be revised. The proposal to alter the name of North East Cambridgeshire CC received no support and he found no reason for it to be changed.

Revised Recommendations

21. We agreed with the Assistant Commissioner's conclusions regarding the boundaries of our provisionally recommended constituencies. We noted that, whilst the inclusion of the Cottenham ward in South Cambridgeshire CC would result in two poorly shaped constituencies, its inclusion in South Cambridgeshire CC would allow for the Balsham and Linton wards to remain in their existing constituency. This would allow the existing constituency name to be retained as the only changes made to the constituency would be those for the realignment with the new ward boundaries. We therefore accepted his recommendation for the retention of the name of South East Cambridgeshire CC instead of East Cambridgeshire CC.

22. Whilst we considered that there was merit in his recommendation for South Cambridgeshire CC to be renamed South West Cambridgeshire CC, we decided that the existing name should be retained. We noted that no changes had been proposed to the western boundary of the constituency to warrant a change of name and that, as the constituency would contain 67% of the electorate of the South Cambridgeshire District, the existing name was not an inaccurate description of the constituency. We therefore rejected the Assistant Commissioner's recommendation in this respect.

23. We accordingly published the following revised recommendations:-

	2000 electorate
Cambridge BC	76,906
Huntingdon CC	74,724
North East Cambridgeshire CC	74,165
North West Cambridgeshire CC	73,648
Peterborough BC	70,640
South Cambridgeshire CC	71,597
South East Cambridgeshire CC	<u>73,941</u>
	<u>515,621</u>

Further Representations

24. Following publication of our revised recommendations, we received six representations. Of these, one representation supported our proposals, one did not support them but did not wish to make a formal objection, one noted the changes but had no comment to make and two objected to the exclusion of the Queen Edith's ward from Cambridge BC. However, we had already published final recommendations for that constituency. One representation objected to the shape of the South Cambridgeshire and South East Cambridgeshire constituencies and submitted that the South Cambridgeshire District ward of Willingham and Over should be included in South Cambridgeshire CC instead of in South East Cambridgeshire CC, in order to create better shapes for the two constituencies.

Recommendation

25. We considered that the submission in respect of the Willingham and Over ward, which was made from outside the county, was not superior to our revised recommendations and we noted that it had no support within the county. We were therefore satisfied that our revised recommendations did not need to be modified. We accordingly recommend the adoption of the following constituencies containing the wards as listed in Appendix C:-

	2000 electorate
Cambridge BC	76,906
Huntingdon CC	74,724
North East Cambridgeshire CC	74,165
North West Cambridgeshire CC	73,648
Peterborough BC	70,640
South Cambridgeshire CC	71,597
South East Cambridgeshire CC	<u>73,941</u>
	<u>515,621</u>

CHESHIRE AND HALTON

The Number of Electors

1. There are currently nine constituencies in the paired Counties of Cheshire and Halton:-

	2000 electorate
City of Chester CC	70,194
Congleton CC	71,944
Crewe and Nantwich CC	66,835
Eddisbury CC	67,615
Ellesmere Port and Neston CC	68,496
Halton CC	64,726
Macclesfield CC	72,388
Tatton CC	64,627
Weaver Vale CC	67,451
	<hr/>
	614,276

The Number of Constituencies

2. Following the Cheshire (Boroughs of Halton and Warrington) (Structural Changes) Order 1996, the Borough of Halton ceased to form part of the county of Cheshire and became a new unitary authority. The remaining six districts in the county formed the County of Cheshire.

3. Cheshire had a 2000 parliamentary electorate of 522,119, which gave a theoretical entitlement to 7.47 constituencies. With seven constituencies allocated, the average constituency electorate would be 74,588, which is 4,653 above the electoral quota.

4. Halton had a 2000 parliamentary electorate of 92,157, which gave a theoretical entitlement to 1.32 constituencies. With one constituency allocated, the electorate would be 92,157, which is 22,222 above the electoral quota, and 12,222 over our 10,000 threshold.

5. We noted that the combined area of Cheshire and Halton had a 2000 electorate of 614,276, which gave a theoretical entitlement to 8.78 constituencies. With nine constituencies allocated, the average constituency electorate would be 68,253, which is only 1,682 below the electoral quota. We provisionally decided that Cheshire and Halton should continue to be reviewed together and that they should continue to be allocated nine constituencies. The electorates of the nine existing constituencies ranged from 64,627 in Tatton CC to 72,388 in Macclesfield CC, a disparity of 7,761, which our provisional recommendations increased slightly to 8,021.

Provisional Recommendations

6. As a result of changes to the district and borough ward boundaries, eleven of the new wards in Cheshire and three of the new wards in Halton were partly in one constituency and partly in another. Our provisional recommendations realigned the constituency boundaries with the new ward boundaries and placed each ward wholly within a constituency.

7. We noted that there was no need to make any major alteration to the existing pattern of constituencies and decided to propose only minimal change. We recommended changes to eight of the nine constituencies and proposed no change to Congleton CC. We proposed that the whole of the three divided Halton Borough wards of Castlefields, Halton Brook and Mersey should be included in Halton CC. We noted that the larger part of the Castlefields ward was in Weaver Vale CC, but decided to include the ward in Halton CC in order to increase the electorate of that constituency to make it closer to both the county average and the electoral quota.

8. We proposed that the whole of the three divided City of Chester wards of Barrow, Tattenhall and Waverton should be included in Eddisbury CC and that the whole of the divided City of Chester ward of Elton should be included in Ellesmere Port and Neston CC.

9. We proposed that the whole of the divided Crewe and Nantwich Borough wards of Acton and Audlem should be included in Eddisbury CC and that the whole of the divided Crewe and Nantwich Borough ward of Leighton should be included in Crewe and Nantwich CC. We also proposed that the whole of the divided Macclesfield Borough ward of Henbury should be included in Tatton CC, rather than in Macclesfield CC, because we considered that it was necessary to reduce the electorate of Macclesfield CC and to increase that of Tatton CC.

10. We proposed that the whole of the divided Vale Royal Borough wards of Hartford & Whitegate and of Leftwich & Kingsmead should be included in Weaver Vale CC, and that the whole of the divided Vale Royal Borough ward of Rudheath & South Witton should be included in Tatton CC. We noted that the inclusion of the Hartford & Whitegate ward in Weaver Vale CC was not ideal in terms of the shape of the constituency, but we considered that it was necessary in order to avoid creating a narrow neck connecting the town of Northwich with the remainder of Weaver Vale CC.

11. Our provisional recommendations were:-

	2000 electorate
City of Chester CC	69,279
Congleton CC	71,944
Crewe and Nantwich CC	69,130
Eddisbury CC	63,923
Ellesmere Port and Neston CC	68,372
Halton CC	69,727
Macclesfield CC	70,677
Tatton CC	67,008
Weaver Vale CC	64,216
	<hr/>
	614,276

Representations

12. Following publication of our provisional recommendations, we received sixty-five representations, of which forty-one fully supported our proposals, four expressed support for part whilst objecting to other parts and nineteen objected to all or part of them. One representation made no comment. It was generally accepted that Cheshire and Halton should

be reviewed together. The objections contained six counter-proposals, some of which overlapped and some of which had features which were not supported at the inquiry.

13. The main issues raised in the objections fell into three principal counter-proposals:-

- a) the first was that the City of Chester ward of Christleton should be included in Eddisbury CC;
- b) the second was that the Halton Borough ward of Castlefields should be included in Weaver Vale CC. It was also proposed that the Halton Borough ward of Beechwood should be included in Halton CC; and
- c) the third counter-proposal was that the Macclesfield Borough ward of Henbury should be included in Macclesfield CC.

Local Inquiry and Assistant Commissioner's Report

14. We were required to hold an inquiry. Following the announcement of the inquiry a further 106 representations were received, of which eighty-three approved of our provisional recommendations, whilst twenty-three objected to them. The Assistant Commissioner reported that the following additional issues were raised at the inquiry:-

- a) that the Vale Royal Borough ward of Rudheath & South Witton should be included in Weaver Vale CC and it was also proposed that the Macclesfield Borough ward of Gawsworth should be included in Tatton CC; and
- b) that the Congleton Borough ward of Dane Valley should be included in Tatton CC.

City of Chester CC

15. The Assistant Commissioner reported that our proposals to include the whole of the divided City of Chester wards of Barrow and Waverton in Eddisbury CC were uncontroversial and attracted no objections. He accordingly endorsed our proposals for these two wards. He also reported that considerable controversy centred on the element of the counter-proposals to include the City of Chester ward of Christleton in Eddisbury CC. This gave rise to a large number of late representations which supported the ward's inclusion in our provisionally recommended City of Chester CC.

16. He reported that those opposing the transfer of the Christleton ward to Eddisbury CC considered the ward to be an integral part of Chester, being situated approximately two miles from the city centre. He accepted that the ward looked to the city for a wide range of services and that its transfer would be at the expense of breaking these local ties and considered that the A55 ring road did not constitute a "physical boundary" separating Christleton from Chester. He also reported that his visit to Christleton convinced him that the case for the transfer of the ward to Eddisbury CC was unsubstantiated and he agreed with our proposals to retain it in City of Chester CC.

Congleton CC

17. He reported that very little was heard about Congleton CC, which is coterminous with its borough boundary. However, he noted a submission which stated that Congleton CC stood out as the largest parliamentary constituency in Cheshire and that moving the Congleton Borough ward of Dane Valley into Tatton CC would reduce its size. He also noted that this suggestion was strongly opposed at the inquiry. He considered that it lacked merit and, therefore, rejected it.

Halton CC

18. The Assistant Commissioner reported that our proposal to include the Halton Borough ward of Castlefields in Halton CC was keenly contested. He considered that the evidence was finely balanced and concluded that the inclusion of the ward in either Halton CC or Weaver Vale CC would be reasonable and sensible. He noted that the greater quantity of submissions supported our proposals.

19. He considered that the submissions against our proposal for the inclusion of the Castlefields ward in Halton CC were “attractive and persuasively presented”. He noted that the inclusion of the Castlefields ward in Halton CC increased the electorate of Halton CC from 64,302 to 69,727, whereas the electorate of Weaver Vale CC reduced from 69,641 to 64,216, that is, to an electorate lower than Halton CC would otherwise have been. He also noted the argument that our proposed transfer of the Castlefields ward to Halton CC was a pursuit of equality of numbers at the expense of local ties and compromised boundaries. However, he also considered that the submission about ties being broken should be seen in the light of the fact that, between 1983 and 1997, the Castlefields ward was in Halton CC.

20. He reported that, following his visit to the Castlefields ward, he concurred with the evidence that the Castlefields ward was at the epicentre of Runcorn and Halton and was very closely aligned with the rest of Runcorn in terms of demography, housing and social factors, as well as being a component of Halton unitary authority. He therefore rejected this element of the counter-proposals to include the Castlefields ward in Weaver Vale CC and supported our recommendation to include it in Halton CC.

21. The Assistant Commissioner reported that it was also submitted that the Halton Borough ward of Beechwood should be included in Halton CC, instead of in Weaver Vale CC. He considered that it would not be desirable, or appropriate, for this ward to be included in Halton CC and recommended that our provisional recommendations for Halton CC should not be changed.

Macclesfield CC

22. The Assistant Commissioner reported that our proposal to include the whole of the divided Macclesfield Borough ward of Henbury in Tatton CC gave rise to the greatest response at the inquiry. However, he noted that our proposals had received some support. He considered that the overwhelming weight of evidence pointed to the Henbury ward being “inexorably linked” with Macclesfield CC and having “precious few ties” with Tatton CC. He noted the evidence suggesting that we had given “too little weight to the strength of the ward’s ties with Macclesfield, and too much to the pursuit of numerical equality”.

23. He was left in no doubt that it would be wholly inappropriate to transfer the Henbury ward from Macclesfield CC to Tatton CC. He noted that there would be a consequential increase in the disparity of numbers between the constituencies from 8,021 to 8,732, but he considered this to be within acceptable limits. He accordingly recommended that our provisional recommendations with regard to the Henbury ward should not be adopted.

24. He reported that the suggestion to include the Macclesfield Borough ward of Gawsworth in Tatton CC received little support at the inquiry and that his visit to the area confirmed that there was continuous residential development connecting Gawsworth to the town of Macclesfield. He found no evidence to support the counter-proposal and rejected it.

Tatton CC and Weaver Vale CC

25. The Assistant Commissioner reported that our proposal to increase the electorate of Tatton CC by including the whole of the divided Vale Royal Borough ward of Rudheath & South Witton attracted opposition and noted that those opposing our proposals argued that the ward had ties with the town of Northwich. He considered the local ties to be far stronger in the case of the wards of Henbury and Gawsworth than those for the Rudheath & South Witton ward. He concluded that numerical considerations precluded the inclusion of the Rudheath & South Witton ward in Weaver Vale CC and rejected any further change to Tatton CC or Weaver Vale CC.

Revised Recommendations

26. We agreed with the Assistant Commissioner's findings that the provisional recommendations for two constituencies should be revised so that the Henbury ward is included in Macclesfield CC. We agreed with his rejection of the other counter-proposals.

27. We accordingly published the following revised recommendations:-

	2000 electorate
City of Chester CC	69,279
Congleton CC	71,944
Crewe and Nantwich CC	69,130
Eddisbury CC	63,923
Ellesmere Port and Neston CC	68,372
Halton CC	69,727
Macclesfield CC	72,655
Tatton CC	65,030
Weaver Vale CC	<u>64,216</u>
	<u><u>614,276</u></u>

28. Following publication of our revised recommendations we received four representations. Of these, three approved of the revised recommendations in their entirety and one objected to them. The objection opposed the inclusion of the Halton Borough ward of Castlefields in Halton CC and suggested that, if necessary, a further inquiry should be held. We noted that the placing of the Castlefields ward had become one of the most contentious issues at the inquiry with differing and strongly held views being expressed. We also noted that the Assistant Commissioner had found the issues to be finely balanced when making his

recommendations and that, to assist him, he had visited the area before reaching his conclusion. We concluded that the objection did not raise any new evidence which would lead us to reconsider our final recommendations, or to hold a further inquiry.

Recommendation

29. We noted the support for our revised recommendations and were satisfied that these did not need to be modified. We therefore recommend the adoption of the following constituencies containing the wards listed in Appendix C:-

	2000 electorate
City of Chester CC	69,279
Congleton CC	71,944
Crewe and Nantwich CC	69,130
Eddisbury CC	63,923
Ellesmere Port and Neston CC	68,372
Halton CC	69,727
Macclesfield CC	72,655
Tatton CC	65,030
Weaver Vale CC	<u>64,216</u>
	<u><u>614,276</u></u>

CORNWALL AND THE ISLES OF SCILLY

The Number of Electors

1. There are currently five constituencies in the County of Cornwall and the Isles of Scilly:-

	2000 electorate
Falmouth and Camborne CC	72,074
North Cornwall CC	83,268
South East Cornwall CC	78,158
St Ives CC	73,435
Truro and St Austell CC	<u>78,555</u>
	<u><u>385,490</u></u>

The Number of Constituencies

2. Cornwall and the Isles of Scilly had a 2000 parliamentary electorate of 385,490, which gave a theoretical entitlement to 5.51 constituencies. The continued allocation of five constituencies would produce a county average of 77,098, which is 7,163 above the electoral quota. With six constituencies the county average would be 64,248, which is 5,687 below the electoral quota. We therefore decided to allocate an additional, sixth, constituency to the area. This enabled us to reduce the high electorates of the North Cornwall, South East Cornwall and Truro and St Austell constituencies and to reduce the disparity between the constituencies with the highest and lowest electorates.

Provisional Recommendations

3. As a result of changes to the district and borough ward boundaries, the Borough of Restormel ward of Rock is the only ward in Cornwall which is divided between constituencies. Our provisional recommendations placed the ward in a reconfigured constituency named St Austell and Newquay CC. We created two constituencies that were coterminous with the Districts of Caradon and North Cornwall, which enabled us to preserve, respectively, the names of South East Cornwall CC and North Cornwall CC. Although these constituencies would have the lowest electorates of those we recommended in Cornwall, we noted that recent growth in these areas was greater than elsewhere in the county.

4. We proposed that the constituencies in the centre of Cornwall should follow district boundaries to a larger extent than as at present. The proposed St Austell and Newquay CC would comprise all but two of the wards of the Borough of Restormel (Mevagissey and St Ewe) and we considered that the name of the constituency should reflect the names of its two largest towns.

5. We proposed that Truro and Falmouth CC should comprise all but three wards of the District of Carrick (Mount Hawke, Perranporth and St Agnes) but that it should include the two Borough of Restormel wards referred to above. We also considered that the name of the constituency should reflect the names of its two largest towns.

6. We proposed that Camborne and Redruth CC should comprise all but four wards of the District of Kerrier (Breage and Crowan, Helston North, Helston South, and Porthleven and Sithney) but should include the three District of Carrick wards referred to above. We considered that it was preferable for the towns of Camborne and Redruth to be in the same constituency and that the names of both towns should be reflected in the constituency name. Although Helston and the area to its north and west was not included in the constituency, we noted that this area is currently in the St Ives constituency and considered that it should remain there in order to create constituencies with similar sized electorates. St Ives CC would therefore comprise the District of Penwith, the four District of Kerrier wards identified above and which were not in the Camborne and Redruth constituency, and the Isles of Scilly. Our proposals would reduce the disparity between constituencies from 11,194 to 2,838.

7. Our provisional recommendations were:-

	2000 electorate
Camborne and Redruth CC	64,810
North Cornwall CC	62,214
South East Cornwall CC	63,606
St Austell and Newquay CC	65,052
St Ives CC	65,023
Truro and Falmouth CC	<hr/> 64,785
	<hr/> <hr/> 385,490

Representations

8. Following publication of our provisional recommendations, we received 127 representations, including seven counter-proposals and a petition containing 370 names. Thirty-two expressed support for all or part of our proposals, eleven expressed support for part of our proposals whilst objecting to other parts and seventy-nine objected to our proposals. Five representations made various other comments. The main issues raised in the objections were whether the constituency boundaries should follow district boundaries more closely, whether the town of Hayle should be included in the St Ives constituency and whether the town of Helston should be separated from the wards of the Lizard Peninsula and placed in different constituencies. The objections were principally contained in five counter-proposals:-

- a) the first counter-proposal created six constituencies each formed of one of the six districts in Cornwall;
- b) the second counter-proposal was based on district boundaries, but placed the Restormel Borough ward of Lostwithiel in North Cornwall CC, the Carrick District ward of Mount Hawke in Camborne and Redruth CC and the two Kerrier District wards of Breage and Crowan, and Porthleven and Sithney with Penwith District in St Ives CC;
- c) the third counter-proposal placed the four Kerrier District wards in the Lizard, (namely Grade-Ruan and Landewednack, Meneage, Mullion, St Keverne) in St Ives CC so that the wards could be in the same constituency as the town of Helston, and placed the three Penwith District wards comprising the Hayle area, of Gwinear, Gwithian and Hayle East, Hayle North and Hayle South in Camborne

and Redruth CC. A variation on this proposal additionally placed the Kerrier District ward of Constantine, Gweek and Mawnan in St Ives CC;

- d) the fourth counter-proposal placed the Hayle area in Camborne and Redruth CC and the four Lizard wards in St Ives CC as in the third counter-proposal, and the Kerrier District wards of Constantine, Gweek and Mawnan, Mabe and Budock, and Stithians in Truro and Falmouth CC; and
- e) the fifth counter-proposal placed the Restormel Borough ward of Lostwithiel in North Cornwall CC, and the Restormel Borough wards of Mevagissey and St Ewe in St Austell and Newquay CC so that the whole of Restormel Borough, except Lostwithiel, would be in one constituency.

Local Inquiry and Assistant Commissioner's Report

9. We were required to hold an inquiry. Following the announcement of the inquiry, a further thirty-eight representations were received. Of these, one approved of our proposals and the remainder objected, including one new counter-proposal which submitted that the Restormel Borough ward of St Columb should be included in North Cornwall CC. Other than this counter-proposal, no new issues were raised. Two further representations were received after the inquiry had closed but neither objected to nor approved of our proposals.

Assistant Commissioner's Report

10. The Assistant Commissioner reported that our proposal to increase the number of constituencies in Cornwall and the Isles of Scilly from five to six met with nearly universal support. He recommended changes to five of the six constituencies and submitted an alternative option should we consider that the electorate of one of his proposed constituencies was too low.

Assistant Commissioner's preferred option

The Restormel Borough wards of Mevagissey and St Ewe

11. The Assistant Commissioner reported that the northern boundary of the St Ewe ward extended to the edge of the built-up area of St Austell. However, our provisional recommendations placed this and the Mevagissey ward in a different constituency to St Austell which we had placed in St Austell and Newquay CC. After hearing the evidence and visiting the area, he considered that the main links of these wards were with St Austell and not Truro and that local ties would be broken by the inclusion of these wards in Truro and Falmouth CC. He accordingly recommended that our provisional recommendations be altered to include the two wards in St Austell and Newquay CC.

The Restormel Borough wards of Lostwithiel and St Columb

12. There was evidence, and some support, for the Lostwithiel ward to be included with other Restormel Borough wards in any of the three constituencies of St Austell and Newquay CC (as in our provisional recommendations), North Cornwall CC (with Bodmin), or South East Cornwall CC (with Liskeard, and where the ward is currently situated). Having recommended that the Mevagissey and St Ewe wards should be in St Austell and Newquay

CC, the Assistant Commissioner considered that a constituency comprising the whole of the Restormel Borough (including Lostwithiel, Mevagissey and St Ewe) and with an electorate of 71,348 would be too large when compared with the other Cornwall constituencies.

13. He considered it more important for the Mevagissey and St Ewe wards to be in the same constituency as St Austell than for Lostwithiel to be part of St Austell and Newquay CC. In his view, the ties of the Lostwithiel ward with Liskeard and the south coast were greater than those with Bodmin and North Cornwall. If Lostwithiel was not included in St Austell and Newquay CC, then for reasons of local ties and electoral equality, he considered that it should be included in South East Cornwall CC rather than in North Cornwall CC.

14. He rejected the late counter-proposal for the St Columb ward to be included in North Cornwall CC, so allowing the Lostwithiel ward to be included in St Austell and Newquay CC, on the basis that it did not appear to have wide support and he found no clear advantages to it.

The Carrick District wards of Mount Hawke, Perranporth and St Agnes

15. The Assistant Commissioner reported that these wards, particularly Perranporth and St Agnes, had stronger ties with Truro rather than with Camborne and Redruth and that placing them in Camborne and Redruth CC would cause inconvenience. He recommended that all three wards should be included in Truro and Falmouth CC and considered that, with Mevagissey and St Ewe being included in St Austell and Newquay CC, a constituency formed of the whole of Carrick District would have an acceptable electorate (67,316). He therefore recommended that the three wards should be included in Truro and Falmouth CC.

The town of Helston and the Lizard peninsular of Kerrier District

16. Our provisional recommendations placed the Lizard wards in a different constituency from Helston town. There was widespread opposition to the division of the two areas and the Assistant Commissioner considered that there were strong local ties between them. It was also argued that both Helston and the Lizard had greater ties with St Ives CC than with the rest of the Kerrier District. However, he did not accept that there was such a lack of common interest between the Helston and Lizard area and the rest of Kerrier District, including Camborne and Redruth, that they should be separated from it. He therefore recommended that the Helston and Lizard wards should be included in Camborne and Redruth CC.

17. He considered that the two Kerrier District wards of Breage and Crowan, and Porthleven and Sithney should remain in St Ives CC, based on their reasonably good communications to the west. This arrangement had the further advantage that Porthleven, which was a working fishing port, would remain in St Ives CC as it had links with the other principal fishing communities in west Cornwall at Newlyn and St Ives.

18. He noted that placing Helston and the Lizard in Camborne and Redruth CC would result in a St Ives CC electorate of 57,583 and a disparity of 10,353 across the county. He considered that the low electorate of St Ives CC could be justified in terms of Rule 7(b) by the need to respect the local ties between Helston and the Lizard. He considered that there were special geographical considerations in terms of Rule 6 that justified a departure from Rule 5 because St Ives CC included the Isles of Scilly, some twenty-eight miles from the mainland. In his view the size, shape and accessibility of the constituency made it desirable to

depart from the need for electoral disparity. In the event that we found the low electorate of his recommended St Ives CC to be unacceptable, he put forward an alternative recommendation (see Assistant Commissioner's alternative option below).

The Hayle area of Penwith District

19. A counter-proposal placed the three Hayle area wards of Gwinear, Gwithian and Hayle East, Hayle North and Hayle South in Camborne and Redruth CC. Although there are industrial links between Hayle and Camborne/Redruth, the Assistant Commissioner considered that the inclusion of the Hayle area in Camborne and Redruth CC would be likely to weaken the ties that now exist with the rest of Penwith District to the west. He therefore recommended that the Hayle area should remain in St Ives CC.

The Kerrier District wards of Constantine, Gweek and Mawnan, Mabe and Budock, and Stithians

20. Various alternatives were submitted as to which constituency should contain these wards. He reported a submission that the ward of Constantine, Gweek and Mawnan should be in St Ives CC and he described alternative proposals that all three wards should be included in Truro and Falmouth CC, or that the wards looked to Camborne and Redruth and so should be included in a constituency with those towns. He concluded that the wards had ties with each other and that the Constantine, Gweek and Mawnan ward in particular looked to Camborne and Redruth. He recommended that the wards should be included in Camborne and Redruth CC, as in our provisional recommendations.

Names of constituencies

21. He rejected, with one exception, all the alternative names submitted because he had not recommended the suggested constituency boundaries or because he considered that the name had little or no support or did not better identify the area. He recommended that the constituency comprising Camborne, Redruth, Helston and the Lizard should be named Camborne and Helston CC. This name had been submitted by a member of the public and found some support at the inquiry.

Assistant Commissioner's alternative option

22. The Assistant Commissioner recognised that the 57,583 electorate of St Ives CC in his preferred option might prove to be too low to be acceptable to us and he therefore submitted an alternative. Nevertheless, he considered that his preferred option reflected local ties better than that alternative.

23. The alternative modified his preferred option in respect of three constituencies: Camborne and Redruth CC, St Ives CC and Truro and Falmouth CC. It adopted, in part, a counter-proposal that kept the Helston and Lizard wards together in St Ives CC and transferred the three wards comprising the Hayle area to Camborne and Redruth CC, creating a St Ives constituency with an increased electorate of 62,692.

24. He considered this option to be better than our provisional recommendations and his visit to the area suggested to him that the local ties between Helston and the Lizard were so strong that they ought to be retained in one constituency. He accepted that if they were placed

together in St Ives CC, the resulting size of the constituencies meant the only realistic option was to break the ties between the Hayle area and the rest of Penwith and include it in a Camborne and Redruth based constituency. A knock-on effect of this change would result in the Carrick District ward of Mount Hawke being in Camborne and Redruth CC in order to balance electorates. The name Camborne and Redruth CC would be retained.

25. The alternative option would produce a disparity of 7,163 which would be better than the 10,353 under his preferred option, but worse than the 2,838 under our provisional recommendations.

Revised Recommendations

26. We considered the Assistant Commissioner's report, the transcript of the inquiry, the written representations and all the evidence. We agreed with his conclusions about local ties but could not agree with his view that a very low electorate for St Ives CC was justified. We considered that there were advantages and disadvantages in both of the Assistant Commissioner's options and in our own proposals.

27. We noted that his preferred option would produce a very low electorate of 57,583 for St Ives CC (12,352 below the electoral quota). We also noted that the resulting disparity of 10,353 was high and only slightly lower than the existing disparity of 11,194, whereas our provisional recommendations produced a low disparity of 2,838.

28. We considered that, having been allocated an extra constituency when the county had such a marginal entitlement, it was inevitable that there would be some tension between Rules 5 and 7. The allocation of an extra constituency should provide an opportunity to improve electorates and markedly reduce the disparity. However, the Assistant Commissioner's preferred option had not achieved these desired improvements. We agreed with him that the presence of the Isles of Scilly twenty-eight miles offshore from the rest of St Ives CC did constitute a special geographical consideration in the terms of Rule 6, but we did not consider that the presence of the islands, with only 1,662 electors, rendered the proposed departure from Rule 5 desirable.

29. We concluded that we could not accept a St Ives CC with an electorate of only 57,583 when it was possible to achieve the desired aim of improving the constituency electorates whilst keeping Helston and the Lizard in one constituency. We therefore rejected the Assistant Commissioner's preferred option.

30. We considered that his alternative option produced acceptable electorates, although they were not as satisfactory as in our provisional recommendations, and would also allow Helston and the Lizard to be in the same constituency. Whilst local ties between Hayle and St Ives CC would be broken, there had been evidence of local ties between Hayle and Camborne and some support for the inclusion of the Hayle area in Camborne and Redruth CC. We therefore decided to accept his alternative option and to revise our recommendations.

31. We accordingly published the following revised recommendations:-

	2000 electorate
Camborne and Redruth CC	60,773
North Cornwall CC	62,214
South East Cornwall CC	67,018
St Austell and Newquay CC	67,936
St Ives CC	62,962
Truro and Falmouth CC	<u>64,587</u>
	<u>385,490</u>

Further Representations

32. Following publication of our revised recommendations, we received sixty-seven representations, of which ten approved of all or part of our proposals, four approved of part whilst objecting to other parts and fifty-three objected. Three of the objections were made in general terms only. Almost all the objectors expressed a preference for the Assistant Commissioner's preferred recommendations, or aspects of them, rather than his alternative option which we adopted as our revised recommendations.

33. The two main areas of objection were the inclusion of Hayle in a constituency with Camborne and Redruth CC instead of with St Ives CC and the placing of the Carrick District wards of Mount Hawke and St Agnes in different constituencies. Some objectors considered that constituencies should not cross district boundaries, even at the expense of poorer electorate figures.

34. No objections were received about our revised recommendations for North Cornwall CC, South East Cornwall CC and St Austell and Newquay CC. These constituencies were identical in both the Assistant Commissioner's preferred and alternative options.

Recommendation

35. We noted that the issues raised by the objectors were interrelated, each having a knock-on effect on the other, and that their wishes could not be met by making minor changes. We further noted that the objectors had not introduced any new evidence or viable alternative counter-proposal. The Assistant Commissioner's preferred option was the only available alternative that could meet all the objections. We had already made it clear that this preferred option would produce an unacceptably low electorate for St Ives CC, whilst his fall-back option achieved the desired aim of improving the electorates, markedly reducing the disparity and retaining Helston and the Lizard in one constituency.

36. We considered that the objectors had placed insufficient weight on the requirement of Rule 5 and too much weight on having constituencies coterminous with districts, which was not a statutory requirement. Comparisons made with other review areas where there were constituencies with low electorates were unhelpful because the circumstances in each area were different and in the comparisons used there was no viable alternative available. We also noted the significant support received for our revised recommendations from the two District Councils most directly affected by the revisions to Camborne and Redruth CC and St Ives CC.

37. We were satisfied that our revised recommendations did not need to be modified. We accordingly recommend the adoption of the following constituencies containing the wards as listed in Appendix C:-

	2000 electorate
Camborne and Redruth CC	60,773
North Cornwall CC	62,214
South East Cornwall CC	67,018
St Austell and Newquay CC	67,936
St Ives CC	62,962
Truro and Falmouth CC	<u>64,587</u>
	<u><u>385,490</u></u>

CUMBRIA

The Number of Electors

1. There are currently six constituencies in the County of Cumbria:-

	2000 electorate
Barrow and Furness CC	66,142
Carlisle BC	59,345
Copeland CC	54,071
Penrith and The Border CC	68,135
Westmorland and Lonsdale CC	70,303
Workington CC	<u>66,336</u>
	<u><u>384,332</u></u>

The Number of Constituencies

2. Cumbria had a 2000 parliamentary electorate of 384,332, which gave a theoretical entitlement to 5.4955 constituencies. With six constituencies, the average constituency electorate would be 64,055, which is 5,880 less than the electoral quota. With five constituencies, the average constituency electorate would be 76,866, which would be 6,931 above the electoral quota. We therefore decided that the county should continue to be allocated six constituencies. This allocation would recognise the special geographical considerations that are to be found in the county and it would result in significantly better electoral figures than would an allocation of five constituencies.

Provisional Recommendations

3. The electorates of the six existing constituencies ranged from 54,071 in Copeland CC to 70,303 in Westmorland and Lonsdale CC, a disparity of 16,232.

4. As a result of changes to the district ward boundaries, the South Lakeland District ward of Crake Valley, the City of Carlisle ward of Stanwix Urban and the Allerdale Borough ward of Waver are partly in one constituency and partly in another. Our provisional recommendations realigned the constituency boundaries with the new ward boundaries.

5. In addition, we provisionally recommended other changes to existing constituencies in order to increase the low electorates of both Carlisle BC and Copeland CC and to decrease the very large geographical area of Penrith and The Border CC, which we considered were undesirable. In forming our proposals, we took into account Cumbria's geographical features.

6. We proposed that the divided City of Carlisle ward of Stanwix Urban should be wholly included in Carlisle BC. We considered various options for further increasing the electorate of Carlisle BC, and proposed that the City of Carlisle ward of Wetheral should be transferred from Penrith and The Border CC to Carlisle BC. Although the M6 motorway created a physical division between the Wetheral ward and Carlisle, we did not feel that the motorway represented a significant barrier as good road links existed between them. Under our proposals, the electorate of Carlisle BC would be increased to 63,001 (1,054 below the county average) and the geographical size of Penrith and The Border CC would be reduced.

7. We proposed that the divided Allerdale Borough ward of Waver should be wholly included in Workington CC. We also proposed that the Allerdale Borough wards of Marsh, Wampool and Wigton should be placed in Workington CC and the Boltons ward should be placed in Penrith and The Border CC. These proposals would also reduce the geographical size of Penrith and The Border CC and improve its shape, whilst reducing its electorate.

8. We were concerned about the very low electorate of Copeland CC, which was 9,984 below the county average and 15,864 below the electoral quota. While we recognised that the boundary of the constituency, which is coterminous with the borough boundary, had remained unchanged for many years, we did not consider that this precluded us from proposing changes to it. We proposed that the Allerdale Borough wards of Clifton, Dalton and Harrington and the South Lakeland District ward of Broughton should be included in Copeland CC. Under our proposals, the electorate of Copeland CC would be increased to 61,048 (3,007 below the county average and 8,887 below the electoral quota). We considered that, because of the physical geography of the area, the transfer of these wards would create less inconvenience to electors than would the transfer of wards from elsewhere.

9. We proposed that the South Lakeland District ward of Crake Valley should be wholly included in Barrow and Furness CC. This proposal, together with the transfer of the Broughton ward, would bring the electorates of the two constituencies closer together and the electorate of Westmorland and Lonsdale CC closer to the county average.

10. The overall effect of our proposals was that the electorates of Carlisle BC and Copeland CC would be brought closer to the county average and the electoral quota. The constituency with the largest geographical area would still be Penrith and The Border CC, but its area would be reduced. As a consequence, its electorate would reduce from 68,135 to 58,303. The changes reduced the disparity between the constituencies with the highest and lowest electorates from 16,232 to 9,095.

11. Our provisional recommendations were:-

	2000 electorate
Barrow and Furness CC	67,279
Carlisle BC	63,001
Copeland CC	61,048
Penrith and The Border CC	58,303
Westmorland and Lonsdale CC	67,303
Workington CC	67,398
	<hr/>
	384,332

12. In announcing the provisional recommendations, our news release did not record, as it might have done, that we had maintained an allocation of six constituencies for the county, even though its theoretical entitlement had fallen just below the arithmetic mean, to take account of the geographical features of this particular area.

Representations

13. Following publication of our provisional recommendations we received eighty-six representations, the majority of which objected to all or part of our proposals. However, no

one disputed our recommendation to continue to allocate six seats to the county and it was generally accepted that realignment to follow new ward boundaries was necessary. The issues raised in the objections were principally contained in four counter-proposals, of which there were two main ones:-

- a) the first proposed that existing constituency boundaries should be retained except where wards were divided between seats; and
- b) the second transferred the City of Carlisle ward of Stanwix Rural to Carlisle BC, retained the Allerdale Borough ward of Wigton in Penrith and The Border CC, and placed the four Allerdale Borough wards of Crummock, Dalton, Derwent Valley and Keswick in Copeland CC and the Allerdale Borough wards of Clifton and Harrington in Workington CC.

Local Inquiry and Assistant Commissioner's Report

14. We were required to hold an inquiry. Following the announcement of the inquiry a further seventeen representations were received, but no new issues emerged. The main issues raised at the local inquiry were the four counter-proposals and other local issues.

The South Lakeland District wards of Broughton and Crake Valley

15. The Assistant Commissioner reported that there was significant local opposition to, and no support for, the Broughton ward being included in Copeland CC. She saw no evidence of any affinity between the ward and Copeland, but considered that there were clear links between the ward and Barrow and Furness CC. She accordingly recommended that the Broughton ward be included in Barrow and Furness CC.

16. She reported that there was both support for, and opposition to, our proposal for the Crake Valley ward. She considered that the electorate of Westmorland and Lonsdale CC was too high and that the ward had ties with Barrow and Furness CC. She supported our proposal that the Crake Valley ward should be wholly included in Barrow and Furness CC.

The City of Carlisle wards of Wetheral, Stanwix Rural and Stanwix Urban

17. The Assistant Commissioner reported that there was more support for, than opposition to, the Wetheral ward being included in Carlisle BC and that the ward had similarities with the Dalston ward, which was included in Carlisle BC at the last review. From the evidence submitted, she considered that Wetheral had close social links with Carlisle. She considered that Wetheral was separated from the rural communities to the east by the River Eden and that the M6 motorway was no longer a barrier between the ward and Carlisle. She accordingly supported our proposal that the Wetheral ward should be included in Carlisle BC.

18. She considered the evidence in support of the second counter-proposal that the Stanwix Rural ward should be transferred from Penrith and The Border CC to Carlisle BC. However, she considered our proposal to transfer the Wetheral ward to Carlisle BC would increase that constituency's electorate sufficiently and reported that if, in addition, the Stanwix Rural ward was transferred to Carlisle BC it would take the electorate of that constituency further from the county average. She recognised that to transfer the Stanwix Rural ward to Carlisle BC would benefit Penrith and The Border CC, but felt that the benefit

to that constituency could be found elsewhere. She therefore rejected that part of the counter-proposal.

19. She reported that there was unanimous support for our proposal to include the whole of the Stanwix Urban ward in the Carlisle constituency and accordingly agreed with us.

The Allerdale Borough wards of Clifton, Crummock, Dalton, Derwent Valley, Harrington and Keswick

20. The Assistant Commissioner reported that there was strong opposition to our proposal for the Clifton, Dalton and Harrington wards, particularly in respect of the Clifton and Harrington wards. She considered that all three wards had close links with the town of Workington, although the evidence indicated that Dalton's links with Workington were weaker but that the ward had close links with the other neighbouring Allerdale Borough wards.

21. She considered, and rejected, the first counter-proposal that Copeland CC should remain unaltered because of the unacceptably low electorate that would result. She also reported that the second counter-proposal transferred the Dalton ward (together with the Crummock, Derwent Valley and Keswick wards) from Workington CC to Copeland CC. She endorsed our proposal that the Dalton ward be included in Copeland CC, but recommended that the Clifton and Harrington wards should remain in Workington CC.

22. She found force in the argument that the Crummock, Derwent Valley and Keswick wards, together with the Dalton ward, were the most appropriate to transfer, as they shared a degree of common interest with Copeland. She noted that the Crummock, Dalton and Derwent Valley wards were contiguous with Copeland and considered they had more in common with Copeland than with Workington. She also noted the employment and road links they had with Whitehaven. She considered that the ward of Dalton was the link between these wards and Whitehaven and that its inclusion as part of the same constituency was essential. She accepted the arguments made in support of the counter-proposal and accordingly recommended the transfer of the Crummock, Dalton, Derwent Valley and Keswick wards from Workington CC to Copeland CC.

The Allerdale Borough wards of Boltons, Marsh, Wampool, Waver and Wigton

23. The Assistant Commissioner reported that, whilst there was little support for the transfer of the Boltons ward to Penrith and The Border CC, there was also negligible opposition. She considered that, when taking account of her other recommendations for the two constituencies, the transfer was unnecessary. She accordingly recommended that the Boltons ward should remain in Workington CC.

24. She found little evidence to support the first counter-proposal which argued that the Marsh and Wampool wards had a stronger association with Penrith and The Border CC than with Workington CC. She felt they linked naturally and had more in common with the rural hinterlands of Silloth, Solway and Holme. She supported our proposal that the Marsh and Wampool wards should be included in Workington CC.

25. She also reported that our proposal to include the whole of the Waver ward in Workington CC had substantial support. She felt that including it in Penrith and The Border CC, as in the first counter-proposal, would make the electorate of that constituency too large. She supported our proposal that the Waver ward should be included in Workington CC. She reported that our proposal to transfer the Wigton ward was widely opposed. She also noted that Penrith and The Border CC was comprised of market towns with Penrith and Wigton being the largest and with similar characteristics. She further noted that the Wigton ward had good road links with Penrith and The Border CC and that historically, the ward had been in that constituency. She accordingly rejected our proposal and recommended that the Wigton ward should remain in Penrith and The Border CC.

Other issues

26. The Assistant Commissioner recommended that the designation of the Carlisle constituency be changed from borough constituency to county constituency. She noted that this change would mean all six constituencies in Cumbria would be designated as county constituencies, reflecting the very large size of the county and the urban and rural mix of all six constituencies. She rejected the other minor counter-proposals, reporting that there was little support for any of them.

Revised Recommendations

27. We agreed with all but one of her recommendations. We decided not to accept the Assistant Commissioner's recommendation to change the designation of the Carlisle constituency from borough constituency to county constituency. We noted that the proposal had been made on the last day of the inquiry, in connection with the second counter-proposal to include the Stanwix Rural ward in the Carlisle constituency, which we had rejected. The Carlisle constituency as proposed contained predominately urban wards and the three rural wards totalled only 8,791 electors out of a total electorate of 63,001.

28. We accordingly published the following revised recommendations:-

	2000 electorate
Barrow and Furness CC	69,142
Carlisle BC	63,001
Copeland CC	62,517
Penrith and The Border CC	61,000
Westmorland and Lonsdale CC	67,303
Workington CC	<u>61,369</u>
	<u>384,332</u>

Further Representations

29. Following publication of our revised recommendations we received eighty-five representations, including a letter signed by fourteen people, a petition with 285 names, proforma questionnaires from 216 individuals, and the results of a MORI poll of 204 Keswick residents. While a number of representations supported our revisions, the majority opposed them. There were calls for a second inquiry. It was further suggested that there had been inadequate consultation about the second counter-proposal and that it had only been

brought forward at the commencement of the inquiry. There was also criticism of the Assistant Commissioner's report. The main areas of objection were:-

- a) the inclusion of the Broughton and Crake Valley wards in Barrow and Furness CC;
- b) the exclusion of the Stanwix Rural ward from Carlisle BC where it was stated in one representation that the currently decreasing electorate in the Carlisle constituency would be addressed by the ward's inclusion in that constituency;
- c) the proposed constituencies and, in particular, in which constituency the wards of Boltons, Marsh, Wampool, Waver and Wigton should be included;
- d) the proposal to include the Crummock, Dalton, Derwent Valley and Keswick wards in Copeland CC; and
- e) suggestions that the Copeland constituency be called Copeland and Keswick.

The Broughton and Crake Valley wards

30. We noted that the inclusion of the Broughton ward together with the whole of the Crake Valley ward in Westmorland and Lonsdale CC would increase the large area of that constituency and that our provisional proposal that the Broughton ward should be included in Copeland CC, which addressed the problem, had received no support before or at the inquiry. The Assistant Commissioner reported links between Broughton and Barrow and Furness CC and considered that the only disadvantage of the transfer would be the awkward shape of the constituency that would be produced. She also reported that Barrow and Furness CC had seen the greatest decrease in electorate in the county since the last review, so justifying an increase to its electorate.

31. We considered that the limited objection to the revised recommendations and the nature of those objections did not warrant any further change in this area and so we proposed no alterations to our revised recommendations in respect of these wards.

The Stanwix Rural ward

32. We noted that our revised recommendations produced a Penrith and The Border constituency with an electorate of 61,000 whereas the transfer of the Stanwix Rural ward (3,094 electors) would reduce this figure to 57,906, so increasing the disparity in the county. We considered this matter had been fully debated at the inquiry and so decided not to alter our proposals in this area.

The Boltons, Marsh, Wampool, Waver and Wigton wards

33. We noted that the counter-proposal to exchange the Marsh and Waver wards with the Wigton ward would be unworkable because the Wigton ward would become detached from the rest of the Workington constituency. The remaining counter-proposals had no other support. We considered that the placing of these wards had been fully debated at the inquiry and that the latest representations contained no new evidence. We therefore decided to make no further change in respect of these five wards.

The Crummock, Dalton, Derwent Valley and Keswick wards

34. We noted the large number of objections received and the strength of local opinion, particularly from Keswick, about their lack of ties with Whitehaven, and we carefully reviewed all the evidence submitted in respect of this area. We remained satisfied that the electorate of Copeland CC was too low and that it should be increased. The Assistant Commissioner had agreed with us and considered that the geographical circumstances were not so extreme as to justify the continuation of such a disparity. She reported that there were no geographical barriers to prevent Copeland CC being extended northwards or eastwards (whereas there are barriers to the south). The electorate had fallen since the last review (when it had been decided that special geographical considerations permitted a very low electorate) whereas most of the rest of the county had remained stable, and the electoral quota had increased.

35. We had provisionally recommended the addition to Copeland CC of the Allerdale Borough wards adjoining Workington Town (and the South Lakeland ward of Broughton). There had been many objections, both written and at the local inquiry, which called for the existing Copeland CC to be retained. The Assistant Commissioner had disagreed but also reported that our provisional recommendations were flawed and rejected them, too. However, evidence had been given at the inquiry confirming that there was no geographical barrier to extending Copeland CC north eastwards into Allerdale Borough and she had accepted the second counter-proposal concerning the rural wards of Allerdale in this respect.

36. Many objectors stated that there were no ties between Keswick and Whitehaven. However, that was not the correct criterion. There was strong evidence given at the inquiry of local ties and links between the southern, rural wards of Allerdale Borough and the contiguous, northern, rural wards of Copeland Borough. In any event, evidence had been given at the inquiry of links that Keswick and the wards to its west had with Whitehaven and Sellafield.

37. There were demands for a second inquiry. However, for the reasons above we concluded that, despite the number of objections and the strength of local feeling, there was no good evidence to warrant rejection of the Assistant Commissioner's recommendation in respect of the constituency boundaries and certainly not for a second inquiry.

38. It was suggested that there was inadequate consultation about the second counter-proposal and that it had only been brought forward at the commencement of the inquiry. We noted that the second counter-proposal for the inclusion of the Crummock, Derwent Valley and Keswick wards in the Copeland constituency had been submitted within the one month period for representations to be made and so was made on time. It had been included in the representations placed on deposit for public inspection at locations around the county before the inquiry opened and was referred to in our inquiry statement. Revisions to the counter-proposal had been submitted later, but the only revisions made agreed with our provisional recommendation that the Dalton ward be transferred to Copeland CC, and proposed that the Broughton ward should be included in Barrow and Furness CC and not, as originally counter-proposed (and as we had proposed), in Copeland CC.

39. We particularly noted that claims that the second counter-proposal had been submitted late, and that there had therefore been no chance to study it, were inaccurate. It was made on time. Although the counter-proposal had not initially included the transfer of the

Dalton ward, this was then in issue as it already formed part of the provisionally recommended Copeland constituency. The transcript of the local inquiry clearly showed that interested persons had been aware of the counter-proposal.

40. We considered that criticism of the Assistant Commissioner's report was unfounded. The transcript clearly showed that she had properly based her decisions on the evidence given at the inquiry. She had given everyone at the inquiry every opportunity to inform her about local factors and she had given every opportunity for the evidence to be questioned to ensure that she was correctly informed. She had also visited the area herself.

41. We noted that it was suggested that the name of the Copeland constituency should be changed to Copeland and Keswick to recognise the inclusion of the Allerdale Borough wards. Reference had first been made to this change of name in the late revision to the second counter-proposal. It had also been referred to on the third day of the inquiry but had not been followed up in questioning by those opposing the counter-proposal, and was not referred to by the Assistant Commissioner in her report. The Keswick electorate only formed about 7% of the constituency. There was little support for the change of the name and we decided not to alter our recommendations in this respect.

Recommendation

42. In considering these objections we had again considered the Assistant Commissioner's report, the transcript of the inquiry and the written representations, and we reviewed the evidence area by area. We were satisfied that our revised recommendations did not need to be modified. We therefore recommend the adoption of the following constituencies containing the wards as listed in Appendix C:-

	2000 electorate
Barrow and Furness CC	69,142
Carlisle BC	63,001
Copeland CC	62,517
Penrith and The Border CC	61,000
Westmorland and Lonsdale CC	67,303
Workington CC	<u>61,369</u>
	<u><u>384,332</u></u>

DERBYSHIRE AND DERBY

The Number of Electors

1. There are currently ten constituencies in the Counties of Derbyshire and Derby:-

	2000 electorate
Amber Valley CC	72,946
Bolsover CC	67,592
Chesterfield BC	73,317
Derby North BC	76,049
Derby South BC	76,762
Erewash CC	78,750
High Peak CC	73,826
North East Derbyshire CC	72,418
South Derbyshire CC	80,679
West Derbyshire CC	74,864
	<hr/>
	<hr/>
	747,203

The Number of Constituencies

2. Following the Derbyshire (City of Derby) (Structural Change) Order 1995, the City of Derby ceased to form part of the County of Derbyshire and became a new unitary authority. The remaining eight districts and boroughs in the county formed the County of Derbyshire.

3. Derbyshire had a 2000 parliamentary electorate of 575,843, which gave a theoretical entitlement to 8.23 constituencies. If reviewed separately, Derbyshire would be allocated eight constituencies, producing a county average of 71,980, which is only 2,045 above the electoral quota. Derby had a 2000 electorate of 171,360, which gave a theoretical entitlement to 2.45 constituencies. If reviewed separately and allocated two constituencies, the county average of Derby would be 85,680, which is 15,745 above the electoral quota and 5,745 over our 10,000 threshold. If three constituencies were allocated, the county average would be 57,120, which is 12,815 below the electoral quota and 2,815 over our 10,000 threshold. Additionally, as Derby has seventeen wards (with an average electorate of 10,080) there would inevitably be some measure of disparity between the constituencies whether two or three seats were allocated. If the two counties were reviewed together, the combined electorate of 747,203 would give a theoretical entitlement of 10.68 indicating an allocation of eleven constituencies, one more than the current allocation.

4. We gave careful consideration as to whether the two counties should be reviewed separately, or whether they should continue to be considered together. If ten constituencies were retained in Derbyshire and Derby, the county average is 74,720, which would be 4,785 above the electoral quota. If eleven constituencies were allocated, the county average would be 67,928, which is just 2,007 below the electoral quota. We therefore decided to treat the two counties as one review area and to allocate an extra, eleventh, constituency because to review Derby separately would produce constituencies with electorates significantly above, or below, the electoral quota.

5. The electorates of the ten existing constituencies in Derbyshire and Derby ranged from 80,679 in South Derbyshire CC to 67,592 in Bolsover CC, a disparity of 13,087.

Provisional Recommendations

6. The allocation of an additional constituency to Derbyshire and Derby would inevitably result in major changes to some of the existing constituencies in the counties. We tried to keep these changes to a minimum, although the distribution of the electorate made it difficult to create constituencies that did not divide some districts between constituencies and break some local ties.

7. Seven City of Derby wards, three Borough of Chesterfield wards and three District of Derbyshire Dales wards are currently divided between constituencies. We noted that realigning the constituency boundaries with these new ward boundaries would affect seven constituencies.

8. We considered that the combined review area had a clear rural/urban divide between the west and the east. This limited the options available for the creation of a new constituency in the west without serious disruption to local ties and the crossing of district boundaries. We also considered that two constituencies should be created within the City of Derby, each containing seven wards, and that the remaining three wards of the City should form part of a new constituency that would also include Heanor. This would allow the problem of the high electorates in the four largest constituencies of Derby North BC, Derby South BC, Erewash CC and South Derbyshire CC to be addressed. However, the shape and electorates of the wards made it difficult to introduce a new constituency without involving substantial change.

9. We proposed that the four northern Derbyshire Dales District wards should be included in West Derbyshire CC to reduce the electorate of High Peak CC. We also proposed that the two southern City of Derby wards should be transferred from South Derbyshire CC to Derby South BC to reduce the electorate of the former. These two recommendations would make High Peak CC and South Derbyshire CC coterminous with the districts of the same names.

10. We proposed a new Derby South BC consisting of seven southern City of Derby wards and a new Derby West BC consisting of seven north-western City of Derby wards.

11. We proposed that an additional, eleventh, constituency named Derby North and Heanor BC should be formed from three north-eastern City of Derby wards, together with four western Erewash Borough wards and the five south-eastern Amber Valley Borough wards. We also proposed that the four Amber Valley Borough wards comprising Belper should be transferred from West Derbyshire CC to a renamed Belper and Ripley BC.

12. We further proposed that the current Chesterfield BC should be left unchanged, apart from the transfer of the greater part of one Chesterfield Borough ward to North East Derbyshire CC. This would reduce the electorate of Chesterfield BC to 71,299.

13. We also proposed that the North East Derbyshire ward of Holmewood and Heath be transferred from North East Derbyshire CC to Bolsover CC in order to increase the electorate of the latter to 70,448.

14. Our proposals would reduce the disparity from 13,087 to 9,617 and produce electorates for all eleven constituencies that were within 5,798 of the county average.

15. Our provisional recommendations were:-

	2000 electorate
Belper and Ripley CC	64,197
Bolsover CC	70,448
Chesterfield BC	71,299
Derby North and Heanor BC	64,867
Derby South BC	69,584
Derby West BC	71,747
Erewash CC	68,934
High Peak CC	68,061
North East Derbyshire CC	71,580
South Derbyshire CC	62,130
West Derbyshire CC	64,356
	<hr/>
	<hr/>
	747,203

Representations

16. Following publication of our provisional recommendations, we received 180 representations (including three counter-proposals) of which forty-nine expressed support for all or part of our proposals, twenty-three expressed support whilst objecting to other parts of our proposals and 106 (including six petitions and one set of proforma letters with a total of 1,217 signatures) objected to our proposals.

17. The main issues raised in the objections were contained in the three principal counter-proposals, which had some common features:-

- a) the first counter-proposal affected West Derbyshire CC and three proposed constituencies within and to the north and east of the City of Derby. It suggested that fifteen eastern Amber Valley Borough wards should form an Amber Valley CC; seven City of Derby wards should form a new Derby North BC; the Derbyshire Dales District and three western Amber Valley Borough wards should be included in West Derbyshire CC which should be renamed Derbyshire Dales CC; and the remaining five Amber Valley Borough wards, three City of Derby wards and four western Erewash Borough wards should be included in Mid Derbyshire CC. Other representations supported all or parts of, or made suggestions similar to, this counter-proposal;
- b) the second counter-proposal related to the north-east of the county. It suggested that the North East Derbyshire District wards of Killamarsh East and Killamarsh West should be included in Bolsover CC and that the North East Derbyshire District wards of Holmewood and Heath and Sutton should be included in North East Derbyshire CC; and

c) the third counter-proposal included three options:-

- i) the first moved three City of Derby wards. It proposed that the Derwent ward should be included in Derby North and Heanor BC instead of Spondon; the Spondon ward should be included in a renamed Derby South and Spondon BC instead of Blagreaves; and the Blagreaves ward should be included in Derby West BC instead of Derwent;
- ii) the second option amounted to a comprehensive reconfiguration and affected all of the constituencies in both the county and the city except High Peak CC and South Derbyshire CC. In the south-east of the county it proposed a renamed and reconfigured Alfreton, Heanor and Ripley CC; and the City of Derby wards were reconfigured and included a renamed Derby North and Derwent Valley CC. In the north-east of the county the counter-proposal put forward an entirely new division of the constituencies surrounding Chesterfield and proposed a new and renamed Dronfield and Bolsover CC and a new and renamed Shirebrook and Clay Cross CC. There were consequential alterations affecting the other three constituencies; and
- iii) the third option differed from the second only in its treatment of the two constituencies surrounding Chesterfield and one of the Chesterfield Borough wards. It created a new and renamed Bolsover and Clay Cross CC and a reconfigured North East Derbyshire CC, which replaced our constituency of that name.

Local Inquiry and Assistant Commissioner's Report

18. We were required to hold an inquiry. Following the announcement of the inquiry a further seventy-five representations were received, some of which were in response to the counter-proposals to our provisional recommendations.

19. The main issues raised at the local inquiry were the counter-proposals and some other local issues. The Assistant Commissioner supported our decision to treat Derbyshire and Derby as one review area. He also supported our decision to allocate eleven constituencies to the combined area and recommended the adoption of the provisional recommendations for seven of the eleven constituencies.

High Peak CC

20. The Assistant Commissioner reported that the evidence regarding our proposals for this constituency was overwhelmingly in support. He had no hesitation in recommending that we confirm our provisional recommendations in respect of High Peak CC.

South Derbyshire CC

21. Similarly, he considered that our proposals for this constituency had several advantages. He noted the general support for our proposals and the absence of reasoned local

opposition. He recommended that our provisional recommendations in respect of South Derbyshire CC should be confirmed.

Erewash CC

22. He noted the support for our proposals for this constituency and the objections to the counter-proposals contained in the third counter-proposal. Whilst he acknowledged that the counter-proposal might appear to have some logic to it by consolidating the rural parts of the constituency, he considered it made very little geographical sense in the urban Ilkeston area and generated a large amount of local objection. He recommended that our provisional recommendations in respect of Erewash CC should be confirmed.

Chesterfield BC

23. In Chesterfield's case, he dismissed the second and third options in the third counter-proposal, which proposed alternative configurations for the wards in the north-east of Chesterfield. He reported that there was no local support for them and they offered no advantages over our proposals. He therefore recommended that our provisional recommendations for Chesterfield BC should be confirmed.

Bolsover CC

24. There was support for our proposals, but the Assistant Commissioner also highlighted objections to our proposal to include the Holmewood and Heath ward in Bolsover CC, rather than in North East Derbyshire CC. He reported that the main arguments were that the ties of the ward were with the town of Clay Cross and the North East Derbyshire area generally, rather than with Bolsover.

25. In considering the second counter-proposal, which sought to include the Killamarsh East and Killamarsh West wards in Bolsover CC rather than in North East Derbyshire CC, whilst retaining the Holmewood and Heath ward in North East Derbyshire CC, he noted the strong objections to the transfer of Killamarsh, and he described the support the transfer attracted as muted. He also noted the increased disparity in the electorates if the Killamarsh wards were not transferred and the Holmewood and Heath ward were to remain in North East Derbyshire CC.

26. The third counter-proposal (second option), which created new constituencies of Shirebrook and Clay Cross CC and Dronfield and Bolsover CC, and the third option that would create a new Bolsover and Clay Cross CC, were dismissed. He considered that there was no local support, little understanding of any local ties that might be affected and little positive justification for what he described as substantial changes.

27. He considered that it was very difficult to resolve the issues raised by the Holmewood and Heath ward. It had strong links with North East Derbyshire CC for the purposes of Rule 7, but retaining it there tended to conflict with Rule 5, which would be resolved by including the ward in Bolsover CC. He concluded that preference should be given to Rule 5 in this case, that no substantial inconvenience would be caused if the ward were transferred, and that our provisional recommendations for Bolsover CC should be confirmed.

North East Derbyshire CC

28. Having already made his decisions regarding Chesterfield BC and Bolsover CC, the Assistant Commissioner dismissed alternative proposals for this constituency and confirmed our provisional recommendations for North East Derbyshire CC.

Derby South BC

29. He noted the support that our proposals for this constituency had received and that the main issues raised in the representations concerned the connections between various City of Derby wards. He concluded that the Boulton and Chellaston wards should be kept together and that the wards formerly in the Derby South constituency should also remain together. He recommended that our provisional recommendations for Derby South BC be confirmed.

Belper and Ripley CC, Derby North and Heanor BC, Derby West BC and West Derbyshire CC

30. He noted the support that our proposals for these constituencies had received. In considering which City of Derby wards should form the second Derby constituency, which we had named Derby West BC, it was his view that Abbey, Darley, Littleover, Mackworth and Mickleover formed an obvious grouping for its core. The main argument regarding the second Derby constituency concerned which grouping of northern wards should be added to this core. He was not convinced that there were sufficient ties between the wards of Chaddesden and Oakwood to require that the two be kept within the same constituency, whilst Chaddesden, like Derwent, appeared to him to be part of the heart of the City.

31. He accepted the considerable evidence about the extent of the links between Derby and Heanor, between Heanor and Ripley and, to a lesser extent, between Heanor, Alfreton and Ripley, and Heanor and Codnor, and also, the existence of links along the Derwent Valley.

32. Our proposals for West Derbyshire CC were largely supported. There was also support for bringing the whole of the Derbyshire Dales District within a single constituency, with the arguments being which Amber Valley Borough wards, or North East Derbyshire District wards, should also go into the constituency. He dismissed the third counter-proposal option that included three North East Derbyshire District wards, reporting that there was little support, and some local opposition, for this proposal.

33. With regard to our proposals for the inclusion of the Amber Valley Borough ward of Duffield in West Derbyshire CC, he concluded that more weight should be given to the breaking of ties between Duffield and Belper, or between Duffield and the wards in West Derbyshire CC, than to whether the proposal might reinforce other ties between Duffield and other Amber Valley Borough, or City of Derby wards. He also reported that, whilst Duffield's association with West Derbyshire may have made sense in combination with Belper, there was less merit in retaining the linkage between Duffield and the South West Parishes ward and severing the link with Belper.

34. He confirmed his preference for moving the Duffield ward into the same constituency as Belper. With regard to the Amber Valley Borough ward of Crich, he found there was less inconvenience and more advantage in moving Crich into West Derbyshire and retaining the

link between Belper and Duffield. He was not convinced that the unusual geographical shape of Mid Derbyshire CC in the first counter-proposal should be a reason for not accepting the counter-proposal.

35. In respect of Mid Derbyshire CC, he considered that the constituency proposed in the first counter-proposal would encompass peripheral wards of the City of Derby, which could be separated from the City more easily than any other combination of wards. He considered that links between the north of Derby and Belper were stronger than links between Derby and Heanor. In respect of these four constituencies he concluded that the first counter-proposal had more advantages than our provisional recommendations and any of the other counter-proposals and that it should be adopted.

Constituency names

36. The Assistant Commissioner recommended that West Derbyshire CC should be renamed Derbyshire Dales CC, as suggested in the first counter-proposal.

Revised Recommendations

37. We agreed with all of the Assistant Commissioner's recommendations. We noted that he had considered this to be a finely balanced and difficult exercise. We agreed with his conclusion that the advantages of the first counter-proposal outweighed our provisional recommendations, particularly as he had reported some strong local ties that justified his recommendations. However, we had some concern with two points in his report.

38. Our first concern was his suggestion that, as Rule 4 would be departed from, it was particularly relevant to have regard to special geographical considerations including the size, shape, and accessibility of the constituencies around Derby for the purposes of Rule 6. We disagreed and remain of the view that special geographical considerations relate mainly to large, often sparsely populated, areas of difficult terrain, to islands or estuaries, and that these cannot be said to apply around Derby. However, we did not consider that his reasoning detracted from his recommendation.

39. Our second point of concern was the poor shape of the counter-proposed Mid Derbyshire CC, which ran in a narrow band north to south from Belper to north Derby and then eastwards around Derby and into Erewash. However, he had considered that the unusual shape should not be a reason for not accepting the counter-proposal and we noted that the principal lines of communication ran north to south between Derby and Belper. We therefore accepted his conclusion that there would be no difficulty in moving between the different parts of the constituency.

40. We accepted the Assistant Commissioner's revised recommendations for Amber Valley CC, Derby North BC, Derbyshire Dales CC and Mid Derbyshire CC, and accepted his recommendations for no change to the other seven constituencies. We accordingly published the following revised recommendations:-

2000 electorate

Amber Valley CC	66,406
Bolsover CC	70,448
Chesterfield BC	71,299
Derby North BC	71,311
Derby South BC	69,584
Derbyshire Dales CC	62,511
Erewash CC	68,934
High Peak CC	68,061
Mid Derbyshire CC	64,939
North East Derbyshire CC	71,580
South Derbyshire CC	62,130
	<hr/>
	747,203

Further Representations

41. Following publication of our revised recommendations we received twenty-five representations. Fourteen representations approved of the revised recommendations. Seven representations, including two new counter-proposals, objected to the revised recommendations. There were three further representations, including a new counter-proposal that supported some parts of the revised recommendations whilst objecting to other parts.

The first new counter-proposal

42. The first new counter-proposal suggested that the four Amber Valley Borough wards that formed Belper should be included in a modified Amber Valley CC; the two Amber Valley Borough wards of Kilburn, Denby and Holbrook, and of Shipley Park, Horsley and Horsley Woodhouse and the two City of Derby wards of Chaddesden and Derwent should be included in a modified Mid Derbyshire CC; the City of Derby ward of Allestree and the Amber Valley Borough ward of Duffield should be included in a modified Derby North BC that should be renamed Derby North West BC. Other representations supported parts of this new counter-proposal.

The second new counter-proposal

43. The second counter-proposal suggested that Mid Derbyshire CC should include the City of Derby ward of Darley instead of Oakwood and that it should be renamed Derwent Valley CC. It proposed that Derby South BC should be renamed Derby East BC and that it should include the three City of Derby wards of Chaddesden, Derwent and Oakwood. It also proposed that Derby North BC should be renamed Derby South West BC and should include the three City of Derby wards of Arboretum, Blagreaves and Normanton. It further proposed that Amber Valley CC be renamed Heanor and Ripley CC and that Derbyshire Dales CC should revert to its former name of West Derbyshire CC.

The Erewash Borough wards of Ockbrook and Borrowash, and West Hallam and Dale Abbey

44. One representation objected to the composition of Mid Derbyshire CC, but made no alternative proposals. A second representation objected to the inclusion of the Ockbrook and Borrowash ward in Mid Derbyshire CC and suggested its inclusion in South Derbyshire CC. A third representation objected to the inclusion of the Ockbrook and Borrowash, and West Hallam and Dale Abbey wards in Mid Derbyshire CC.

The Amber Valley Borough ward of Crich

45. One representation expressed concern about the inclusion of the Crich ward in Derbyshire Dales CC.

Other Issues

46. Two representations objected to, or expressed concern about, the name of Derbyshire Dales CC. One representation objected to the four revised constituencies and preferred the provisional recommendations. One representation expressed reservations about Mid Derbyshire CC but did not wish formally to object to the revised recommendations.

Recommendation

47. We noted the support for, and the limited number of objections to, the revised recommendations. We considered that no new evidence had been submitted to suggest that the revised recommendations should be changed.

48. We considered that the new counter-proposals clearly could, and should, have been made at the local inquiry where the composition of the new constituencies and the surrounding area was the chief subject of discussion. The submission of these new counter-proposals at such a late stage, for areas that had been fully debated, made it difficult to determine what support, if any, they might have generated without holding a second local inquiry, but it could reasonably be assumed that they would raise strong objections from those who supported the revised recommendations. Moreover, the issues that motivated the new counter-proposals had not inspired significant comment or objection at the inquiry from the electors in the wards concerned. In any event, the objection to, and the new counter-proposal affecting South Derbyshire CC and Derby South BC respectively, could not be accepted because the final recommendations for these constituencies had already been published. Furthermore, the first new counter-proposal took the electoral disparity across the counties beyond 10,000 and left only one constituency consisting solely of City of Derby wards.

49. All of the other issues raised had been discussed at the inquiry and had been dealt with in the Assistant Commissioner's report. With regard to the name of Derbyshire Dales CC, he had reported that there had been considerable support for it.

50. We were satisfied that our revised recommendations did not need to be modified. We therefore recommend the adoption of the following constituencies containing the wards as listed in Appendix C:-

2000 electorate

Amber Valley CC	66,406
Bolsover CC	70,448
Chesterfield BC	71,299
Derby North BC	71,311
Derby South BC	69,584
Derbyshire Dales CC	62,511
Erewash CC	68,934
High Peak CC	68,061
Mid Derbyshire CC	64,939
North East Derbyshire CC	71,580
South Derbyshire CC	<u>62,130</u>
	<u>747,203</u>

DEVON, PLYMOUTH AND TORBAY

The Number of Electors

1. There are currently eleven constituencies in the Counties of Devon, Plymouth and Torbay:-

	2000 electorate
East Devon CC	69,907
Exeter BC	82,088
North Devon CC	72,126
Plymouth, Devonport BC	73,788
Plymouth, Sutton BC	68,295
South West Devon CC	71,630
Teignbridge CC	84,508
Tiverton and Honiton CC	78,996
Torbay BC	71,210
Torridge and West Devon CC	79,282
Totnes CC	<u>71,640</u>
	<u><u>823,470</u></u>

The Number of Constituencies

2. Following The Devon (City of Plymouth and Borough of Torbay) (Structural Change) Order 1996, the City of Plymouth and the Borough of Torbay ceased to form part of the County of Devon and became new unitary authorities. The remaining eight districts in the county formed the County of Devon.

3. Devon had a 2000 parliamentary electorate of 544,489, which gave a theoretical entitlement to 7.79 constituencies. The allocation of eight constituencies would produce an average electorate 1,873 below the electoral quota.

4. Plymouth had a 2000 parliamentary electorate of 184,534, which gave a theoretical entitlement to 2.64 constituencies. The allocation of three whole constituencies would produce an average electorate 8,424 below the electoral quota.

5. We also noted that Torbay had a 2000 parliamentary electorate of 94,447 and a theoretical entitlement to 1.35 constituencies. The allocation of one constituency to Torbay would produce an electorate 24,512 above the electoral quota. The allocation of two whole constituencies to Torbay would produce an average electorate 22,712 below the electoral quota. Both of these would be significantly over our 10,000 threshold.

6. We therefore concluded that neither Plymouth nor Torbay should be reviewed separately and decided to review Devon, Plymouth and Torbay together. The combined area had a 2000 parliamentary electorate of 823,470, which gave a theoretical entitlement to 11.77 constituencies. We decided to allocate an extra, twelfth, constituency. With twelve constituencies, the average constituency electorate in the combined area would be 68,623, which is only 1,312 below the electoral quota. The electorates of the eleven existing

constituencies ranged from 84,508 in Teignbridge CC to 68,295 in Plymouth, Sutton BC, a disparity of 16,213.

Provisional Recommendations

7. As a result of changes to the district and borough ward boundaries, five of the new wards in Devon, three in Plymouth and three in Torbay, are partly in one constituency and partly in another. Our provisional recommendations realigned the constituency boundaries with the new ward boundaries.

The City of Plymouth

8. Minimum change realignment of the Plymouth, Devonport, and Plymouth, Sutton constituency boundaries with the new ward boundaries would result in the disparity between the electorates of these constituencies being 15,065. We considered this would be too large and therefore proposed that the new Devonport ward, which is divided between the constituencies, should be included in the revised Plymouth, Sutton BC, although this did not represent minimum change. This would bring the electorates of Plymouth, Devonport BC, and Plymouth, Sutton BC much closer together, with a disparity of only 4,397. As a result of this change we decided to alter the names from Plymouth, Devonport BC to Plymouth North BC and from Plymouth, Sutton BC to Plymouth South BC.

The Borough of Torbay

9. We proposed realigning the Torbay constituency boundary with the three divided wards of Torbay Borough. We proposed that the Blatchcombe and Churston-with-Galmpton wards should be included in Totnes CC and the new Clifton-with-Maidenway ward should be included in Torbay BC. We decided not to include the Churston-with-Galmpton ward in Torbay BC, despite the greater part of its electorate being in that constituency, as it would allow the constituency electorate to be closer to the electoral quota.

The County of Devon

10. We considered that the electorate of the existing Exeter BC, at 82,088 was too large and that the City of Exeter would need to be divided between constituencies. We believed that it was important for this division to follow a clearly identifiable boundary and considered that the River Exe provided a good division. Our proposals transferred the Alphington, Cowick, Exwick and St Thomas wards from Exeter BC. Although the electorate of Exeter BC would be low, at 60,588, we noted that since the enumeration date, the area had experienced growth above the county average.

11. The extra, twelfth, constituency would be created in the middle of Devon. It would comprise the four City of Exeter wards of Alphington, Cowick, Exwick and St Thomas, together with parts of the Mid Devon, Teignbridge and West Devon Districts. We named this constituency Mid Devon CC. The creation of this constituency reduced the high electorates of Exeter BC, Teignbridge CC, Tiverton and Honiton CC, and Torridge and West Devon CC.

12. We proposed the creation of a Newton Abbot constituency (similar to the existing Teignbridge constituency) formed entirely of the southern part of Teignbridge District. We also proposed a revised Tiverton and Honiton constituency with a reduced area and an

electorate that would be only fifty-five below the electoral quota. Changes elsewhere realigned constituency boundaries with the boundaries of the new wards. Our changes allowed the southern boundaries of North Devon CC and Torridge and West Devon CC to follow district boundaries. This produced a North Devon constituency that was coterminous with North Devon District. It also returned the Buckland Monachorum ward of West Devon Borough to Torridge and West Devon CC. We noted that there had been sustained calls for its inclusion in that constituency during the previous general review.

13. The overall effect of these changes reduced the disparity between the constituencies with the highest and lowest electorates in Devon, Plymouth, and Torbay from 16,213 for the eleven existing constituencies, to 12,652 for the twelve proposed constituencies.

14. Our provisional recommendations were:-

	2000 electorate
East Devon CC	69,153
Exeter BC	60,588
Mid Devon CC	71,701
Newton Abbot CC	70,038
North Devon CC	68,272
Plymouth North BC	68,843
Plymouth South BC	73,240
South West Devon CC	68,756
Tiverton and Honiton CC	69,880
Torbay BC	69,340
Torridge and West Devon CC	68,720
Totnes CC	64,939
	<hr/>
	<hr/>
	823,470

Representations

15. Following publication of our provisional recommendations, we received 388 representations. There were no objections to our proposal to treat Devon, Plymouth and Torbay as a single review area and there was general support for our allocation of twelve constituencies to the area. Seventeen of the representations supported all or part of our proposals, twenty-four supported part of our proposals whilst also objecting to other parts, and 346 objected to all or part of our proposals. One representation made other comments regarding the size of constituencies. The objections included petitions containing a total of 4,746 names. The main issues concerned two separate areas. There were objections to our proposals both for Plymouth and for Exeter, with consequences for all three of Exeter's surrounding constituencies and for the proposed boundary between our Mid Devon and Newton Abbot seats.

16. The objections were contained in two principal counter-proposals. There were four other counter-proposals which either contained overlapping objections or received no support at all at the inquiry, and which the Assistant Commissioner dismissed, and there were a number of alternative constituency names proposed:-

- a) the first counter-proposal exchanged the two City of Plymouth wards of Devonport and Egguckland between the two Plymouth constituencies, so allowing the existing names of Plymouth, Devonport BC and Plymouth, Sutton BC to be retained. A variation to this treatment of Plymouth divided the city with a north-south boundary by exchanging the wards of Egguckland and Moor View with those of Devonport, Peverell and Stoke, which also allowed the existing names of Plymouth, Devonport BC and Plymouth, Sutton BC to be retained; and
- b) the second counter-proposal, which was modified in respect of one ward at the start of the inquiry, reunited the City of Exeter with its four wards on the west of the River Exe. It placed the wards of St Loyes and Topsham in a revised East Devon constituency which also included seventeen of the westernmost East Devon District wards. Exeter BC would be comprised of all of the City of Exeter wards except St Loyes and Topsham. The Mid Devon constituency would contain the East Devon District ward of Exe Valley together with twelve of the westernmost Mid Devon District wards, the eight north-western Teignbridge District wards and the nine West Devon Borough wards contained in our proposed Mid Devon CC. Newton Abbot CC would contain the eighteen Teignbridge District wards in our proposed Newton Abbot constituency except for Ashburton and Buckfastleigh, and Haytor, but with the addition of the Kenton with Starcross ward. Tiverton and Honiton CC would contain the remaining fourteen East Devon District wards and the remaining twelve Mid Devon District wards.

Local Inquiry and Assistant Commissioner's Report

17. We were required to hold an inquiry. Following the announcement of the inquiry, a further 147 representations were received of which fifty approved of our proposals, three approved of part while objecting to other parts, eighty-five were objections and nine made other comments. None of these additional representations introduced any new issues. Documents submitted at the inquiry included six petitions or bundles of postcards. Two petitions, containing 1,372 names, together with 962 postcards, objected to our proposals and one petition, containing 110 names, together with 1,208 postcards, supported our proposals while objecting to the second counter-proposal. Three further objections were received after the inquiry had closed but these raised no new issues.

18. The Assistant Commissioner reported that there was general support for our treatment of Devon, Plymouth and Torbay as one review area and for the allocation of an extra, twelfth, constituency. He supported our proposals in respect of both matters.

Boundaries of the two constituencies wholly in the City of Plymouth

19. The Assistant Commissioner considered that, in respect of the Devonport, Egguckland, Moor View and Stoke wards, the local ties advanced in support of the first counter-proposal did not outweigh those which would be broken, such as between Devonport and the wards of Stoke, and St Peter and the Waterfront. He also considered that parts of the Egguckland ward had ties with the Ham ward and that these links would suffer disruption if Egguckland were to be in a different constituency.

20. He considered that, while the variation to this counter-proposal had much to commend it, it also had major disadvantages. He reported that it did not have such a clearly identifiable boundary as our provisional recommendations, largely ignored the predominant divide within the city of the A38/Parkway, caused more disruption and transferred a greater number of electors than our proposals.

21. He considered that our provisional recommendations, using the A38/Parkway as part of the boundary between the constituencies, caused the minimum inconvenience and produced a logical, clear and identifiable boundary. He considered that our proposals preserved local ties as far as practicable and recommended that our provisional recommendations in respect of the boundaries in Plymouth be confirmed.

Names of the Plymouth constituencies

22. He reported that the possible loss of the historic names of Devonport and Sutton generated more debate than the composition of the constituencies and the proposed name of Plymouth North BC and that our proposed names for the two constituencies had no support and a great deal of opposition.

23. Three alternative names for Plymouth North BC had some support at the inquiry. These names, all preceded by Plymouth, were Moor Side, Moor View and Tamarside. Moor Side and Moor View had more support than Tamarside and he noted that Moor View is the name of a ward within the proposed constituency. On balance, he considered that the name Plymouth, Moor View BC was the most appropriate and accordingly recommended it should be adopted.

24. Various alternatives to Plymouth South BC were proposed. These names, all preceded by Plymouth, were Devonport and Sutton, Marine, Sutton and Devonport, and Waterfront. On balance, he considered that the name Plymouth, Sutton and Devonport BC was the most appropriate and recommended its adoption.

The Borough of Torbay

25. There were no objections to our provisional recommendations relating to Torbay BC and the Assistant Commissioner accordingly recommended that they be confirmed.

The County of Devon

26. The main issue in the representations and at the inquiry was in relation to the composition of Exeter BC and specifically which wards should be excluded from the existing constituency. Of equal significance was the knock-on effect this had on surrounding constituencies.

The City of Exeter wards of Alphington, Cowick, Exwick and St Thomas

27. The Assistant Commissioner reported that there was widespread discontent with our proposals to exclude the Exeter City wards of Alphington, Cowick, Exwick and St Thomas from Exeter BC and that some of those who lived in the Mid Devon and West Devon Districts expressed similar concerns at being included in a constituency with these four wards west of the River Exe. It was his view that the A30 and Cowick Ridge formed a clear

identifiable boundary on the western boundary of Exeter between urban Exeter and the rural areas of Mid Devon District.

28. It was also his view that the River Exe was a unifying feature of Exeter and was a focal point within the City. He noted that there were excellent transport links between the four west Exe wards and the rest of Exeter and that the wards to the west of the River Exe were closely linked to the city centre. He considered that St Thomas in particular was an integral part of central Exeter and that Alphington merged seamlessly with its City of Exeter ward neighbours.

29. It was argued that the provisionally recommended Mid Devon constituency would be incoherent and likely to be unworkable and that Exeter would be better served by having its urban core in one constituency. The Assistant Commissioner considered that significant inconvenience and broken ties would be caused by the provisional recommendations.

The City of Exeter wards of St Loyes and Topsham

30. He reported that the A38 ring road, the M5 motorway, the Ludwell Valley, green belt land and a golf course separated the centre of Exeter from Topsham, which lay about five miles from the city centre.

31. Those opposing the second counter-proposal submitted that the wards of St Loyes and Topsham had ties with Exeter. However, the Assistant Commissioner considered that greater significant inconvenience and broken ties would be caused if the wards of Alphington Cowick, Exwick and St Thomas were transferred from the Exeter constituency, than by the removal of the St Loyes and Topsham wards.

The Districts of East Devon and Mid Devon

32. The Assistant Commissioner considered carefully the implications for the East Devon and Mid Devon Districts, and the constituencies most affected, namely East Devon CC, Mid Devon CC and Tiverton and Honiton CC, if the St Loyes and Topsham wards were excluded from the Exeter constituency.

33. The second counter-proposal placed the St Loyes and Topsham wards in a new East Devon constituency with five East Devon District wards that are currently in Tiverton and Honiton CC, but which he considered looked toward Exeter. Objections to the counter-proposal submitted that the five wards had ties with other wards located in Tiverton and Honiton CC and with the town of Honiton and that the coastal region of East Devon had historically been one constituency.

34. The second counter-proposal created a Tiverton and Honiton CC which included eight East Devon District wards currently in East Devon CC. Objections to the counter-proposal submitted that these wards had close ties with Sidmouth and that the coastal communities in east Devon had tourism related interests which would be better served by being in one constituency. However, he considered that these eight wards had stronger links with Honiton than they had with either Exmouth or Sidmouth and that the east/west division of East Devon District would result in two more satisfactory and better-shaped constituencies.

35. The second counter-proposal excluded the four City of Exeter wards west of the River Exe from the Mid Devon constituency, but included five Mid Devon District wards currently in Tiverton and Honiton CC, together with the East Devon District ward of Exe Valley, which is currently in East Devon CC. He considered that these six wards had a strong affinity with the wards of the Mid Devon, Teignbridge and West Devon Districts in the Mid Devon constituency.

36. The Assistant Commissioner noted that the second counter-proposal resulted in a significantly higher number of electors moving constituency than under our proposals. He also noted that there was significant local opposition within East Devon to it, but he considered that, on balance, the second counter-proposal produced acceptable constituencies in the East Devon and Mid Devon Districts and recommended it should be adopted in this area.

The Teignbridge District wards of Ashburton and Buckfastleigh, Haytor and Kenton with Starcross

37. The Assistant Commissioner reported that the second counter-proposal, as modified at the inquiry, placed the Kenton with Starcross ward in Newton Abbot CC instead of in Mid Devon CC and the Ashburton and Buckfastleigh, and Haytor wards in Mid Devon CC instead of in Newton Abbot CC. There was also a proposal to place the Ashburton and Buckfastleigh ward in Totnes CC (its current constituency) instead of in Newton Abbot CC. He heard evidence that Ashburton had greater ties with Newton Abbot, but that Buckfastleigh had stronger ties with Totnes. It was submitted that the Haytor ward had close ties with Newton Abbot CC and that the Kenton with Starcross ward was an estuarine area with ties to Dawlish, which is in Newton Abbot CC.

38. He considered that the Kenton with Starcross ward did have connections with Dawlish and should be included in Newton Abbot CC and it was appropriate that the Ashburton and Buckfastleigh, and Haytor wards should be included in Mid Devon CC. They had much greater identity with Mid Devon and Dartmoor than had the Kenton with Starcross ward and he was not satisfied that the case for retaining Ashburton and Buckfastleigh in Totnes CC had been made out.

North Devon CC

39. The Assistant Commissioner reported that no counter-proposals were received in respect of North Devon CC and recommended that the provisional recommendations should be confirmed for this area.

The West Devon Borough ward of Buckland Monachorum (Torridge and West Devon CC)

40. A submission was made during the course of the evidence that the Buckland Monachorum ward of West Devon Borough should not form part of the Torridge and West Devon constituency and should remain part of South West Devon CC. He considered that, as the ward lay in West Devon Borough, its inclusion in the Torridge and West Devon constituency would allow the southern boundary of this constituency to be coterminous with the district boundary. He found no justification to depart from the provisional recommendations and recommended that they be confirmed in respect of this ward.

Other proposals

41. He reported that other counter-proposals, or suggestions regarding Okehampton, were either lacking in evidence, had little or no support or, in his opinion, had no advantages over the provisional recommendations. He therefore rejected them.

Names of the Devon constituencies

42. The Assistant Commissioner considered that there were insufficient reasons to recommend any change to the names of the provisionally recommended constituencies in Devon except to that of Mid Devon CC. He reported that there was some local opinion that the name could be confused with the Mid Devon District and that its use could also be confusing as the whole of Mid Devon District was not included in one constituency. Of the alternatives submitted, he preferred Central Devon CC and recommended this name be adopted in place of Mid Devon CC.

Revised Recommendations

43. We accepted the Assistant Commissioner's proposal for the name Plymouth, Sutton and Devonport BC, because it reflected the historical names in the area and had much support. We accepted, but with less enthusiasm, his proposal to name the other Plymouth constituency Plymouth, Moor View BC because it was the name of only one ward on the north-eastern edge of the City. However, the name had some support at the inquiry and there appeared to be no better locally acceptable alternative.

44. We decided to accept the Assistant Commissioner's recommendations in full, which would reduce the electoral disparity in the combined review area from 12,652 in the provisional recommendations to 10,929. We accordingly published the following revised recommendations:-

	2000 electorate
Central Devon CC	63,563
East Devon CC	69,068
Exeter BC	74,492
Newton Abbot CC	64,555
North Devon CC	68,272
Plymouth, Moor View BC	68,843
Plymouth, Sutton and Devonport BC	73,240
South West Devon CC	68,756
Tiverton and Honiton CC	69,682
Torbay BC	69,340
Torridge and West Devon CC	68,720
Totnes CC	64,939
	<hr/>
	823,470

Further Representations

45. Following publication of our revised recommendations we received 116 representations. Of these, eighty-two approved of all or part of the revised recommendations, four approved of part while objecting to other parts and thirty objected to various parts. Other than suggesting alternative names for some constituencies, we considered that none of the objections contained any new evidence.

46. The objections were in respect of the exclusion of the St Loyes and Topsham wards from Exeter BC and the consequential effects of this alteration on East Devon CC, and the inclusion of the Exe Valley ward in Central Devon CC. One representation submitted that the situation with respect to East Devon should be looked at afresh. One objection was received in respect of the names of East Devon CC, Newton Abbot CC and Tiverton and Honiton CC. Although four of the objections opposed the composition or name of Torridge and West Devon CC, we had already published our final recommendations for this constituency.

Recommendation

47. We considered that the arguments presented in the objections had been discussed at length at the inquiry and we were satisfied that our revised recommendations did not need to be modified, or that the situation with respect to East Devon needed to be looked at afresh. With regard to the names of East Devon CC and Tiverton and Honiton CC, whilst we accepted that the alternative names submitted had some merit, we decided not to alter our proposals as the alternatives were not widely supported and our proposals for these constituencies retained the existing names. We noted that the name of Newton Abbot CC had received widespread support in response to our provisional recommendations and at the inquiry and considered it was the most appropriate name for the new constituency.

48. We therefore recommend the adoption of the following constituencies containing the wards as listed in Appendix C:-

	2000 electorate
Central Devon CC	63,563
East Devon CC	69,068
Exeter BC	74,492
Newton Abbot CC	64,555
North Devon CC	68,272
Plymouth, Moor View BC	68,843
Plymouth, Sutton and Devonport BC	73,240
South West Devon CC	68,756
Tiverton and Honiton CC	69,682
Torbay BC	69,340
Torridge and West Devon CC	68,720
Totnes CC	64,939
	<hr/>
	823,470

DORSET, BOURNEMOUTH AND POOLE

The Number of Electors

1. There are currently eight constituencies in the Counties of Dorset, Bournemouth and Poole:-

	2000 electorate
Bournemouth East BC	61,568
Bournemouth West BC	62,393
Christchurch CC	73,643
Mid Dorset and North Poole CC	69,011
North Dorset CC	71,180
Poole BC	65,531
South Dorset CC	67,752
West Dorset CC	<u>71,462</u>
	<u>542,540</u>

The Number of Constituencies

2. Following the Dorset (Boroughs of Bournemouth and Poole) (Structural Change) Order 1995, the Boroughs of Bournemouth and Poole ceased to form part of the County of Dorset and became new unitary authorities. The remaining six districts in the county formed the County of Dorset.

3. Dorset had a 2000 parliamentary electorate of 309,634, which gave a theoretical entitlement to 4.43 constituencies. Bournemouth had a 2000 parliamentary electorate of 123,961, which gave a theoretical entitlement to 1.77 constituencies. Poole had a 2000 parliamentary electorate of 108,945, which gave a theoretical entitlement to 1.56 constituencies. Whether reviewed separately or as one unit, eight constituencies would be allocated. However, if the three areas were reviewed separately, the county average in Bournemouth would be low at 61,981 and that of Poole, at 54,473, would be very low and 15,462 below the electoral quota and 5,462 over our 10,000 threshold.

4. We rejected the option to review Bournemouth separately because we considered that there would be an unacceptably high disparity between the low electorates of the two Bournemouth constituencies and the electorates of the neighbouring constituencies of Christchurch CC and North Dorset CC.

5. We decided to retain the allocation of eight constituencies and to review the three areas together. The combined area had a 2000 parliamentary electorate of 542,540, which gave a theoretical entitlement to 7.76 constituencies. The county average of 67,818 would be only 2,117 below the electoral quota. The electorates of the eight existing constituencies ranged from 61,568 in Bournemouth East BC to 73,643 in Christchurch CC, a disparity of 12,075.

Provisional Recommendations

6. As a result of changes to the borough and district ward boundaries, four of the new wards in Dorset, four in Bournemouth and two in Poole were partly in one constituency and partly in another. Our provisional recommendations realigned the constituency boundaries with the new ward boundaries.

7. We considered that the disparity of 12,075 between the electorates of the adjacent Bournemouth East BC and Christchurch CC should be reduced, particularly as the electorate of Bournemouth East BC had decreased since the last general review, whilst that of Christchurch CC had increased. We also noted that, if we were to recommend only minimum change to realign the constituency boundaries with the new ward boundaries, the electorates of our recommended constituencies would range from 56,309 in Bournemouth East BC to 73,640 in Christchurch CC, an increased disparity of 17,331. We therefore proposed changes to six of the eight constituencies in order to reduce the disparity. No change was proposed to South Dorset CC or West Dorset CC.

8. We proposed that the three divided Bournemouth Borough wards of East Cliff and Springbourne, Moordown and Queen's Park should be included in Bournemouth East BC and the divided Winton East ward should be included in Bournemouth West BC rather than in Bournemouth East BC.

9. We proposed that the divided Poole Borough wards of Alderney and Creekmoor should be included in Bournemouth West BC and Poole BC, respectively. We also proposed that the Poole Borough ward of Branksome East should be included in Bournemouth West BC.

10. We proposed that five southern East Dorset District wards should be included in Mid Dorset and North Poole CC rather than in North Dorset CC. We also proposed that the three East Dorset District wards in Verwood should be included in North Dorset CC rather than in Christchurch CC. Our proposals would reduce the disparity from 12,075 to 6,675.

11. Our provisional recommendations were:-

	2000 electorate
Bournemouth East BC	68,895
Bournemouth West BC	68,080
Christchurch CC	65,143
Mid Dorset and North Poole CC	68,488
North Dorset CC	64,787
Poole BC	67,933
South Dorset CC	67,752
West Dorset CC	<u>71,462</u>
	<u>542,540</u>

Representations

12. Following publication of our provisional recommendations, we received seventy-four representations, of which twenty expressed support for all or part of our proposals, six expressed support whilst objecting to other parts of our proposals, and forty-eight objected to our proposals. The main issues raised in the representations were principally contained in three counter-proposals:-

- a) the first proposed a new Bournemouth West and Ferndown BC comprising eight Bournemouth Borough wards and four East Dorset District wards; a new Christchurch and East Dorset CC comprising Christchurch Borough and ten East Dorset District wards; a Mid Dorset and North Poole CC comprising three East Dorset District wards, six Poole Borough wards and six Purbeck District wards; a North Dorset CC comprising seven East Dorset District wards and North Dorset District; and a Poole BC of ten Poole Borough wards. Other counter-proposals were identical to all or parts of this counter-proposal;
- b) the second proposed that the two Bournemouth constituencies should each consist of nine Bournemouth Borough wards. It did not include any proposals for the remainder of the constituencies in the county; and
- c) the third proposed that the East Dorset District ward of Three Cross and Potterne should be included in North Dorset CC and that the two East Dorset District wards of Longham and Stapehill should be included in Christchurch CC.

Local Inquiry and Assistant Commissioner's Report

13. We were required to hold an inquiry. Following the announcement of the inquiry a further twenty-two representations were received, of which fourteen approved of our provisional recommendations, one expressed support for part whilst objecting to other parts and five objected to our proposals. Two representations made other comments.

14. The Assistant Commissioner reported that the main issues raised at the inquiry were the three counter-proposals, with several variations, and that a number of local issues also arose.

Bournemouth East BC and Bournemouth West BC

15. The Assistant Commissioner noted the support for our provisional recommendations. There was also support for the second counter-proposal to retain two constituencies wholly within Bournemouth Borough, if this could be achieved within the rules. In order to minimise the disparity between the two constituencies the second counter-proposal included the Bournemouth Borough ward of Moordown in Bournemouth West BC rather than in Bournemouth East BC. In support of the counter-proposal it was also submitted that there was inadequate justification to breach the presumption in Rule 4 that county boundaries were to be followed so far as was practicable.

16. There were objections to the inclusion of the two Poole Borough wards of Alderney and Branksome East in Bournemouth West BC on the grounds that local ties would be broken. The Assistant Commissioner considered evidence that pointed to an increase in the

electorate of Bournemouth, but gave little weight to it due to the increases in electorate elsewhere in Dorset and Poole.

17. In his view a number of considerations favoured the provisional recommendations. First, without some additional electors from outside Bournemouth, the Bournemouth constituencies would be too small and would give rise to an excessive disparity with the electorates of neighbouring constituencies. He considered that the two Poole Borough wards of Alderney and Branksome East could not readily be re-accommodated within Poole BC or Mid Dorset and North Poole CC without unacceptably increasing the electorates of those constituencies, and that there was nothing novel in these two wards forming part of Bournemouth West BC, as this was broadly the position from 1983 to 1997. He noted evidence that representing both Poole and Bournemouth residents did not create problems or complaints, was not considered likely to do so in the future and that the arguments on community severance and distinctiveness had been exaggerated, thus diminishing the weight that could be placed on Rule 7. Following his visit to the area he accepted the evidence of links and common interests between the two Poole Borough wards and Bournemouth and did not accept that local ties would be significantly broken by the provisional recommendations.

18. The Assistant Commissioner rejected a variation of only including the Branksome East ward but not the Alderney ward in Bournemouth West BC. He also rejected a variation involving the transfer of the two Poole Borough wards of Canford Cliffs and Penn Hill instead of Alderney and Branksome East.

19. In excluding the two Poole Borough wards the first counter-proposal extended the Bournemouth West constituency (to be re-named Bournemouth West and Ferndown BC) northwards to include the four East Dorset District wards of Ameysford, Ferndown Central, Ferndown Links and Parley. The Assistant Commissioner considered that this appeared to have been driven more by the desire to retain the two Poole Borough wards in their existing constituencies (and not to alter Mid Dorset and North Poole CC), than by community ties or geographical similarity between Ferndown and Bournemouth. He reported that there was considerable opposition to the counter-proposal and, although he considered the alleged difficulties and confusion to be exaggerated, he noted that it would result in East Dorset District being represented by four MPs, which would be undesirable, although he did not accept the argument that it constituted a breach of Rule 7(a). He advised strongly against this part of the counter-proposal.

20. He recommended that our proposals for the two Bournemouth constituencies should be adopted, but that Bournemouth West BC should be re-named Bournemouth West and Poole East BC. He considered that this change of name might play a small part in reducing the hostility of some of the residents of the two Poole Borough wards to their inclusion in the constituency.

Christchurch CC

21. The Assistant Commissioner noted the substantial growth, particularly in the Verwood area. He considered that, if no change were made to the constituency, it would have the largest electorate in the review area with growth continuing since the enumeration date. In his view the electorate needed to be reduced. He reported that the first counter-proposal retained Verwood in Christchurch CC and excluded Ferndown, but added the three East

Dorset District wards of Alderholt, Crane and Holt. He rejected the counter-proposal as it would break the ties of these rural wards.

22. The third counter-proposal added the East Dorset District ward of Three Cross and Potterne to the three Verwood wards which we had provisionally transferred to North Dorset CC and compensated Christchurch CC for the loss of the ward by including the two East Dorset District wards of Longham and Stapehill in the constituency. After visiting the area, he confirmed the desirability of including Three Cross and Potterne and the three Verwood wards together and recommended the adoption of this counter-proposal, but rejected any change of name for Christchurch CC.

North Dorset CC

23. The Assistant Commissioner reported that he had already recommended that the provisional recommendations for North Dorset CC should be varied by the addition of the East Dorset District ward of Three Cross and Potterne.

Mid Dorset and North Poole CC and Poole BC

24. He considered that the divided Poole Borough ward of Creekmoor, which we had included in Poole BC, had links with the Poole Borough ward of Broadstone in Mid Dorset and North Poole CC. He noted that, if the ward remained in Mid Dorset and North Poole CC, another ward would have to be transferred to Poole BC to compensate for the loss of electorate. He canvassed the possibility of transferring the Poole Borough ward of Canford Heath East from Mid Dorset and North Poole CC to Poole BC. However, it was made clear to him that the new residential community in the Poole Borough wards of Canford Heath East and Canford Heath West should not be divided. After visiting the area, he agreed and noted that, if both wards were moved to Poole BC to replace the Creekmoor ward, it would make Poole BC the largest constituency in the area. He noted that his recommendation to transfer the two East Dorset District wards of Longham and Stapehill to Christchurch CC from Mid Dorset and North Poole CC would reduce the latter's electorate to 65,066, the smallest in the review area.

25. He reported that there were no acceptable alternatives and endorsed our proposals which placed the Creekmoor ward in Poole BC. He recommended that we should confirm our proposals for Mid Dorset and North Poole BC and Poole BC, save in respect of the two East Dorset District wards which he had placed in Christchurch CC. He rejected any change of name for either constituency.

Revised recommendations

26. We considered the Assistant Commissioner's report, the transcript of the inquiry, and the written representations and we reviewed the evidence area by area. We considered that his recommendations relating to constituency boundaries fully complied with the Rules and accurately reflected the evidence submitted in the written representations and in the submissions made to the local inquiry.

27. We carefully considered whether to accept his recommendation to change the name of Bournemouth West BC to Bournemouth West and Poole East BC. We noted that the provisionally recommended Bournemouth West BC contained only two of the sixteen Poole

Borough wards. A previous Bournemouth West BC, which existed from 1983 to 1997, had contained three Poole Borough wards. We considered that his reason for recommending a change of name was inappropriate and did not justify doing so. We therefore decided to reject his recommended change of name. We accepted all his other recommendations.

28. We accordingly published the following revised recommendations:-

2000 electorate	
Bournemouth East BC	68,895
Bournemouth West BC	68,080
Christchurch CC	66,744
Mid Dorset and North Poole CC	65,066
North Dorset CC	66,608
Poole BC	67,933
South Dorset CC	67,752
West Dorset CC	71,462
	<hr/>
	542,540

Further Representations

29. Following publication of our revised recommendations we received seven representations, of which two approved of all or part of our revised recommendations and two objected. Three representations commented on other matters. The two representations objected to the name of Bournemouth West BC and suggested that the constituency should be renamed Bournemouth West and Poole East BC.

Recommendation

30. We noted that this issue had been fully discussed at the local inquiry and that we had decided not to accept the Assistant Commissioner's recommendation to alter the name of Bournemouth West BC. We also noted that we had confirmed our provisional recommendations as final for Bournemouth West BC. We were satisfied that our revised recommendations did not need to be modified. We therefore recommend the adoption of the following constituencies containing the wards as listed in Appendix C:-

2000 electorate	
Bournemouth East BC	68,895
Bournemouth West BC	68,080
Christchurch CC	66,744
Mid Dorset and North Poole CC	65,066
North Dorset CC	66,608
Poole BC	67,933
South Dorset CC	67,752
West Dorset CC	71,462
	<hr/>
	542,540

DURHAM AND DARLINGTON

The Number of Electors

1. There are currently seven constituencies in the Counties of Durham and Darlington:-

	2000 electorate
Bishop Auckland CC	67,453
City of Durham CC	69,926
Darlington BC	65,202
Easington CC	61,809
North Durham CC	68,085
North West Durham CC	67,321
Sedgefield CC	<u>65,340</u>
	<u>465,136</u>

The Number of Constituencies

2. Following The Durham (Borough of Darlington) (Structural Change) Order 1995, the Borough of Darlington ceased to form part of the County of Durham and became a new unitary authority. The remaining seven districts formed County Durham.

3. County Durham had a 2000 parliamentary electorate of 389,431, which gave a theoretical entitlement to 5.57 constituencies. Darlington had a 2000 parliamentary electorate of 75,705, which gave a theoretical entitlement to 1.08 constituencies. If Durham were reviewed separately, it would be allocated six constituencies, producing a county average of 64,905, which is 5,030 below the electoral quota. The electorate of the single constituency allocated to Darlington would be 5,770 above the electoral quota. The two combined counties had an electorate of 465,136 which gave a theoretical entitlement to 6.65 constituencies. This would indicate an allocation of seven constituencies and would produce a county average of 66,448, which is 3,487 below the electoral quota. The electorates of the existing constituencies in Durham and Darlington ranged from 69,926 in City of Durham CC to 61,809 in Easington CC, a disparity of 8,117.

4. We noted that, whether the two counties were reviewed separately or whether they continued to be considered together, the overall allocation of constituencies would be seven. If the two counties were to be treated separately, substantial changes would need to be made to the existing constituencies. However, if the two counties were treated as one review area, the option of minimum change could be considered, whereby constituency boundaries would be realigned only to take account of the divided wards.

Provisional Recommendations

5. We considered that the decision as to whether Durham and Darlington should be treated separately or together was finely balanced. We concluded that treating the two counties as one review area was preferable because it allowed us, with one exception, to realign the new wards with the constituency boundaries so as to cause the minimum amount of disruption. The exception to this minimum realignment was the Easington District ward of Hutton Henry. We considered it necessary to locate the whole of the ward in Easington CC in

order to address its low electorate and to reduce the disparity between it and the neighbouring constituencies. Our proposals reduced the disparity between constituencies from 8,117 to 7,364.

6. Our provisional recommendations were:-

	2000 electorate
Bishop Auckland CC	67,474
City of Durham CC	69,926
Darlington BC	65,872
Easington CC	62,562
North Durham CC	68,087
North West Durham CC	67,298
Sedgefield CC	<u>63,917</u>
	<u>465,136</u>

Representations

7. Following publication of our provisional recommendations, we received 117 representations, of which forty-one approved and sixty-five objected to all or part of our proposals, and eleven made other comments. There were no objections to our placing of the divided Hutton Henry ward. The principal issue raised in the objections was that Darlington should be treated as a separate review area and the consequences that arose from that. The objections included two counter-proposals. The other comments, many of which opposed the thrust of the counter-proposals, included a petition containing twenty-nine names and forty-six signed proformas. The objections proposed that Darlington should be allocated one constituency, designated as a county constituency, and that six constituencies should be allocated to County Durham:-

- a) the first counter-proposal, which was the preferred option of the proposer, suggested that the Sedgefield Borough wards of Low Spennymoor and Tudhoe Grange, Middlestone, Spennymoor and Tudhoe (the Spennymoor area) should be included in Sedgefield CC instead of in Bishop Auckland CC; the Derwentside District wards of Annfield Plain and Catchgate should be included in North West Durham CC instead of in North Durham CC; the Wear Valley District wards of Howden, Hunwick, St John's Chapel, Stanhope, and Wolsingham and Witton-le-Wear should be included in Bishop Auckland CC instead of in North West Durham CC; and the Borough of Darlington wards of Heighington and Coniscliffe, Hurworth, Middleton St George, and Sadberge and Whessoe should be included in Darlington BC instead of in Sedgefield CC; and
- b) the second counter-proposal, which was a fall-back option, proposed that the Sedgefield Borough wards of Byerley, Sunnydale and Thickley (the Shildon area) should be included in Sedgefield CC instead of in Bishop Auckland CC; the Derwentside District ward of Tanfield should be included in North West Durham CC instead of in North Durham CC; the Wear Valley District wards of St John's Chapel, Stanhope, and Wolsingham and Witton-le-Wear should be included in Bishop Auckland CC instead of in North West Durham CC (as in the preferred option); and the Borough of Darlington wards of Heighington and Coniscliffe,

Hurworth, Middleton St George, and Sadberge and Whessoe should be included in Darlington BC instead of in Sedgefield CC (also as in the preferred option).

Local Inquiry and Assistant Commissioner's Report

8. We decided to exercise our discretion to hold an inquiry. Following the announcement of the inquiry a further eighty-six representations were received, none of which introduced any new evidence. One further representation was received after the inquiry closed, but this also contained nothing new.

Darlington Borough

9. The Assistant Commissioner reported that many objectors submitted that Darlington Borough should form one whole constituency, by including the four rural wards surrounding Darlington, and which were identified in the counter-proposals, in Darlington BC instead of in Sedgefield CC. Whilst treating County Durham and Darlington separately would not necessarily produce an excessive disparity, he considered that it was appropriate for us to exercise our discretion under the Rules to review County Durham and Darlington together. He also reported significant approval for our provisional recommendations to keep the four wards in Sedgefield CC.

10. He considered that the present constituency boundaries in the borough did not give rise to any substantial difficulties as regards constituency or other arrangements. He accepted that, while many of the residents of the four rural wards would prefer to be in a Darlington constituency, some minor local links with the rest of the Sedgefield constituency, such as those with Newton Aycliffe, would inevitably be broken if they were transferred. He considered that, on balance, the present constituency arrangements for the Borough of Darlington should not be changed (except for the realignment of the constituency boundary with the wards of Faverdale and Harrowgate Hill).

The Spennymoor and Shildon wards of Sedgefield Borough

11. He reported that the counter-proposals for either the Spennymoor or Shildon areas to be transferred from Bishop Auckland CC to Sedgefield CC would result in important ties with Bishop Auckland being broken.

The Teesdale and Wear Valley Districts

12. The counter-proposals to create a Bishop Auckland constituency comprising either Spennymoor or Shildon, the whole of the Teesdale District and much of the Wear Valley District (including Upper Weardale) received little support and a degree of opposition. He considered that such a constituency would create a large geographical area that would be inconvenient.

North Durham CC and North West Durham CC

13. There was no local support for the counter-proposal to transfer the Wear Valley District wards of Howden and Hunwick from North West Durham CC to Bishop Auckland CC, which he considered would adversely affect satisfactory existing links and affinities.

14. The counter-proposals also proposed that either the Derwentside District wards of Annfield Plain and Catchgate, or the Derwentside District ward of Tanfield should be transferred from North Durham CC to North West Durham CC. He reported that, while there was some local support for the counter-proposals, there was considerable opposition to them. He considered that the counter-proposals would cause inconvenience and break significant local ties and he rejected them.

Recommendation

15. We agreed with the Assistant Commissioner's recommendation that our provisional recommendations should be confirmed in full and that, on balance, there was no case for the inclusion of the four rural Darlington wards in Darlington BC. We accordingly recommend the adoption of the following constituencies containing the wards as listed in Appendix C:-

	2000 electorate
Bishop Auckland CC	67,474
City of Durham CC	69,926
Darlington BC	65,872
Easington CC	62,562
North Durham CC	68,087
North West Durham CC	67,298
Sedgefield CC	<u>63,917</u>
	<u>465,136</u>

EAST RIDING OF YORKSHIRE, KINGSTON UPON HULL, NORTH EAST LINCOLNSHIRE AND NORTH LINCOLNSHIRE

The Number of Electors

1. There are currently ten constituencies in the four unitary authorities of East Riding of Yorkshire, Kingston upon Hull, North East Lincolnshire and North Lincolnshire:-

	2000 electorate
Beverley and Holderness CC	74,545
Brigg and Goole CC	64,394
Cleethorpes CC	68,938
East Yorkshire CC	71,620
Great Grimsby BC	64,594
Haltemprice and Howden CC	66,609
Kingston upon Hull East BC	67,994
Kingston upon Hull North BC	64,648
Kingston upon Hull West and Hessle BC	64,651
Scunthorpe CC	<u>59,884</u>
	<u><u>667,877</u></u>

The Number of Constituencies

2. Following The Humberside (Structural Change) Order 1995 the County of Humberside was abolished and the area divided into four unitary authorities.

3. For the purpose of allocating constituencies, we considered whether we should treat each of the four authorities separately, as required by Rule 4, or whether we should combine two or more of them. We noted that, if the four authorities were treated separately, a total of eleven constituencies would be allocated and that the average electorate of each constituency would be 60,716, which is 9,219 below the electoral quota. If the four authorities were reviewed as one combined area, this would result in a theoretical entitlement to 9.55 constituencies, which would produce ten constituencies with an average electorate of 66,788 which is only 3,147 below the electoral quota. The electorates of the existing ten constituencies ranged from 74,545 in Beverley and Holderness CC to 59,884 in Scunthorpe CC, a disparity of 14,661.

4. We considered that the allocation of ten constituencies would avoid the need to allocate an extra, eleventh, constituency, thus having regard to Rule 1. We could also create constituencies with electorates nearer the electoral quota and so have regard to Rule 5. Furthermore, it would allow us to minimise the changes required to the existing constituencies, thereby having regard to Rule 7. Accordingly we decided to treat the four authorities as one review area and to retain the allocation of ten constituencies to the combined review area.

Provisional Recommendations

5. Eleven of the new wards are divided between the existing constituencies. Our provisional recommendations realigned constituency boundaries with the new ward

boundaries and placed each ward wholly within one constituency. We noted that since the last general review the electorate of Beverley and Holderness CC had grown to 74,545 and that of East Yorkshire CC to 71,620, whereas the adjacent Haltemprice and Howden CC had grown only slightly, to 66,609. We therefore decided to propose further changes to bring the electorates of these three constituencies closer to each other and nearer to the electoral quota.

6. We proposed the transfer of three pairs of East Riding of Yorkshire wards between the Beverley and Holderness, East Yorkshire, and Haltemprice and Howden constituencies. The wards of Cottingham North and Cottingham South were included in Beverley and Holderness CC; the wards of Beverley Rural and North Holderness were included in East Yorkshire CC; and the wards of Pocklington Provincial and Wolds Weighton were included in Haltemprice and Howden CC.

7. In addition, we proposed that the East Riding of Yorkshire ward of Howden should be transferred from the existing Haltemprice and Howden constituency to Brigg and Goole CC. This transfer increased the low electorate of Brigg and Goole CC and allowed for the three constituencies in the rest of the East Riding of Yorkshire to have electorates close to each other (with a disparity of only 1,678), and closer to the electoral quota (within 1,142). These changes required the Haltemprice and Howden constituency to be renamed and we proposed that it should be called Haltemprice and Pocklington CC.

8. Under our proposals the disparity between the electorates of the constituencies in the four unitary authorities was reduced from 14,661 to 8,606.

9. Our provisional recommendations were:-

	2000 electorate
Beverley and Holderness CC	70,471
Brigg and Goole CC	65,712
Cleethorpes CC	68,938
East Yorkshire CC	68,793
Great Grimsby BC	64,594
Haltemprice and Pocklington CC	70,044
Kingston upon Hull East BC	70,638
Kingston upon Hull North BC	62,286
Kingston upon Hull West and Hessle BC	64,369
Scunthorpe CC	<hr/> 62,032 <hr/> <hr/> 667,877

Representations

10. Following publication of our provisional recommendations, we received ninety-five representations that included five letters of support. North of the Humber some of the objectors wanted no change and suggested there should be only minimal change realignment of constituency boundaries. South of the Humber, where we had only proposed minimum change, there were proposals affecting three of the wards in the Scunthorpe and Brigg and Goole constituencies. The objections were principally contained in three counter-proposals:-

- a) the first was mainly concerned with minimum change realignment of constituency boundaries with the new ward boundaries for the three northern constituencies of Beverley and Holderness CC, East Yorkshire CC and Haltemprice and Howden CC. An alternative to this proposal placed the ward of Howden wholly in Brigg and Goole CC, as in our proposals, and renamed the Haltemprice and Pocklington constituency Haltemprice CC. South of the Humber the alternative varied from both our proposals, and the counter-proposal, and included the two North Lincolnshire wards of Burrougham and Gunness and of Burton upon Stather and Winterton in Scunthorpe CC instead of in Brigg and Goole CC, and the divided North Lincolnshire ward of Ridge wholly in Brigg and Goole CC, although this did not reflect minimum change realignment;
- b) the second placed the twenty-three Kingston upon Hull wards in three constituencies within the city on an east, central and west basis, (with the constituencies so named), and excluded the East Riding of Yorkshire ward of Hessle from a Kingston upon Hull constituency; and
- c) the third differed from our proposals in respect of constituencies in the East Riding of Yorkshire and Kingston upon Hull and proposed the creation of three constituencies formed of parts of the East Riding of Yorkshire and Kingston upon Hull with only one constituency wholly contained within the City of Kingston upon Hull. Additionally, the Howden ward was excluded from Brigg and Goole CC, contrary to our proposal, but in agreement with the first counter-proposal.

Local Inquiry and Assistant Commissioner's Report

11. We were required to hold an inquiry. Following the announcement of the inquiry a further five representations were received, of which three objected to our proposals, though none of these introduced any new evidence. After the inquiry had closed, a further eight representations were received, of which five objected to our proposals, though none of these introduced any new evidence.

The counter-proposals for constituencies in the East Riding of Yorkshire

12. The Assistant Commissioner reported that there was strong support for the counter-proposals for no change to the existing Beverley and Holderness, East Yorkshire and Haltemprice and Howden constituencies (other than the realignment of constituency boundaries with the new divided wards). There was particularly strong objection to our proposals for Cottingham to be in a constituency with part of Holderness, for the Holderness area to be divided between constituencies and for the Pocklington and Wolds Weighton area to be separated from wards to their north east.

13. He reported that there were strong ties between the two Cottingham wards and the villages in the existing Haltemprice and Howden constituency, but that the links between Cottingham and Holderness were virtually non-existent. He considered that the links between Cottingham and Beverley were merely administrative and that there was no affinity between the two communities. He reported that Pocklington and Market Weighton identified with the villages of the uplands of the Wolds, which they served as market towns, and that there were no connections between Pocklington and Market Weighton and the villages and towns of the existing Haltemprice and Howden constituency.

14. Although there was support for our proposal to place the Howden ward in the Brigg and Goole constituency, there were also objections. It was his view that, whilst Howden did have some connections with Goole, they could not be considered as local ties. He reported that the River Ouse was a clear and substantial natural boundary between Howden and Goole and that the market town of Howden formed the socio-economic and historical centre for the west of the Haltemprice and Howden constituency and that there were local ties between Howden and the villages on the north bank of the River Ouse within this area known as Howdenshire and beyond. He considered that the residents of these villages identified with and related to Howden and that there were no ties whatsoever between Howden and Brigg. He accordingly recommended that the first counter-proposal should be adopted in respect of the East Riding of Yorkshire but without the alternative relating to the Howden ward. He also recommended that the existing constituency names should be retained. Thus the Howden ward would remain in a constituency with wards to its north and not be moved to Brigg and Goole CC as in our proposals and the alternative to the first counter-proposal.

The counter-proposal for the Brigg and Goole, and Scunthorpe constituencies

15. The Assistant Commissioner reported that, without the inclusion of the Howden ward in Brigg and Goole CC, the alternative, as in the first counter-proposal, of placing the Ridge ward in Brigg and Goole CC and the two wards of Burrougham and Gunness, and Burton upon Stather and Winterton in Scunthorpe CC, would produce a Brigg and Goole constituency with an electorate 9,904 below the electoral quota and 6,757 below the county average. He accordingly rejected this aspect of the alternative to the first counter-proposal.

The counter-proposals for the Kingston upon Hull constituencies

16. The Assistant Commissioner reported that the second counter-proposal, which divided the City of Kingston upon Hull into three whole constituencies, created unacceptable electorates, transferred an excessive number of electors and made no provision for the East Riding of Yorkshire District ward of Hessle. He accordingly recommended the adoption of our proposals for minimum change in this area. The Assistant Commissioner reported that the third counter-proposal, which principally formed three constituencies combining parts of the East Riding with wards from Kingston upon Hull, had received no support at the inquiry. He considered that there were no connections between the city wards and those from the East Riding and reported that, so far as possible, the constituencies of the City of Kingston upon Hull, with the exception of Kingston upon Hull West BC in respect of the Hessle ward, should be confined to the city limits. He therefore rejected this aspect of the third counter-proposal.

Revised Recommendations

17. We decided to accept the Assistant Commissioner's recommendations in full. We considered that whilst the electoral disparity was high, his proposals should be adopted as they commanded a much wider degree of acceptance than our own. We also noted that there had been a large amount of disruption in the area over recent years, which would only be compounded if our provisional recommendations were retained.

18. We accordingly published the following revised recommendations:-

	2000 electorate
Beverley and Holderness CC	74,488
Brigg and Goole CC	62,246
Cleethorpes CC	68,938
East Yorkshire CC	72,018
Great Grimsby BC	64,594
Haltemprice and Howden CC	66,268
Kingston upon Hull East BC	70,638
Kingston upon Hull North BC	62,286
Kingston upon Hull West and Hessle BC	64,369
Scunthorpe CC	<u>62,032</u>
	<u><u>667,877</u></u>

Further Representations

19. Following publication of our revised recommendations we received nineteen representations. Eighteen approved of all or part of the revised recommendations although two of these representations expressed reservations, as did the single objection, to the inclusion of the City of Kingston upon Hull ward of Sutton in Kingston upon Hull East BC instead of in Kingston upon Hull North BC. We noted that issues and representations regarding the Sutton ward had been carefully considered by the Assistant Commissioner, that there had been no support at the inquiry for what was now suggested, and we had subsequently published our final recommendations for the City of Kingston upon Hull constituencies proposing minimum change realignment in respect of the Sutton ward.

Recommendation

20. We were satisfied that our revised recommendations did not need to be modified. We therefore recommend the adoption of the following constituencies containing the wards as listed in Appendix C:-

	2000 electorate
Beverley and Holderness CC	74,488
Brigg and Goole CC	62,246
Cleethorpes CC	68,938
East Yorkshire CC	72,018
Great Grimsby BC	64,594
Haltemprice and Howden CC	66,268
Kingston upon Hull East BC	70,638
Kingston upon Hull North BC	62,286
Kingston upon Hull West and Hessle BC	64,369
Scunthorpe CC	<u>62,032</u>
	<u><u>667,877</u></u>

EAST SUSSEX AND BRIGHTON AND HOVE

The Number of Electors

1. There are currently eight constituencies in the Counties of East Sussex and Brighton and Hove.

	2000 electorate
Bexhill and Battle CC	68,152
Brighton, Kemptown BC	67,702
Brighton, Pavilion BC	68,667
Eastbourne BC	73,709
Hastings and Rye CC	71,200
Hove BC	70,615
Lewes CC	65,453
Wealden CC	<u>83,014</u>
	<u><u>568,512</u></u>

2. Following the East Sussex (Boroughs of Brighton and Hove) (Structural Changes) Order 1995, the City of Brighton and Hove ceased to form part of the County of East Sussex and became a new unitary authority. The remaining five districts in the county formed the County of East Sussex.

3. East Sussex had a 2000 parliamentary electorate of 377,588, which gave a theoretical entitlement to 5.40 constituencies. With five constituencies allocated, the average constituency electorate would be 75,518, which is 5,583 above the electoral quota.

4. The City of Brighton and Hove had a 2000 electorate of 190,924, which gave a theoretical entitlement to 2.73 constituencies. With three constituencies allocated, the average constituency electorate would be 63,641, which is 6,294 below the electoral quota.

5. We noted that the disparity between the average constituency electorates would, therefore, be 11,877. We also noted that the combined area of East Sussex and the City of Brighton and Hove had a 2000 electorate of 568,512, which gave a theoretical entitlement to 8.13 constituencies. With eight constituencies allocated, the average constituency electorate would be 71,064, which is only 1,129 above the electoral quota. After careful consideration, we provisionally decided to continue to review East Sussex and Brighton and Hove together and to continue to allocate eight constituencies to the combined area. The electorates of the eight existing constituencies ranged from 65,453 in Lewes CC to 83,014 in Wealden CC, a disparity of 17,561, which our provisional recommendations reduced to 9,397.

Provisional Recommendations

6. Our provisional recommendations realigned the constituency boundaries with the new ward boundaries. We recommended changes to all eight constituencies to reduce the disparity, but in three of the constituencies our alterations only realigned constituency boundaries with ward boundaries.

7. In Brighton and Hove we decided to include the whole of the divided wards of Brunswick and Adelaide and of Hanover and Elm Grove in Hove BC and Brighton, Pavilion BC, respectively. We also decided that Brighton, Kemptown BC would include the whole of the divided Queen's Park ward and would continue to include the four Lewes District wards of East Saltdean and Telscombe Cliffs, Peacehaven East, Peacehaven North and Peacehaven West.

8. We proposed that the whole of the divided Wealden District wards of East Dean and Willingdon should be included in Lewes CC so as to increase its electorate. We noted that the new Wealden District ward of Willingdon contained part of the town of Polegate and that if Willingdon were to remain in Eastbourne BC Polegate would necessarily be divided between constituencies.

9. We noted that the electorate of Eastbourne Borough was only 4,115 below the county average and considered that it was large enough to form a constituency on its own, without the addition of any neighbouring wards from Wealden District.

10. We proposed that the whole of the two divided Wealden District wards of Chiddingly and East Hoathly, and Hellingly should be included in Wealden CC. We also proposed the transfer of the three Wealden District wards of Heathfield East, Heathfield North and Central, and Mayfield from Wealden CC to Bexhill and Battle CC. These transfers would reduce the electorate of Wealden CC from 83,014 to 74,960, which is only 3,896 above the county average.

11. We proposed that the whole of the divided Rother District ward of Rother Levels should be included in Bexhill and Battle CC and that the Rother District ward of Brede Valley should be transferred from Bexhill and Battle CC to Hastings and Rye CC, thereby creating two neighbouring constituencies with electorates close to each other and to the county average.

12. Our provisional recommendations were:-

	2000 electorate
Bexhill and Battle CC	73,622
Brighton, Kemptown BC	65,563
Brighton, Pavilion BC	70,509
Eastbourne BC	66,949
Hastings and Rye CC	74,623
Hove BC	70,912
Lewes CC	71,374
Wealden CC	<u>74,960</u>
	<u>568,512</u>

Representations

13. Following publication of our provisional recommendations we received sixty-one representations, of which six supported all or parts of our proposals, eight supported part of our proposals whilst objecting to other parts, and forty-six, which included seven counter-proposals, objected to all or part of our proposals. One representation noted our proposals,

but declined to make any comment on them. No one objected to our proposal to review the two counties together and to continue to allocate eight constituencies.

14. Some features were common to a number of those counter-proposals, but the main issues raised in the objections could be summarised in four counter-proposals:-

- a) the first proposed moving the Rother District ward of Brede Valley to Bexhill and Battle CC and the Wealden District ward of Pevensey and Westham to Eastbourne BC;
- b) the second affected Lewes CC and proposed that the Wealden District ward of Willingdon should be included in Eastbourne BC and that the Wealden District ward of Danehill/Fletching/Nutley should be included in Lewes CC;
- c) the third was directed to the unity of the town of Heathfield and proposed that the Wealden District ward of Cross in Hand/Five Ashes should be included in Bexhill and Battle CC and the Wealden District ward of Mayfield should remain in Wealden CC;
- d) the fourth proposed similarly that the Wealden District ward of Mayfield should remain in Wealden CC and further proposed that the Wealden District ward of Wadhurst should be included in Bexhill and Battle CC; and
- e) additionally, alterations were proposed to the names of some of the constituencies.

Local Inquiry and Assistant Commissioner's Report

15. We were required to hold an inquiry. Following the announcement of the inquiry, a further nine representations were received, all of which objected to parts of our proposals. A further thirteen representations were received after the inquiry had been concluded, of which five supported all or part of our proposals and eight objected to them. In the light of the support received the Assistant Commissioner agreed with our decisions to combine the County of East Sussex and the City of Brighton and Hove as one review area and to allocate eight constituencies.

The Rother District ward of Brede Valley and the Wealden District ward of Pevensey and Westham

16. The Assistant Commissioner reported that it was proposed that the Brede Valley ward should be included in Bexhill and Battle CC, instead of in Hastings and Rye CC, and he noted that it was also suggested that the Pevensey and Westham ward should be transferred from Bexhill and Battle CC to Eastbourne BC, so as to equalise electorates. He considered that the arguments for and against the transfer of the Brede Valley ward were finely balanced, but he concluded that the ward should be included in Hastings and Rye CC because it would result in two constituencies with electorates close to the county average. He also concluded that the Pevensey and Westham ward should not be included in Eastbourne BC because there was very little support for the proposal and it would break local ties. He therefore rejected the first counter-proposal.

The Wealden District wards of East Dean and Willingdon

17. He noted that the second counter-proposal suggested the inclusion of the Willingdon ward in Eastbourne BC. He noted that the proposal would slightly increase the overall disparity of the electorate from 9,397 to 9,678 and that the overwhelming majority of people who submitted representations and attended the inquiry objected to our provisionally recommended inclusion of the Willingdon ward in Lewes CC. He concluded that the Willingdon ward should continue to be included in Eastbourne BC and endorsed this element of the second counter-proposal. Whilst noting that there was no formal counter-proposal, he rejected the inclusion of the East Dean ward in Eastbourne BC.

The Wealden District ward of Danehill/Fletching/Nutley

18. The Assistant Commissioner noted that the Danehill/Fletching/Nutley ward is long, narrow, and relatively sparsely populated. He reported that, during the inquiry, it became clear that the interests of the residents in the northern part of the ward, which included part of Ashdown Forest, were substantially different from those in the south. He also reported that the principal reason put forward in the second counter-proposal relating to the ward was the need to reduce the size of the electorate in Wealden CC and to increase the size of the electorate of Lewes CC (thereby bolstering Willingdon's case to remain in Eastbourne BC). In addition, those in favour of the proposal drew attention to the ties that were claimed to exist between the ward and Lewes CC. At the inquiry, however, there was very strong opposition to the proposal. It was acknowledged on both sides that there was some affinity between the southern part of the ward with wards in the north of Lewes CC. Although he found the arguments on affinity and local ties inconclusive and unsatisfactory, he had no doubt that the electorate in the north of the ward had very little in common with Lewes CC.

19. He considered that, if the ward were included in Lewes CC, the size and shape of the constituency would become unwieldy and inconvenient to the electorate, certainly in the northern part of the ward. He was mindful of the special interests concerning Ashdown Forest, not only in the northern part of the ward, but in the neighbouring wards currently in Wealden CC. He was satisfied that the transfer of the ward to Lewes CC would cause some inconvenience to electors and that local ties would be broken to some extent if such a transfer were to take place. He therefore rejected this part of the second counter-proposal.

The Wealden District wards of Cross in Hand/Five Ashes, Mayfield and Wadhurst

20. The Assistant Commissioner reported that the third counter-proposal supported the inclusion of the Cross In Hand/Five Ashes ward in Bexhill and Battle CC and the Mayfield ward in Wealden CC. He also reported that, whilst the counter-proposal would not unite the whole of Heathfield and Waldron Parish in one constituency, it was considered to be the least worst option. He further reported that there was support for the counter-proposal at the inquiry.

21. He noted that our provisional recommendations divided the town of Heathfield between constituencies. He further noted that, by including the Cross in Hand/Five Ashes ward in Bexhill and Battle CC, the town of Heathfield would be united within one constituency, as at present, and he considered that this counter-proposal had merit. To balance the number of electors affected by the transfer of the Cross in Hand/Five Ashes ward to Bexhill and Battle CC, he saw no detriment to the Mayfield ward being included in

Wealden CC, where it is at present. The disparity would be increased by a further 29 to 9,707. He recommended acceptance of the third counter-proposal. He also noted that the transfer of the Mayfield ward had been part of the fourth counter-proposal. However, he rejected the inclusion of the Wadhurst ward in Bexhill and Battle CC, which had also been suggested in the fourth counter-proposal, because it did not have any support.

The names of the proposed constituencies

22. The Assistant Commissioner reported that the counter-proposal to rename Hove BC as Hove and Portslade BC had received widespread support. He considered that compelling submissions had been made and said he had no hesitation in recommending the proposed change of name to us.

23. He reported that a number of alternative names had been suggested for some of our provisionally recommended constituencies. He considered that there was no need to depart from the existing constituency names, which we had retained in our provisional recommendations, and therefore rejected any other changes to constituency names.

Revised Recommendations

24. We agreed with his findings that the provisional recommendations for Bexhill and Battle CC, Eastbourne BC, Lewes CC and Wealden CC should be revised.

25. However, we rejected the Assistant Commissioner's recommendation to change the name of Hove BC. We had not proposed any change of name because only very minor changes were made to the constituency. Where a recommended name had been objected to and a suitable alternative commanded greater local support, we would usually revise our recommendations in favour of the alternative, if we considered that name to be inappropriate. However, we considered that a change of name in such circumstances would only be appropriate in the case of new constituencies, or where there are significant changes to constituencies, and not to the names of existing or barely changed constituencies. We also noted that Hove BC had been a constituency name for over 50 years, having been introduced in the Initial Report of the Boundary Commission in 1947. We therefore rejected the Assistant Commissioner's recommendation for a change of name.

26. We accordingly published the following revised recommendations:-

	2000 electorate
Bexhill and Battle CC	73,593
Brighton, Kemptown BC	65,563
Brighton, Pavilion BC	70,509
Eastbourne BC	73,041
Hastings and Rye CC	74,623
Hove BC	70,912
Lewes CC	65,282
Wealden CC	74,989
	<hr/>
	568,512

Further representations

27. Following publication of our revised recommendations we received eight representations, of which six supported our proposals. Of the two representations objecting to our revised recommendations, one objected to the inclusion of the Wealden District ward of Willingdon in Eastbourne BC, whilst the other objected to the inclusion of the Wealden District ward of Cross in Hand/Five Ashes in Bexhill and Battle CC. These representations repeated objections which had already been considered by the Assistant Commissioner and contained no significant new evidence. We saw no reason to modify our recommendations.

Recommendation

28. We were satisfied that our revised recommendations did not need to be modified. We therefore recommend the adoption of the following constituencies containing the wards as listed in Appendix C:-

	2000 electorate
Bexhill and Battle CC	73,593
Brighton, Kemptown BC	65,563
Brighton, Pavilion BC	70,509
Eastbourne BC	73,041
Hastings and Rye CC	74,623
Hove BC	70,912
Lewes CC	65,282
Wealden CC	<u>74,989</u>
	<u>568,512</u>

ESSEX, SOUTHEND-ON-SEA AND THURROCK

The Number of Electors

1. There are currently seventeen constituencies in the Counties of Essex, Southend-on-Sea and Thurrock:-

	2000 electorate
Basildon BC	74,726
Billericay CC	78,569
Braintree CC	77,084
Brentwood and Ongar CC	65,263
Castle Point BC	68,065
Colchester BC	77,033
Epping Forest CC	73,328
Harlow CC	67,181
Harwich CC	76,958
Maldon and East Chelmsford CC	68,699
North Essex CC	69,651
Rayleigh CC	70,554
Rochford and Southend East CC	71,791
Saffron Walden CC	76,922
Southend West BC	65,233
Thurrock BC	75,585
West Chelmsford CC	<u>76,787</u>
	<u>1,233,429</u>

The Number of Constituencies

2. Following the Essex (Boroughs of Colchester, Southend-on-Sea and Thurrock, and District of Tendring) (Structural, Boundary and Electoral Change) Order 1996, the Boroughs of Southend-on-Sea and Thurrock ceased to form part of the County of Essex and became new unitary authorities. The remaining twelve districts formed the County of Essex.

3. Essex had a 2000 parliamentary electorate of 1,005,343, which gave a theoretical entitlement to 14.38 constituencies. With fourteen constituencies allocated, the average constituency electorate would be 71,810, which is 1,875 above the electoral quota.

4. Southend-on-Sea had a 2000 parliamentary electorate of 125,443, which gave a theoretical entitlement to 1.79 constituencies. With two constituencies allocated, the average constituency electorate would be 62,722, which is 7,213 below the electoral quota.

5. Thurrock had a 2000 parliamentary electorate of 102,643, which gave a theoretical entitlement to 1.47 constituencies. With two constituencies allocated, the average constituency electorate would be 51,322, which is 18,613 below the electoral quota and 8,613 over our 10,000 threshold. With one constituency allocated, the constituency electorate would be 102,643, which is 32,708 above the electoral quota and 22,708 over our 10,000 threshold.

6. We decided that Thurrock would have to continue to be paired with Essex. Essex and Thurrock had a 2000 electorate of 1,107,986, which gave a theoretical entitlement to 15.84 constituencies. With sixteen constituencies allocated, the average constituency electorate would be 69,249, which is only 686 below the electoral quota.

7. We noted that Southend-on-Sea had seventeen wards, with an average electorate of almost 7,400 per ward. To allocate two constituencies wholly to Southend-on-Sea would lead to the creation of a constituency containing eight wards and a low electorate of the order of 59,200, which would be more than 10,000 below the electoral quota. We rejected this option and provisionally decided to continue to group Essex, Southend-on-Sea and Thurrock.

8. Essex, Southend-on-Sea and Thurrock had a 2000 parliamentary electorate of 1,233,429, which gave a theoretical entitlement to 17.64 constituencies. With eighteen constituencies allocated, the average constituency electorate would be 68,524, which is only 1,411 below the electoral quota. We therefore provisionally decided to allocate eighteen constituencies to the combined area of Essex, Southend-on-Sea and Thurrock. The electorates of the seventeen existing constituencies ranged from 78,569 in Billericay CC to 65,233 in Southend West BC, a disparity of 13,336, which our provisional recommendations reduced to 9,976.

Provisional Recommendations

9. As a result of changes to the district and borough ward boundaries, thirteen of the new wards in Essex, one in Southend-on-Sea and two in Thurrock are partly in one constituency and partly in another. Our provisional recommendations realigned the constituency boundaries with the new ward boundaries. The creation of the extra, eighteenth constituency, necessarily involved a degree of disruption and more widespread changes and together with the realignment led us to recommend changes to sixteen of the seventeen existing constituencies. Castle Point BC was unchanged.

10. We decided that Essex could be considered in three discrete areas. We decided to continue to allocate seven constituencies to the area comprised of the Boroughs of Castle Point, Southend-on-Sea and Thurrock and the Districts of Basildon and Rochford and to continue to allocate three constituencies to the area comprised of the Borough of Brentwood and the Districts of Epping Forest and Harlow. We decided to allocate an extra, eighth, constituency to the area comprised of the Boroughs of Chelmsford and Colchester and the Districts of Braintree, Maldon, Tendring and Uttlesford.

Basildon, Castle Point, Rochford, Southend-on-Sea and Thurrock

11. We considered that it was necessary to reduce the electorate of Thurrock BC, which was now significantly above the county average. We decided to transfer the Thurrock Borough ward of East Tilbury to the East Thurrock and Pitsea CC. We also decided to include the divided Thurrock Borough ward of Chadwell St Mary in Thurrock BC, although this would not affect any electors.

12. We also considered that it was necessary to reduce the size of the existing Basildon and Billericay constituencies. We therefore proposed including five southern Basildon District wards in a constituency with six eastern Thurrock Borough wards, which included the East Tilbury ward. We decided that the constituency should be named East Thurrock and

Pitsea CC to reflect its composition. We also proposed that the eight north-western Basildon District wards should be included in a renamed Basildon and Billericay BC to reflect its altered composition.

13. We proposed that the three Basildon District wards of Wickford Castledon, Wickford North and Wickford Park should be transferred from Billericay CC to Rayleigh CC, which would also include the Rochford District ward of Rochford. We further proposed that the constituency should be renamed Rayleigh and Wickford CC.

14. In the Borough of Southend-on-Sea, we proposed realigning ward and constituency boundaries by including the whole of the divided Prittlewell ward in Southend West BC. We also proposed that the Rochford District ward of Ashingdon and Canewdon should be included in Rochford and Southend East CC and that the constituency should be renamed Southend East CC. We proposed no change to Castle Point BC.

Brentwood, Epping Forest and Harlow

15. We proposed that the electorate of Brentwood and Ongar CC should be increased by transferring the Epping Forest District ward of North Weald Bassett from Epping Forest CC. We also proposed that the whole of the two divided Epping Forest District wards of Broadley Common, Epping Upland and Nazeing, and of Hastingwood, Matching and Sheering Village should be included in Harlow CC. No other changes were proposed to Brentwood and Ongar CC, Epping Forest CC or Harlow CC.

Braintree, Chelmsford, Colchester, Maldon, Tendring and Uttlesford

16. We proposed creating a constituency based on the town of Chelmsford, which would include thirteen urban wards. We also proposed that the four Chelmsford Borough wards of Boreham and The Leighs, Broomfield and The Walthams, Chelmsford Rural West and Writtle should be included in Saffron Walden CC, together with the District of Uttlesford. We further proposed that seven Chelmsford Borough wards should be included in the renamed Maldon CC, together with thirteen wards of the District of Maldon.

17. We proposed placing four Maldon District wards with nine Braintree District wards and the five south-western Colchester Borough wards in a new constituency named Witham CC.

18. The only change we proposed to Colchester BC, thereby reducing the electorate to very near the electoral quota and to the county average, was the inclusion of the two Colchester Borough wards of Copford and West Stanway, and Stanway in Witham CC.

19. We proposed that eight Braintree District wards and the two divided Braintree District wards of Gosfield and Greenstead Green and of The Three Colnes should be included in Braintree CC rather than in Saffron Walden CC. The remaining nine rural Colchester Borough wards were included in Harwich CC with fourteen Tendring District wards. We placed the twenty-one remaining Tendring District wards in a newly named Clacton CC.

20. Our provisional recommendations were:-

	2000 electorate
Basildon and Billericay BC	65,475
Braintree CC	65,616
Brentwood and Ongar CC	68,099
Castle Point BC	68,065
Chelmsford BC	68,177
Clacton CC	65,999
Colchester BC	70,933
East Thurrock and Pitsea CC	71,425
Epping Forest CC	68,875
Harlow CC	68,798
Harwich CC	67,715
Maldon CC	70,557
Rayleigh and Wickford CC	73,815
Saffron Walden CC	70,402
Southend East CC	68,064
Southend West BC	66,508
Thurrock BC	71,067
Witham CC	63,839
	<hr/>
	1,233,429

Representations

21. Following publication of our provisional recommendations we received 397 representations, of which 219 supported all or parts of our proposals, twenty-two expressed support for parts whilst also objecting to other parts and 156 objected to all or parts of our proposals. It was generally accepted that Essex, Southend-on-Sea and Thurrock should be reviewed together. The objections contained ten counter-proposals, some of which had features which were not supported at the inquiry.

22. The main issues raised in the objections fell into three principal wide-ranging counter-proposals and, additionally, there were two localised counter-proposals, whilst other representations suggested different names for constituencies:-

- a) the first was that the Rochford District wards of Ashingdon and Canewdon, and Rochford should remain in Rayleigh and Wickford CC and Southend East CC, respectively. It was also proposed that the town of Chelmsford should be divided between constituencies, with thirteen Chelmsford Borough wards being included in South Chelmsford CC and the remaining eleven Chelmsford Borough wards being included in Chelmsford North and Witham CC, together with five Braintree District wards; and that the District of Maldon should not be divided between constituencies. Additionally, five northern wards from Braintree District were to remain in Saffron Walden CC;
- b) the second, in addition to proposing identical arrangements for the Rochford District wards of Ashingdon and Canewdon, and Rochford, as were made in the first counter-proposal, also included the Basildon District ward of Langdon Hills in

Basildon and Billericay CC. It also proposed that the two Epping Forest District wards of Broadley Common, Epping Upland and Nazeing and of Hastingwood, Matching and Sheering Village should be included in Epping Forest CC and Brentwood and Ongar CC, respectively; the Maldon District ward of Wickham Bishops and Woodham should be included in Maldon CC; five Maldon District wards, seven Colchester Borough wards and seven Tendring District wards should be included in a renamed North East Essex CC; the six north-eastern Tendring District wards should be included in Clacton CC, which should be renamed Harwich CC; the nine wards in the south of Braintree District should be included in Braintree CC; and twelve Braintree District wards should be included in a renamed North Essex CC. Parts of this counter-proposal received support in the proposals of other objectors;

- c) the third counter-proposal was that the Brentwood Borough ward of Herongate, Ingrave and West Horndon and the three Basildon District wards of Billericay East, Billericay West and Crouch should be included in a renamed Billericay and East Thurrock CC; the nine southern Basildon District wards should be included in a renamed Basildon BC; and the Epping Forest District ward of Broadley Common, Epping Upland and Nazeing should be included in Epping Forest CC;
- d) the fourth counter-proposal was that the two Epping Forest District wards of Lower Sheering and Hastingwood, Matching and Sheering Village should be included in Brentwood and Ongar CC and the two Epping Forest District wards of Lambourne and North Weald Bassett should be included in Epping Forest CC; and
- e) the fifth counter-proposal, in addition to proposing identical arrangements for the Rochford District wards of Ashingdon and Canewdon, and Rochford, as in the first and second counter-proposals, was that the Chelmsford Borough ward of Galleywood should be included in Chelmsford BC and the Southend-on-Sea Borough ward of Milton should be included in Southend West BC.

Local Inquiry and Assistant Commissioner's Report

23. We were required to hold an inquiry. Following the announcement of the inquiry a further 253 representations were received, of which eight approved of our provisional recommendations, four expressed support for part whilst objecting to other parts and 241 objected to our proposals.

24. The Assistant Commissioner upheld our decision to combine the County of Essex and the unitary authorities of Southend-on-Sea and Thurrock as one review area, so as to reduce the overall disparity between the electorates of neighbouring constituencies, and to allocate eighteen constituencies.

Castle Point BC and Thurrock BC

25. The Assistant Commissioner agreed that the electorate of Thurrock BC needed to be reduced and noted that there were no objections to the transfer of the Thurrock Borough ward of East Tilbury from Thurrock BC. He also noted that there were no objections to the proposal to recommend no change to Castle Point BC. He therefore endorsed our provisional recommendations for these two constituencies.

Rayleigh and Wickford CC, Southend East CC and Southend West BC

26. The fifth counter-proposal suggested that the Southend-on-Sea Borough ward of Milton should be included in Southend West BC, instead of in Southend East CC. The Assistant Commissioner did not find this lone proposal persuasive and rejected it.

27. There was unanimous support at the inquiry for the inclusion of the Rochford District wards of Rochford, and Ashingdon and Canewdon in the constituencies of Southend East CC and Rayleigh and Wickford CC, respectively. He fully supported this and recommended that the wards be exchanged. He noted that this had the effect of reducing the overall disparity from 9,976 to 8,136. He also recommended that our proposed Southend East CC retain the name Rochford and Southend East CC.

Basildon and Billericay BC and East Thurrock and Pitsea CC

28. He considered that the critical judgement in drawing constituency boundaries in this area was whether the town of Basildon should continue to be divided between constituencies. Although sympathetic to the argument for a constituency based on the former new town of Basildon, he was unable to recommend it and noted the absence of much objection to, or adverse comment upon, our provisional proposals. He also noted that Basildon was currently divided into separate constituencies and he suspected that it had “come to be accepted, if not positively then passively”.

29. He noted that, in order to create a constituency based wholly on Basildon New Town, it would have been necessary to include the Brentwood Borough ward of Herongate, Ingrave and West Horndon in a constituency containing the town of Billericay and wards from the east of Thurrock Borough. The Assistant Commissioner reported that, although an element of the third counter-proposal which had included this ward in a renamed Billericay and East Thurrock CC as part of an alternative division of Basildon District between constituencies had been withdrawn by the proposers prior to the inquiry, the issue of the transfer of the ward had remained a live issue in the consideration of a constituency based on Basildon new town, and he had heard evidence, both in support of, and against this transfer. There was substantial opposition to the transfer of the ward and to this part of the withdrawn counter-proposal and he rejected it because it would have broken the ties of the ward with the town of Brentwood.

30. He considered that the element of the second counter-proposal, which suggested the transfer of the Basildon District ward of Langdon Hills to Basildon and Billericay BC, had some merit. However, he concluded that there was insufficient weight of evidence to justify the rejection of our proposed constituencies. He therefore rejected the counter-proposal and endorsed our provisionally recommended Basildon and Billericay BC and East Thurrock and Pitsea CC.

The Borough of Brentwood and the Districts of Epping Forest and Harlow

31. Two counter-proposals involved the five Epping Forest District wards of Lambourne, Lower Sheering, North Weald Bassett, and Broadley Common, Epping Upland and Nazeing, and Hastingwood, Matching and Sheering Village and the constituencies in which they should be included. The Assistant Commissioner noted that our provisional recommendations would create a disparity of only 776 between the three proposed constituencies.

32. He noted that the growth in the electorate of Harlow District had been no more than the average for Essex. Although there were plans for the building of a large number of houses along the M11 development corridor, he considered that he could not take account of these plans because they were still speculative. Accordingly, he considered that Harlow CC would need to retain some existing rural parishes, at least in the short term, in order to achieve anything approaching electoral parity.

The Epping Forest District ward of Lambourne

33. It was counter-proposed that this ward should be transferred from Brentwood and Ongar CC to Epping Forest CC. It had only 1,511 electors and the move would not in itself give rise to any great disparity in electorates. However, he considered that there was clear evidence of the links between the ward and Brentwood and Ongar CC, there was no significant interest or support for the ward's transfer to another constituency, and he rejected the proposed move.

The Epping Forest District ward of Lower Sheering

34. The Assistant Commissioner could identify no body of support for the counter-proposed transfer of the ward from Harlow CC to Brentwood and Ongar CC, which was separated from the Matching, Hastingwood and Sheering Village ward by the M11 motorway, a significant barrier. There was convincing evidence that the ward's road links to Brentwood were poor, as they were to Harlow, and that the ward looked above all across the county border to Hertfordshire and the towns of Sawbridgeworth and Bishops Stortford and then perhaps to Harlow. He was unable to find any strong case in support of the Lower Sheering ward being transferred from Harlow CC.

The Epping Forest District ward of North Weald Bassett

35. This ward was geographically much closer to Epping than it was to Brentwood and a little closer to Epping than it was to Chipping Ongar. The Assistant Commissioner also noted that although its transfer to Brentwood and Ongar CC would place the ward in a third constituency in as many reviews, he considered that the ward had as close ties with Ongar as it did with Epping and he was not persuaded that our proposed transfer of the ward would break local ties or produce excessive inconvenience. He therefore supported the provisionally recommended inclusion of the North Weald Bassett ward in Brentwood and Ongar CC.

The Epping Forest District wards of Broadley Common, Epping Upland and Nazeing and Hastingwood, Matching and Sheering Village

36. The Assistant Commissioner reported that the proposed inclusion of the two wards in Harlow CC provoked a large number of objections. He noted that these wards had small electorates of 1,566 and 1,638, respectively, and that to detach either from Harlow CC would give rise to only a modest disparity. He also noted that the greatest number of electors in each of these wards was at present in the existing Harlow CC.

37. In the case of the Hastingwood, Matching and Sheering Village ward, he concluded that the balance of advantage lay with its inclusion in Harlow CC. He noted that it was where the greatest proportion of its electors already were and took into account shape, transport and the electoral balance.

38. In the case of the Broadley Common, Epping Upland and Nazeing ward, he found the balance much finer, although he noted that the historical associations of the ward with Epping were strong. He considered that, where parts of the ward were geographically close to Harlow, the links appeared to be more with Roydon in Hertfordshire than with Harlow. He considered that the shape of Harlow CC without the ward would be less elegant, but by no means odd. The inclusion of the ward in Epping Forest CC would produce an electorate of 70,441, and of 67,232 in Harlow CC, which he considered to be well within acceptable limits.

39. He noted that none of the counter-proposals had suggested the removal of the Broadley Common, Epping Upland and Nazeing ward alone from Harlow CC. However, he considered that the ward's ties had been exhaustively explored in representations and in the evidence at the inquiry. He therefore recommended that the ward should be included in Epping Forest CC.

Colchester BC

40. The Assistant Commissioner noted that the electorate of the existing Colchester BC was excessive. He considered that there were only two wards that could be excluded from Colchester BC: Mile End or Stanway. He agreed with us and said that it was better that the Stanway ward should be excluded, because it was more peripheral than other wards to the town of Colchester. He rejected the counter-proposal to divide the town of Colchester between constituencies as it had no merit and was not supported at the inquiry. He therefore supported the provisionally recommended Colchester BC.

Clacton CC and Harwich CC

41. He noted that Harwich CC had included Clacton and the coastal towns of Walton and Frinton on a settled basis. However, he also noted that the electorate of the present Harwich CC was 76,958, which he considered to be excessive. Our proposals to create two separate constituencies of Harwich CC and Clacton CC had provoked a mixture of strong support and opposition.

42. There was evidence of a common identity of issues between Harwich and Clacton and the coastal towns between them, and of community links. However, there was also evidence that Harwich was very different in nature, not only from Frinton and Walton, but also from Clacton. He noted that the transport links between Harwich and the other coastal towns were poor and that the flow of transport and business was instead east-west, with affinity between Harwich and Manningtree. He also noted that the counter-proposed Harwich CC would not include Jaywick, which it was argued had very close ties to Clacton.

43. He concluded that Harwich was different in nature from Clacton and in geography, clearly distinct. Harwich was an international port and the seaside resorts to the south appeared to be significantly different in character and, at Clacton, in scale. He also concluded that Jaywick was intimately linked with Clacton, being separated only by a narrow strip of open land from Clacton and that, unless imposed by considerations elsewhere, to exclude the Tendring District ward of Golf Green, which included Jaywick, from a Clacton constituency would unjustifiably sever long-standing ties. He therefore rejected those elements of the counter-proposals which had included the towns of Harwich and Clacton in the same constituency.

Braintree CC and Saffron Walden CC

44. The Assistant Commissioner noted that the present Saffron Walden CC was the largest in area in Essex and consisted of the whole of the Uttlesford District and a large part of the northern area of the Braintree District, including the town of Halstead. He was told that Saffron Walden CC had contained wards from Braintree District since 1885. He noted that the constituency was of an unusual shape, with the Uttlesford District wards joined to the others by a narrow bridge at the north western corner of Braintree District. He considered that the electorate of Saffron Walden CC was now excessive.

45. Our provisional recommendations excised all the Braintree District wards from Saffron Walden CC to form Braintree CC, which contained the towns of Braintree and Halstead and the northern wards of Braintree District. He noted that the four northern wards of Chelmsford Borough were added to Saffron Walden CC.

46. He found persuasive the evidence that the rural wards nearer to Braintree were closely tied to Braintree and that Halstead and the northernmost Braintree District wards perhaps looked first across the county border to Suffolk. There was strong evidence that they did not look at all towards the rural wards adjacent to Manningtree as suggested in the second counter-proposal. He noted that there were strong ties to Braintree, particularly in areas physically closer.

47. He considered our provisionally recommended Saffron Walden CC to be tidy on the map and observed that there was very little evidence or representation for or against from those in the immediate areas. He further considered that the issues affecting Stansted Airport might be of high potential importance to large parts of Essex and not just to those in the rural areas across Uttlesford District and the north of Braintree District, but considered they were unlikely to create any local conflict of interest for the MP.

48. He concluded that our proposed Braintree CC and Saffron Walden CC did not produce excessive inconvenience or disruption to the existing ties of the northern Braintree District wards, which would be included in Braintree CC, nor to those Chelmsford Borough wards to be included in Saffron Walden CC.

Maldon CC

49. The Assistant Commissioner noted that Maldon District was too small to have a constituency coterminous with its boundary and needed to be joined with wards from a neighbouring district. He reported that there was both support for, and opposition to, our proposals to divide Maldon District, which had never before been divided between constituencies. He also considered that, although Maldon District had not previously been divided between constituencies, it might be necessary to divide the district in this review.

50. He rejected the element of the second counter-proposal to place the two Heybridge wards in a separate constituency from Maldon. He considered that Heybridge was intimately linked with Maldon, that its boundary with it was barely noticeable on the ground, and that it would be a grave breach of the local ties between Heybridge and Maldon to include the two towns in separate constituencies. He was also satisfied that there were associations between the wards in the south-east of Chelmsford Borough and the area around Maldon, and although he accepted that the Chelmsford Borough ward of South Hanningfield, Stock and

Margaretting, which would be at the western margin of the proposed constituency, had few ties with Maldon, it was inescapable that such may occur at the margins of constituencies.

51. He considered that, although it was important to respect ties where practicable, it was not always possible to respect all ties throughout the county. He concluded that, although Maldon District had not previously been divided between constituencies, on a broad view, and taking into account the support for our proposals for a new Maldon constituency, the contending proposals for neighbouring constituencies and the evolution of the distribution of the population in this part of Essex, our proposals to divide the district in this review should be adopted.

Chelmsford BC

52. The Assistant Commissioner noted that Chelmsford Borough was currently divided between three constituencies of which the West Chelmsford constituency had an electorate of 76,787, which needed to be reduced. He also noted that Chelmsford Borough had an electorate of 120,631, which was insufficient to support two constituencies. The first counter-proposal suggested that two Chelmsford constituencies should be created by dividing the urban town area in two. This would place the adjoining urban wards of Chelmsford Borough in the North Chelmsford and South Chelmsford constituencies, as opposed to including them in the urban core constituency which we had provisionally recommended, and would also include the town of Witham in the proposed North Chelmsford constituency. He reported that, whilst the first counter-proposal would involve separation of Witham from Braintree, so would our provisional recommendations.

53. He noted that our provisional recommendations received considerable support. He considered that Chelmsford was a clearly defined and compact urban area and that on much of its perimeter there was either open country or Green Belt land between it and surrounding settlements. He also considered that the dividing line through the centre of the town under the counter-proposal did not reflect any natural or community division. However, he considered that the counter-proposal had obvious merit. In particular, it did not separate the immediately adjoining areas of Broomfield, Boreham, Galleywood and Writtle from a Chelmsford constituency and it respected associations with Chelmsford for those who were in rural areas of Chelmsford Borough.

54. He considered that the weight of representations from within the town of Chelmsford was very heavily in favour of a town constituency and that there was a strong advantage for the town having an MP to represent it as a single constituency. He also concluded that the Galleywood ward should be included in Chelmsford BC, as suggested in the fifth counter-proposal, instead of in Maldon CC, so as to reflect the ward's ties with Chelmsford. This change increased the overall disparity from 8,136 to 8,996, but was still below the disparity in our provisional recommendations.

Braintree CC and Witham CC

55. A number of objections were made to our provisional recommendations for a Witham constituency and particularly to the separation of the towns of Witham and Braintree. The Assistant Commissioner considered that, although the two towns shared a number of links, they also had separate identities and character, and limited connections. He considered that our provisionally recommended Witham CC was based around an important town and had

been supported in the representations. He therefore accepted that the two towns could be placed in separate constituencies and endorsed our provisional recommendations.

Constituency names

56. Several different names for the constituencies in Essex had been suggested. The Assistant Commissioner rejected the alternatives put forward for Basildon and Billericay BC and Thurrock BC. He recommended that East Thurrock and Pitsea CC be changed to South Basildon and East Thurrock CC, as it more accurately reflected the area covered by the constituency and was more likely to resonate with electors. Alternative names for Epping Forest CC were proposed, but he rejected any change to the existing name, as it was well recognised and apposite.

57. It was proposed that Harwich CC be renamed to include reference to North Essex. He therefore recommended the adoption of the name Harwich and North Essex CC, which he considered to be accurate, if a little long and pedantic.

58. Various alternatives were suggested for Saffron Walden CC. He was satisfied that the historic name Saffron Walden must remain in the title, but he considered it was important that electors elsewhere were not “de-motivated” by retaining a name identical with that of the town of Saffron Walden alone. He therefore proposed the name Saffron Walden and Writtle CC. Alternative names were suggested for Maldon CC, but, on the basis of simplicity, he recommended no change to the name of the constituency.

Revised recommendations

59. With one exception, we agreed with all the Assistant Commissioner’s recommendations and decided to accept them. We rejected the recommendation for the proposed Saffron Walden CC to be renamed Saffron Walden and Writtle CC. Whilst our proposed Saffron Walden CC differed markedly in composition from the existing constituency, we noted that the Writtle ward contained only 4,533 electors (just 6.4% of the constituency electorate). We concluded that an alternative such as North West Essex was not appropriate and that Saffron Walden CC should therefore remain the name of the constituency. We accordingly published the following revised recommendations:-

2000 electorate

Basildon and Billericay BC	65,475
Braintree CC	65,616
Brentwood and Ongar CC	68,099
Castle Point BC	68,065
Chelmsford BC	72,835
Clacton CC	65,999
Colchester BC	70,933
Epping Forest CC	70,441
Harlow CC	67,232
Harwich and North Essex CC	67,715
Maldon CC	65,899
Rayleigh and Wickford CC	71,975
Rochford and Southend East CC	69,904

Saffron Walden CC	70,402
South Basildon and East Thurrock CC	71,425
Southend West BC	66,508
Thurrock BC	71,067
Witham CC	63,839
	<hr/>
	1,233,429

Further Representations

60. Following publication of our revised recommendations we received twelve representations. Of these, three approved of all or part of the revised recommendations, one noted them and eight objected to various parts. Three of the objections concerned the inclusion of Chelmsford Borough wards in Saffron Walden CC. Two of the objections concerned the inclusion of the Epping Forest District ward of Hastingwood, Matching and Sheering Village in Harlow CC. One objection concerned the inclusion of the Epping Forest District ward of Broadley Common, Epping Upland and Nazeing in Epping Forest CC. One representation objected to the revised name of South Basildon and East Thurrock CC, whilst another objected to our decision not to accept the Assistant Commissioner's proposed name for Saffron Walden CC. We considered that these representations repeated objections which had already been fully considered by the Assistant Commissioner and by us and that they contained no new significant evidence.

Recommendation

61. We were satisfied that our revised recommendations did not need to be modified. We therefore recommend the adoption of the following constituencies containing the wards as listed in Appendix C:-

	2000 electorate
Basildon and Billericay BC	65,475
Braintree CC	65,616
Brentwood and Ongar CC	68,099
Castle Point BC	68,065
Chelmsford BC	72,835
Clacton CC	65,999
Colchester BC	70,933
Epping Forest CC	70,441
Harlow CC	67,232
Harwich and North Essex CC	67,715
Maldon CC	65,899
Rayleigh and Wickford CC	71,975
Rochford and Southend East CC	69,904
Saffron Walden CC	70,402
South Basildon and East Thurrock CC	71,425
Southend West BC	66,508
Thurrock BC	71,067
Witham CC	63,839
	<hr/>
	1,233,429

GLOUCESTERSHIRE

The Number of Electors

1. There are currently six constituencies in the County of Gloucestershire:-

	2000 electorate
Cheltenham BC	68,274
Cotswold CC	68,969
Forest of Dean CC	66,055
Gloucester BC	82,153
Stroud CC	79,386
Tewkesbury CC	<u>69,927</u>
	<u>434,764</u>

The Number of Constituencies

2. Gloucestershire had a 2000 parliamentary electorate of 434,764, which gave a theoretical entitlement to 6.22 constituencies. With six constituencies retained, the average constituency electorate in the county would be 72,461, which is 2,526 more than the electoral quota. We decided, therefore, provisionally to recommend that the county should continue to be allocated six constituencies. The electorates of the six existing constituencies ranged from 66,055 in Forest of Dean CC to 82,153 in Gloucester BC, a disparity of 16,098.

Provisional Recommendations

3. As a result of changes to the district ward boundaries, seven of the new wards in the county are partly in one constituency and partly in another. Our provisional recommendations realigned the constituency boundaries with the new ward boundaries. In forming our proposals we recognised that a certain degree of change was necessary across several constituencies in order to reduce the existing disparity and the high electorates in Gloucester BC and Stroud CC. However, we decided to keep these changes to a minimum.

4. We decided to reduce the electorate of Gloucester BC by including the City of Gloucester ward of Longlevens in Tewkesbury CC. We considered that the Longlevens ward was the most appropriate ward to include from Gloucester BC, given the geographical constraints posed by the River Severn to the west, the M5 motorway to the east and the already large Stroud CC to the south.

5. We included the whole of the four divided Cheltenham Borough wards of Leckhampton, Oakley, Up Hatherley and Warden Hill in an enlarged Cheltenham BC. We further proposed to realign ward and constituency boundaries by including the two divided Cheltenham Borough wards of Prestbury and Swindon Village in the revised Tewkesbury CC.

6. We decided to reduce the electorate of Stroud CC, but noted that the geographical location of Stroud presented several difficulties. Stroud CC is bordered by the River Severn to the west (with no crossing points) and Gloucester BC to the north (which did not need additional electors). We therefore proposed that the whole of the divided Stroud District ward of Wotton-under-Edge should be included in Cotswold CC and that the Stroud District ward

of Minchinhampton should be transferred to Cotswold CC. We proposed no change to Forest of Dean CC as we considered that the River Severn represented a clear and identifiable natural boundary. The overall effect of these changes reduced the disparity between the constituencies from 16,098 to 9,203.

7. Our provisional recommendations were:-

	2000 electorate
Cheltenham BC	73,330
Cotswold CC	73,097
Forest of Dean CC	66,055
Gloucester BC	74,876
Stroud CC	75,258
Tewkesbury CC	<u>72,148</u>
	<u>434,764</u>

Representations

8. Following publication of our provisional recommendations, we received seventy-nine representations, including four counter-proposals, of which ten supported all or parts of our proposals and sixty-nine objected to all or parts of them.

9. There were common features in the counter-proposals and the main issues raised in the objections were principally contained in two counter-proposals:-

- a) the first was that the Gloucester City wards of Longlevens and Hucclecote should be included in Gloucester BC and Tewkesbury CC, respectively; the Cotswold District ward of Sandywell should be included in Tewkesbury CC; the Stroud District wards of Nailsworth and Minchinhampton should be included in Cotswold CC and Stroud CC, respectively; and that Cotswold CC should be renamed as ‘The Cotswolds CC’; and
- b) the second was that the boundaries of the six constituencies should be coterminous with their local government district boundaries.

Local Inquiry and Assistant Commissioner’s Report

10. We were required to hold an inquiry. Following the announcement of the inquiry a further eleven representations were received, one of which approved of our proposals, whilst nine objected to them and one expressed no comment. The Assistant Commissioner reported that, in addition to the above, the following issues were also discussed during the inquiry:-

- a) a new counter-proposal that objected to the inclusion of the City of Gloucester wards of Quedgeley Fieldcourt and Quedgeley Severn Vale in Gloucester BC;
- b) the inclusion of one of the Stroud District wards of Dursley or Painswick in Stroud CC; and
- c) that the county should be allocated seven constituencies.

The City of Gloucester wards of Hucclecote and Longlevens

11. The Assistant Commissioner reported that it was generally accepted that the size of the existing Gloucester BC, with 82,153 electors, had to be reduced. He considered that it was impracticable to transfer a City of Gloucester ward to Forest of Dean CC and accepted the reasons given by us in our provisional recommendations against such a move.

12. Those who objected to the transfer of the Longlevens ward to Tewkesbury CC had argued that the ward was an integral part of the City of Gloucester and that moving it would result in the unnecessary disruption of local ties. He reported that it was counter-proposed that the Hucclecote ward should be transferred to Tewkesbury CC, instead of the Longlevens ward, but that there was considerable opposition to any City of Gloucester ward being transferred to Tewkesbury CC. He considered that there would be substantial difficulties in transferring either of the two wards to Tewkesbury CC as both wards naturally belonged to Gloucester and he noted that major roads (A40/A417/M5) formed well-defined boundaries between the City of Gloucester and the Borough of Tewkesbury. He considered that there was no numerical advantage in choosing one ward over the other.

13. He reported that those supporting the transfer of the City of Gloucester ward of Hucclecote to Tewkesbury CC pointed to the fact that the historic parish of Hucclecote extended on both sides of the M5 motorway and that the neighbouring ward of the Borough of Tewkesbury was similarly called Hucclecote. However, he considered that, whatever the historical circumstances, the M5 was now a formidable physical boundary between the two Hucclecote wards.

14. The Assistant Commissioner reported that the one factor of substance which allowed discrimination between the two wards was that the boundaries of the Longlevens ward were readily apparent, being formed by main roads, whereas the boundary of the Hucclecote ward with its neighbouring wards in the City of Gloucester was considerably more difficult to identify. He therefore considered that the electors of the Longlevens ward would find it easier to understand that they lived in an area that had become part of Tewkesbury CC, than would those in Hucclecote. He therefore agreed with us that the Longlevens ward should be included in Tewkesbury CC and rejected this element of the first counter-proposal.

The City of Gloucester wards of Quedgeley Fieldcourt and Quedgeley Severn Vale

15. He reported that the new counter-proposal, which was discussed during the inquiry, was for the two Quedgeley wards to be included in Stroud CC, so as to allow for the Longlevens ward to be included in Gloucester BC. He acknowledged that the counter-proposal had merit, but considered that such a transfer would necessitate further changes to Stroud CC and, in consequence, to Cotswold CC and Tewkesbury CC and no detail of any such changes was made public before or at the inquiry. He therefore considered the alternative option of moving either the Longlevens or Hucclecote ward to be less disruptive and rejected this counter-proposal.

The Stroud District wards of Dursley, Minchinhampton, Nailsworth and Painswick

16. The Assistant Commissioner reported that our proposal to include the Minchinhampton ward in Cotswold CC gave rise to considerable objection. He noted that the principal counter-proposal had alternatively proposed the transfer of the Nailsworth ward to Cotswold CC. He also reported that by the end of the inquiry there had been alternative

counter-proposals to transfer either the Dursley ward or the Painswick ward to Cotswold CC. He reported that all these counter-proposals were subject to objections, albeit to a lesser extent, than the opposition voiced to the transfer of the Minchinhampton ward.

17. He considered that the alternative of not transferring any ward from the Stroud constituency to Cotswold CC would give rise to an unacceptable disparity as well as a high electorate in Stroud CC and that this could not be justified by the preservation of local ties or for special geographical considerations. He also considered that both Stroud District and Cotswold District were largely rural with no obvious natural boundary between them and that none of the wards had physical characteristics that made one of them more suitable to transfer than another.

18. He reported that the shape of the Painswick ward and its close proximity to the town of Stroud made it an unsuitable ward to move and that this proposal received comparatively little support at the inquiry. He considered that the Nailsworth ward had close historical connections with the town of Stroud, which also made Nailsworth an unsuitable ward to move. He noted the very close ties that the Dursley ward had with the town of Cam, which it was proposed would remain in Stroud CC, and that the Dursley ward lay further west than either the Minchinhampton or Nailsworth wards. He therefore considered that the transfer of the Dursley ward to Cotswold CC would compound the problem of the geographical size of the constituency by increasing its length at one end yet further.

19. He reported that the transfer of the Minchinhampton ward also presented difficulties in that it too had close ties to the town of Stroud. He noted that its transfer would divide the village of Brimscombe between Stroud CC and Cotswold CC and that the links between Minchinhampton and towns within Cotswold CC, such as Cirencester, were weak. However, despite these disadvantages, he considered that the Minchinhampton ward was the most "geographically discrete" of the four wards and that it was closer to the centre of Cotswold CC than either the Dursley or Nailsworth wards. He also considered that there were no noticeable features which formed a boundary between the Minchinhampton ward and Cotswold CC. He therefore concluded that the Minchinhampton ward should be included in Cotswold CC and rejected this element of the first counter-proposal.

The Costwold District ward of Sandywell

20. The Assistant Commissioner reported that the principal counter-proposal submitted that the Sandywell ward should be transferred from Cotswold CC to Tewkesbury CC. He considered that there was little benefit in such a transfer, as the small effect on the disparity could not be justified in terms of the overall disruption to the electorate. He concluded that the Sandywell ward should remain in Cotswold CC.

The name of the proposed Cotswold constituency

21. He reported that it had been proposed that the name of Cotswold CC should be changed to 'The Cotswolds CC'. This received general support and was not opposed. He reported that he found the evidence presented at the inquiry in favour of this proposal had been very helpful and noted that "nearly everyone puts an 's' on the name". He accordingly recommended that 'Cotswold CC' be renamed 'The Cotswolds CC'.

Other counter-proposals

22. The Assistant Commissioner rejected the second counter-proposal which was for six constituencies to be formed in Gloucestershire with their boundaries being coterminous with the district boundaries, as the disparity between the electorates of the six constituencies would be too high. He also rejected a suggestion to allocate seven constituencies to Gloucestershire because the county was not entitled to an extra constituency.

Revised Recommendations

23. We noted that the Assistant Commissioner had supported our provisional recommendations, save for his recommendation for the revised name of 'The Cotswolds CC', which we accepted. We accordingly published the following revised recommendations:-

	2000 electorate
Cheltenham BC	73,330
Forest of Dean CC	66,055
Gloucester BC	74,876
Stroud CC	75,258
Tewkesbury CC	72,148
The Cotswolds CC	<u>73,097</u>
	<u>434,764</u>

Further Representations

24. Following publication of our revised recommendations we received nine representations, of which two approved of the revised recommendations, six objected to them and one noted them. Of the six objections, five opposed the inclusion of the Stroud District ward of Minchinhampton in The Cotswolds CC and one opposed the inclusion of the Gloucester City ward of Longlevens in Tewkesbury CC. We noted that the issues regarding these wards had been fully considered at the local inquiry and the representations did not contain any significant new evidence.

Recommendation

25. We were satisfied that our revised recommendations did not need to be modified. We therefore recommend the adoption of the following constituencies containing the wards as listed in Appendix C:-

	2000 electorate
Cheltenham BC	73,330
Forest of Dean CC	66,055
Gloucester BC	74,876
Stroud CC	75,258
Tewkesbury CC	72,148
The Cotswolds CC	<u>73,097</u>
	<u>434,764</u>

HAMPSHIRE AND SOUTHAMPTON

The Number of Electors

1. There are currently fifteen constituencies in the combined area of the Counties of Hampshire and Southampton:-

	2000 electorate
Aldershot CC	79,219
Basingstoke CC	78,401
East Hampshire CC	77,903
Eastleigh BC	75,145
Fareham CC	71,423
Gosport BC	69,708
Havant BC	70,623
New Forest East CC	66,881
New Forest West CC	68,034
North East Hampshire CC	70,992
North West Hampshire CC	76,192
Romsey CC	70,632
Southampton, Itchen BC	77,241
Southampton, Test BC	74,401
Winchester CC	<u>82,083</u>
	<u>1,108,878</u>

The Number of Constituencies

2. Following The Hampshire (Cities of Portsmouth and Southampton) (Structural Change) Order 1995, the cities of Portsmouth and Southampton ceased to form part of the county of Hampshire and became new unitary authorities. The remaining eleven districts in the county formed the County of Hampshire. As Portsmouth had a 2000 parliamentary electorate of 142,645, which gave a theoretical entitlement to 2.04 constituencies, we provisionally decided to review Portsmouth separately from Hampshire and Southampton.

3. Hampshire had a 2000 parliamentary electorate of 945,397, which gave a theoretical entitlement to 13.52 constituencies. Southampton had a 2000 parliamentary electorate of 163,481, which gave a theoretical entitlement to 2.34 constituencies. Whether considered as one or two review areas, sixteen constituencies would be allocated instead of the existing fifteen. However, if reviewed separately, the average constituency electorate in Hampshire would be 67,528, whilst in Southampton it would be 81,741, which is 11,806 above the electoral quota and 1,806 above our 10,000 threshold. The combined counties of Hampshire and Southampton had a 2000 parliamentary electorate of 1,108,878, which gave a theoretical entitlement to 15.86 constituencies. With sixteen constituencies, the average constituency electorate in the area would be 69,305, which is only 630 less than the electoral quota. We therefore decided to review Hampshire and Southampton together. The electorates of the fifteen existing constituencies ranged from 66,881 in New Forest East CC to 82,083 in Winchester CC, a disparity of 15,202.

Provisional Recommendations

4. As a result of changes to ward boundaries in Hampshire and Southampton, eleven of the new wards in Hampshire, and four of the new wards in Southampton, are partly in one constituency and partly in another. Our provisional recommendations placed each ward wholly within a constituency.

5. We proposed that there should be no change to Fareham CC and Gosport BC as both existing constituencies had electorates that were close to the electoral quota, and we proposed only the minimum change to Havant BC in order to include the divided Havant Borough ward of Waterloo in the new Meon Valley CC.

6. We considered that the electorate of the existing Aldershot constituency, at 79,219, was too high. We proposed that the three Hart District wards to the north west, that comprised Yateley, should be transferred from the constituency. This change, plus the realignment of wards which were divided between constituencies, produced an electorate for Aldershot CC much closer to the electoral quota than at present. We also considered that the predominately urban nature of the proposed constituency warranted it being re-designated as a borough constituency.

7. We also considered that the electorate of the existing Basingstoke constituency, at 78,401, was too high. We noted that the Borough of Basingstoke and Deane was currently divided between two constituencies and that our proposals would divide it between three constituencies. However, our provisionally recommended Basingstoke constituency contained all the wards of the town of Basingstoke, with an electorate closer to the electoral quota than at present. We also considered that the predominately urban nature of the proposed constituency warranted it being re-designated as a borough constituency.

8. We proposed that North East Hampshire CC should contain all of Hart District, apart from the two wards of Blackwater and Hawley, and Frogmore and Darby Green which we included in the Aldershot constituency, and the four Basingstoke and Deane Borough wards of Calleva, Pamber, Sherborne St John, and Upton Grey and The Candovers.

9. We proposed that North West Hampshire CC should contain the remaining ten Basingstoke and Deane Borough wards, together with ten Test Valley Borough wards, which included the town of Andover, and that East Hampshire CC should contain thirty-one of the thirty-eight wards of East Hampshire District, so placing the towns of Alton, Bordon and Petersfield in the same constituency.

10. We proposed that the new Meon Valley CC should include the seven East Hampshire District wards not in East Hampshire CC, the three Borough of Havant wards not in Havant BC and eleven City of Winchester wards in the south east of the district. We considered that the Meon Valley, which bisects the constituency, was an appropriate name to describe this mainly rural constituency because no individual town formed a focal point in it.

11. We considered that the electorate of the existing Southampton, Itchen constituency at 77,241 was too high. We also noted that there were four City of Southampton wards that were divided between constituencies and that in order to reduce the electorates and to place wards wholly within a constituency, major changes would be required.

12. We proposed that there should be two City of Southampton constituencies each with seven City of Southampton wards and we placed the two divided wards of Bassett and Swaythling in Romsey CC, which would no longer include any Eastleigh Borough wards. The remainder of the existing Romsey constituency would be retained.

13. We proposed that Eastleigh BC should contain sixteen of the nineteen Eastleigh Borough wards. The four wards comprising Chandler's Ford and Hiltingbury would be included in the constituency and the three wards of Bishopstoke East, Bishopstoke West, and Fair Oak and Horton Heath would be included in Winchester CC.

14. We noted that the existing Winchester constituency, which is formed of the entire City of Winchester, had the highest electorate in Hampshire, at 82,083. We decided that to reduce the high electorate the district would have to be divided between two constituencies. Our proposed Winchester constituency would include all the City of Winchester wards, other than the eleven included in Meon Valley CC detailed above. Winchester CC would also include the three Eastleigh Borough wards mentioned above. The constituency would have an electorate much closer to the electoral quota than at present.

15. We decided that New Forest District should continue to be divided between two whole constituencies. We noted that the Boldre and Sway ward was divided between the existing constituencies and decided that the ward should be included in New Forest West CC. Although this did not represent minimum change realignment in terms of area, it did represent minimum change in respect of the number of electors transferred.

16. The overall effect of these changes would be to reduce the disparity between the constituencies with the highest and lowest electorates in Hampshire and Southampton from 15,202 for the fifteen existing constituencies, to 8,725 for the sixteen proposed constituencies. Our provisional recommendations were:-

	2000 electorate
Aldershot BC	66,499
Basingstoke BC	69,987
East Hampshire CC	67,452
Eastleigh BC	74,063
Fareham CC	71,423
Gosport BC	69,708
Havant BC	70,138
Meon Valley CC	65,952
New Forest East CC	65,338
New Forest West CC	69,577
North East Hampshire CC	67,417
North West Hampshire CC	73,840
Romsey CC	65,461
Southampton, Itchen BC	71,142
Southampton, Test BC	72,018
Winchester CC	68,863
	<hr/> <hr/>
	1,108,878

Representations

17. Following publication of our provisional recommendations, we received 207 representations, of which 139 objected to all or part of our proposals. The main issues raised in the objections were contained in three counter-proposals:-

- a) the first counter-proposal placed the New Forest District ward of Boldre and Sway in New Forest East CC, the City of Winchester ward of Cheriton and Bishops Sutton in Winchester CC, the Basingstoke and Deane Borough wards of Basing in North East Hampshire CC, and the wards of Oakley and North Waltham, and Upton Grey and The Candovers in Basingstoke BC. It also designated the Aldershot and Basingstoke constituencies as county constituencies and altered the name of Romsey CC to Romsey and West Hampshire CC. Various parts of this counter-proposal were supported by others;
- b) the second counter-proposal also placed the Winchester City ward of Cheriton and Bishops Sutton in Winchester CC, but in addition placed the East Hampshire District ward of East Meon in Meon Valley CC, the Eastleigh Borough wards of Bishopstoke East, Bishopstoke West, and Fair Oak and Horton Heath in Eastleigh BC, the Chandler's Ford East, Chandler's Ford West, Hiltingbury East and Hiltingbury West in Winchester CC, and the Hart District wards of Yateley East, Yateley North and Yateley West in Aldershot BC. It also designated the Aldershot and Basingstoke constituencies as county constituencies. Various parts of this counter-proposal were supported by others; and
- c) the third counter-proposal supported various parts of the first and second counter-proposals but in addition placed the Basingstoke and Deane Borough ward of Pamber in North West Hampshire CC and the Basingstoke and Deane Borough wards of Upton Grey and The Candovers, and Sherborne St John, respectively, in East Hampshire CC and Basingstoke BC.

Local Inquiry and Assistant Commissioner's Report

18. We were required to hold an inquiry. Following the announcement of the inquiry, a further two representations were received, neither of which introduced any new issues. The Assistant Commissioner reported that, in addition to the counter-proposals above, the following issues arose at the inquiry:-

- a) the name of the constituency that comprised part of Southampton;
- b) the division of the Hart District parish of Yateley between constituencies; and
- c) the division of the City of Winchester community of Whiteley.

The Southampton and Romsey constituencies

19. The Assistant Commissioner reported that our recommendation for part of Southampton to be included in a constituency with part of Hampshire was not challenged at the inquiry. He agreed with us that the City of Southampton wards of Bassett and Swaythling

were the most appropriate Southampton wards to include in Romsey CC and noted that a part of each of these wards was already in the Romsey constituency.

The Yateley area

20. He reported that our provisional recommendations divided the parish of Yateley between constituencies. However, he considered that to unite the parish in either Aldershot BC or North East Hampshire CC would produce a large disparity. He did not consider that the division of the parish was as significant a disadvantage as the resulting disparity would be if the area was placed in one constituency and accordingly recommended the adoption of our proposals for the area.

The Whiteley area

21. He reported that the recently developed community of Whiteley was said to be divided between two wards and two districts (the Fareham Borough ward of Sarisbury and the City of Winchester ward of Whiteley) and between two constituencies (Fareham CC and Winchester CC). He did not consider this was an appropriate stage for him to recommend placing the two wards in one constituency or dividing the Sarisbury ward between constituencies in order to satisfy the objectors. He considered that our proposals for the area should be adopted.

The Eastleigh Borough wards of Chandler's Ford, Hiltingbury, Bishopstoke, and Fair Oak and Horton Heath

22. He reported that both the provisional recommendations and the second counter-proposal transferred the Eastleigh Borough wards of Chandler's Ford and Hiltingbury out of Romsey CC. He accepted that the wards were more suited to Eastleigh BC but that they could alternatively be included in Winchester CC. He similarly considered that the Eastleigh Borough wards of Bishopstoke, and Fair Oak and Horton Heath were also more suited to Eastleigh BC but that they could alternatively be included in Winchester CC. He noted that retaining them in Eastleigh BC resulted in the transfer of fewer electors between constituencies than did our proposals. On balance, he considered that the second counter-proposal to place the Chandler's Ford and Hiltingbury wards in Winchester CC and to retain the Bishopstoke, and Fair Oak and Horton Heath wards in Eastleigh BC was preferable.

The Meon Valley constituency

23. There was widespread acceptance of our proposed Meon Valley CC although he noted that the first and second counter-proposals which placed the City of Winchester ward of Cheriton and Bishops Sutton in Winchester CC were well supported. He did not consider that the evidence in support of the first counter-proposal was strong and rejected it on the basis that, if the counter-proposal for the Eastleigh Borough wards was accepted (as he had recommended), an increased disparity would result. He rejected the second and third counter-proposals which included the East Hampshire District ward of East Meon in Meon Valley CC instead of in East Hampshire CC as he considered that parts of the ward had many ties with adjacent Petersfield.

The New Forest constituencies

24. There was significant support for that part of the first counter-proposal which placed the divided New Forest District ward of Boldre and Sway wholly in New Forest East CC. The Assistant Commissioner recommended the change despite noting that 1,222 more electors would be transferred under this option than in our proposals.

The Basingstoke constituency

25. He noted the various counter-proposals for Basingstoke BC and the constituencies adjacent to it. He was satisfied that the fifteen urban wards of the town should form the basis of the Basingstoke constituency, but considered that the disparity between Basingstoke BC and its neighbours would be too large if the constituency contained only those wards. He considered that there were three wards adjacent to the urban wards that were suitable for inclusion in Basingstoke BC and concluded that, of these, our provisional recommendations which kept the Basing ward in that constituency provided the best solution. He also noted that our proposals resulted in the transfer of fewer electors than the alternatives.

The name of the Romsey constituency

26. The Assistant Commissioner reported that, as over 30% of the electorate of Romsey CC resided in the City of Southampton, the name Romsey was no longer appropriate. He considered that specific reference to Southampton should be contained in the name and recommended Romsey and Southampton North CC. This name had been submitted at the provisional recommendations stage and discussed at the inquiry.

The designation of the Aldershot and Basingstoke constituencies

27. He noted the first and second counter-proposals calling for the designation of the Aldershot and Basingstoke constituencies to be county constituencies, but agreed that the nature of the revised constituencies now meant that they should be designated borough constituencies.

Revised Recommendations

28. In considering which Eastleigh Borough wards should be included in Winchester CC, we accepted that the alternatives were finely balanced. The Assistant Commissioner reported that Bishopstoke had historical ties with Eastleigh and decided to recommend those aspects of the second counter-proposal with regard to the Eastleigh wards. We also noted that the recommendation would produce a constituency boundary that cut through the residential area between the Chandler's Ford West ward and other parts of Eastleigh Borough that were in Eastleigh BC. However, after taking all the evidence into account, we agreed with the Assistant Commissioner that on balance, the counter-proposal with regard to Eastleigh was to be preferred to our provisional recommendations.

29. In considering his recommendation to include the New Forest District ward of Boldre and Sway in New Forest East CC, instead of in New Forest West CC, we noted that there had been overwhelming support for such a change. Although more electors would be transferred than under our provisional recommendations, we accepted that the ties between the ward and

the New Forest East constituency were significant and considered that such a change was justified.

30. In considering the renaming of Romsey CC, we agreed with the Assistant Commissioner and decided that Romsey and Southampton North CC was a more appropriate name.

31. We decided to accept the Assistant Commissioner's recommendations in full and accordingly published the following revised recommendations:-

	2000 electorate
Aldershot BC	66,499
Basingstoke BC	69,987
East Hampshire CC	67,452
Eastleigh BC	72,715
Fareham CC	71,423
Gosport BC	69,708
Havant BC	70,138
Meon Valley CC	65,952
New Forest East CC	69,646
New Forest West CC	65,269
North East Hampshire CC	67,417
North West Hampshire CC	73,840
Romsey and Southampton North CC	65,461
Southampton, Itchen BC	71,142
Southampton, Test BC	72,018
Winchester CC	<u>70,211</u>
	<u>1,108,878</u>

Further Representations

32. Following publication of our revised recommendations we received forty-seven representations. One approved of the revised recommendations in their entirety. Another approved of them, but nevertheless preferred our provisional recommendations for Eastleigh BC and Winchester CC. A further twenty-four approved of particular aspects of the revised recommendations. A total of twenty-one objected to aspects of the revised recommendations. Sixteen were in respect of Eastleigh BC and Winchester CC of which one suggested a different name for Winchester CC. Another suggested that the New Forest District ward of Boldre and Sway should remain divided between New Forest East CC and New Forest West CC. Four other objections proposed changes to constituencies where we had already published our final recommendations.

Recommendation

33. In respect of the boundaries of Eastleigh BC and Winchester CC, we noted that the arguments presented in these objections had been discussed at length at the inquiry. We also noted that the name of Winchester CC was not raised at the inquiry and that the submission had received no other support. It is our policy not to divide wards between constituencies and in respect of the Boldre and Sway ward we noted that no support had been received to the

suggestion that the ward remain divided between constituencies. We were satisfied that our revised recommendations did not need to be modified. We therefore recommend the adoption of the following constituencies containing the wards as listed in Appendix C:-

	2000 electorate
Aldershot BC	66,499
Basingstoke BC	69,987
East Hampshire CC	67,452
Eastleigh BC	72,715
Fareham CC	71,423
Gosport BC	69,708
Havant BC	70,138
Meon Valley CC	65,952
New Forest East CC	69,646
New Forest West CC	65,269
North East Hampshire CC	67,417
North West Hampshire CC	73,840
Romsey and Southampton North CC	65,461
Southampton, Itchen BC	71,142
Southampton, Test BC	72,018
Winchester CC	<u>70,211</u>
	<u><u>1,108,878</u></u>

HARTLEPOOL, MIDDLESBROUGH, REDCAR AND CLEVELAND, AND STOCKTON-ON-TEES

The Number of Electors

1. There are currently six constituencies in the four unitary authorities of Hartlepool, Middlesbrough, Redcar and Cleveland, and Stockton-on-Tees:-

	2000 electorate
Hartlepool BC	68,262
Middlesbrough BC	69,688
Middlesbrough South and East Cleveland CC	71,892
Redcar BC	67,638
Stockton North BC	64,767
Stockton South BC	<u>71,268</u>
	<u>413,515</u>

The Number of Constituencies

2. Following The Cleveland (Structural Change) Order 1995, the County of Cleveland was abolished and the area divided into four unitary authorities.

3. For the purposes of allocating constituencies, we considered whether we should treat each of the four unitary authorities separately, as required by Rule 4, or whether we should combine two or more of them. We noted that, if the four authorities were treated separately, a total of seven constituencies would be allocated and that the average electorate of each constituency would be 59,074, which would be 10,861 below the electoral quota and 861 over our 10,000 threshold. We also noted that if Hartlepool and Stockton-on-Tees were reviewed separately and allocated one and two constituencies respectively, and that if Middlesbrough, and Redcar and Cleveland were reviewed as one area and allocated three constituencies, this would result in six constituencies being allocated, as at present.

4. We considered that the allocation of six constituencies would avoid the need to allocate an extra, seventh, constituency, thereby enabling us to have regard to Rule 1. It would also allow us to create constituencies with electorates nearer the electoral quota and to minimise the changes required to the existing constituencies, thereby enabling us to have regard to Rules 5 and 7, respectively. The electorates of the existing six constituencies ranged from 71,892 in Middlesbrough South and East Cleveland CC to 64,767 in Stockton North BC, a disparity of 7,125, which our provisional recommendations reduced to 4,413.

Provisional Recommendations

5. As a result of changes to the district ward boundaries, ten of the new wards in three of the unitary authorities were partly in one constituency and partly in another. Our provisional recommendations realigned the constituency boundaries with the new ward boundaries. We recommended the minimum change necessary by including the whole of each ward in the constituency that already contained the majority of the electorate of that ward.

6. We proposed no change to Hartlepool BC. We proposed that the three divided Middlesbrough Borough wards of Beechwood, Brookfield and Kader should be included in Middlesbrough BC, and the divided Middlesbrough Borough ward of Park End should be included in Middlesbrough South and East Cleveland CC. We also proposed that the three divided Stockton-on-Tees Borough wards of Newtown, Stockton Town Centre and Western Parishes should be included in Stockton North BC and the divided Stockton-on-Tees Borough ward of Bishopsgarth and Elm Tree should be included in Stockton South BC. We further proposed that the divided Redcar and Cleveland Borough wards of St Germain's and Saltburn should be included in Redcar BC and Middlesbrough South and East Cleveland CC, respectively, although we noted that no electors would be affected by the realignment of these two wards.

7. We considered that, with the abolition of the County of Cleveland, the name of Middlesbrough South and East Cleveland CC was no longer appropriate. We therefore decided that the constituency be renamed Middlesbrough South and Cleveland CC.

8. Our provisional recommendations were:-

2000 electorate	
Hartlepool BC	68,262
Middlesbrough BC	69,638
Middlesbrough South and Cleveland CC	71,942
Redcar BC	67,638
Stockton North BC	67,529
Stockton South BC	68,506
	<hr/>
	413,515

Representations

9. Following publication of our provisional recommendations, we received twenty-seven representations, of which two supported all or part of our proposals, three supported part of our proposals whilst objecting to other parts and twenty-two objected to them. Twenty-six proforma letters of objection were treated as one representation. The objections included alternative names for Middlesbrough South and Cleveland CC and Redcar BC. As there were no objections to our provisional recommendations for Hartlepool, our provisional recommendations for the unitary authority were confirmed as our final recommendations.

10. The main issues raised in the objections were contained in three counter-proposals:-

- a) the first was that the Middlesbrough Borough ward of Park End should be included in Middlesbrough BC and the Stockton-on-Tees Borough ward of Western Parishes should be included in Stockton South BC;
- b) the second was that the Stockton-on-Tees Borough ward of Bishopsgarth and Elm Tree should be included in Stockton North BC with the Stockton Town Centre ward being included in Stockton South BC; and
- c) the third was that the Redcar and Cleveland Borough ward of Saltburn should be included in Redcar BC.

Local Inquiry and Assistant Commissioner's Report

11. We were required to hold an inquiry. Following the announcement of the inquiry a further twenty-nine representations were received. Twenty-five expressed support for all or part of our proposals, three objected to them and one made no comment. The Assistant Commissioner noted that no one had objected to our decision to continue to combine the boroughs of Middlesbrough and Redcar and Cleveland and to treat Stockton-on-Tees Borough separately.

The Middlesbrough Borough ward of Park End

12. The Assistant Commissioner reported that there were objections to our provisionally recommended inclusion of the Park End ward in Middlesbrough South and Cleveland CC. It was submitted that the ward had closer ties with the other Middlesbrough Borough wards in Middlesbrough BC and that its inclusion in that constituency would provide a clearer boundary between the two constituencies. The objectors also submitted that, as the electorate of Middlesbrough South and Cleveland CC was increasing whilst that of Middlesbrough BC was decreasing, it would be preferable to include the ward in Middlesbrough BC so that the electoral disparity would not increase over time.

13. He considered that there was merit both in our provisional recommendations and in the first counter-proposal, which was confirmed by his visit to the area, and that the arguments were evenly balanced. However, he concluded that the electoral disparity that would result from the counter-proposal would be too large and that the ties of the majority of the electors in Park End ward were with Middlesbrough South and Cleveland CC. He therefore rejected this element of the first counter-proposal and recommended the inclusion of the Park End ward in Middlesbrough South and Cleveland CC.

The Stockton-on-Tees Borough ward of Western Parishes

14. The first counter-proposal also proposed that the Western Parishes ward should be included in Stockton South BC, because, it was argued, the ties of the electors in the southern part of the ward were stronger with Stockton South BC than were the ties of the electors in the northern part of the ward with Stockton North BC. He noted that the shape of this ward made it difficult for him to decide whether it should be included in Stockton North BC, or in Stockton South BC. He also noted that 64% of the electorate of the ward was already included in Stockton North BC and that to include the whole of the ward in Stockton South BC increased the electoral disparity between the two constituencies from 977 to 5,883. He therefore concluded that our provisional recommendations were the better option and rejected the element of the counter-proposal that included this ward in Stockton South BC.

The Stockton-on-Tees Borough ward of Stockton Town Centre

15. The Assistant Commissioner reported that the second counter-proposal proposed that the Stockton Town Centre ward should be included in Stockton South BC because the boundary between the current Stockton North BC and Stockton South BC was confusing and that the boundary proposed by us would not improve this situation. It was further submitted that, although the majority of the electorate of the new Stockton Town Centre ward was in Stockton North BC, there were ties with the wards to the south, which were in Stockton South BC. He noted that 65% of the electorate of the ward was already included in Stockton

North BC, and he considered that this ward had strong ties to the Newtown and Norton wards to the north and that the Portrack Industrial Estate should not be divided between constituencies. He therefore endorsed our provisional recommendation that this ward should be included in Stockton North BC.

The Stockton-on-Tees Borough ward of Bishopsgarth and Elm Tree

16. It was submitted in the second counter-proposal that the inclusion of the Bishopsgarth and Elm Tree ward in Stockton North BC was a ‘balancing exercise’ to counteract the inclusion of the Stockton Town Centre ward in Stockton South BC. He noted that if the Bishopsgarth and Elm Tree ward were to be included in Stockton North BC, 98% of the electors in the ward would change constituencies. Having already rejected the counter-proposal to include the Stockton Town Centre ward in Stockton South BC, he considered that there were no compelling reasons for including the Bishopsgarth and Elm Tree ward in Stockton North BC. He therefore supported our provisional recommendations.

The Redcar and Cleveland Borough ward of Saltburn

17. The Assistant Commissioner reported that the third counter-proposal suggested that the Saltburn ward should be included in Redcar BC because the electorate of Redcar BC was decreasing and the addition of this ward was a sensible means of maintaining the electorate of the constituency. It was also submitted that the name of the constituency be changed to Redcar and Saltburn BC. He noted that these arguments received no support and he rejected the counter-proposal.

Middlesbrough South and Cleveland CC

18. He reported that our proposal to drop the ‘East’ from the name of the current Middlesbrough South and East Cleveland CC resulted in a number of objections and that there was little, if any, support for the change. It was suggested that the name remain Middlesbrough South and East Cleveland CC to reflect the fact that the constituency was only adopted at the last general review and was substantially unaltered by our proposals. It was also submitted that the area of Redcar and Cleveland Borough in the current Middlesbrough South and East Cleveland CC was known as East Cleveland. He further reported that the alternative of Cleveland and Middlesbrough South CC was suggested, to reflect the names alphabetically and to acknowledge that the Cleveland wards contained the greater number of electors. He considered that there was no compelling reason to alter the current name and recommended that the name of the constituency should be Middlesbrough South and East Cleveland CC.

19. We agreed with all of the Assistant Commissioner’s recommendations and decided to accept them.

Revised Recommendations

20. We accordingly published the following revised recommendations:-

	2000 electorate
Hartlepool BC	68,262
Middlesbrough BC	69,638
Middlesbrough South and East Cleveland CC	71,942
Redcar BC	67,638
Stockton North BC	67,529
Stockton South BC	<u>68,506</u>
	<u>413,515</u>

Further representations

21. Following publication of our revised recommendations we received two representations, both of which supported our proposals. We therefore saw no reason to modify our recommendations.

Recommendation

22. We therefore recommend the adoption of the following constituencies containing the wards as listed in Appendix C:-

	2000 electorate
Hartlepool BC	68,262
Middlesbrough BC	69,638
Middlesbrough South and East Cleveland CC	71,942
Redcar BC	67,638
Stockton North BC	67,529
Stockton South BC	<u>68,506</u>
	<u>413,515</u>

HEREFORDSHIRE

The Number of Electors

1. There is currently one whole constituency, Hereford CC, and part of one other, Leominster CC, in the County of Herefordshire. The figures set out below for these two constituencies relate only to those electors who are within the county:-

	2000 electorate
Hereford CC	71,610
Leominster CC (part)	<u>61,440</u>
	<u><u>133,050</u></u>

The Number of Constituencies

2. Following the Hereford and Worcester (Structural, Boundary and Electoral Changes) Order 1996, Herefordshire ceased to form part of the former county of Hereford and Worcester and became a new unitary authority named Herefordshire. The new unitary authority comprised the area of the former City of Hereford, the District of Leominster, the District of South Herefordshire, and part of the District of Malvern Hills.

3. The combined area of the former County of Hereford and Worcester had eight constituencies with a 2000 parliamentary electorate of 553,882 which gave a theoretical entitlement to 7.92 constituencies. Herefordshire had a 2000 parliamentary electorate of 133,050 and a theoretical entitlement to 1.90 constituencies. Worcestershire had a 2000 parliamentary electorate of 420,832 and a theoretical entitlement to 6.02 constituencies. Eight constituencies would therefore be retained whether the counties were reviewed separately or as one review area. The former County of Hereford and Worcester had a county average of 69,235, which is only 700 below the electoral quota. Herefordshire had a county average of 66,525, which is 3,410 below the electoral quota, whilst Worcestershire had a county average of 70,139, which is only 204 above the electoral quota. As the county averages of both counties would be close to the electoral quota, we decided to consider the two counties separately.

Provisional Recommendations

4. Three wards are currently divided between the two constituencies. We considered whether to adopt the minimum amount of change necessary to realign the constituencies with these divided wards. Minimum change realignment would increase the disparity between Hereford CC and Leominster CC from 10,170 to 10,962 because the divided wards of Golden Valley North and Old Gore would be wholly included in Hereford CC and would transfer 1,199 electors from Leominster CC. Although the divided ward of Backbury would be wholly included in Leominster CC and would transfer 803 electors, the net effect of these realignments would be to reduce the electorate of Leominster CC by 396 and to increase the electorate of Hereford CC by the same amount.

5. We therefore proposed that the two Golden Valley wards should be placed in Leominster CC in order to reduce the disparity and bring the two constituencies closer to the county average. The effect of these transfers would be to reduce the disparity from 10,170 to 1,780.

6. Our provisional recommendations were:-

	2000 electorate
Hereford CC	67,415
Leominster CC	<u>65,635</u>
	<u>133,050</u>

Representations

7. Following publication of our provisional recommendations, we received forty-one representations, of which four expressed support for all of our proposals and thirty-seven objected to our proposals. The main issues raised in the objections were contained in a counter-proposal:-

- a) it proposed that the Golden Valley North and Golden Valley South wards should both be included in Hereford CC and the Old Gore ward should be included in Leominster CC. It also proposed that Hereford CC should be re-named Hereford and South Herefordshire CC and that Leominster CC should be re-named North Herefordshire CC. Other representations were identical to all or parts of this first counter-proposal; and
- b) a submission was received before the inquiry affecting the Golden Valley South and the Stoney Street wards, but it received neither representation nor support at the inquiry and the Assistant Commissioner rejected it.

Local Inquiry and Assistant Commissioner's Report

8. We were required to hold an inquiry. After the representation period had closed, and during the inquiry, a further six representations were received.

9. The main issues raised at the local inquiry were those in the counter-proposal. The Assistant Commissioner supported our decision to allocate two constituencies to the county.

The counter-proposal

10. The counter-proposal suggested that the Old Gore ward should be included in Leominster CC rather than Hereford CC. The Assistant Commissioner noted that our proposal to include this ward in Hereford CC had received support but that evidence given at the inquiry had highlighted the close ties between Fownhope (Backbury ward) and Brockhampton (Old Gore ward) and that the largest village in the Old Gore ward, Much Marcle, was currently in Leominster CC and had much closer ties with Ledbury than with Hereford. He noted the evidence from residents of the Old Gore ward who preferred to be in Leominster CC and that the natural boundary of the River Wye lay to the south-west of the ward.

11. In considering the suggestion that both the Golden Valley North and the Golden Valley South wards should be in Hereford CC, he reported that a number of residents of each of these two wards drew to his attention not only the close ties between the two wards themselves but also their ties with Hereford rather than Leominster. He also noted the evidence of the travelling difficulties from these two wards north to Leominster in view of the limited crossing points over the River Wye. His own visit to the area confirmed these points.

12. The counter-proposal would increase the 1,780 disparity in the provisional recommendations to 6,214. In noting the evidence which urged him to address the issue of the balance which should be sought between Rule 5 and Rule 7, he concurred that we did have a duty to balance the requirements of these Rules. It was his view that a choice had to be made between achieving a result which was closer to the electoral quota, but which did not take into consideration the natural boundary of the River Wye and the inconvenience that would be caused, and one which limited inconvenience, but resulted in a greater disparity.

Constituency names

13. The Assistant Commissioner reported that he did not hear a single voice against the proposal to rename Leominster CC and noted the views of electors from locations such as Bromyard, Kington and Ledbury who felt disenfranchised by the present name. He therefore recommended that Leominster CC be renamed North Herefordshire CC.

14. Nor did he hear a single voice against the proposal to rename Hereford CC and recommended that Hereford CC be renamed Hereford and South Herefordshire CC.

15. He recommended that we adopt the counter-proposal, with changes to the names of the two constituencies, include the Old Gore ward in Leominster CC and include the wards of Golden Valley North and Golden Valley South in Hereford and South Herefordshire CC.

Revised Recommendations

16. We agreed with all of the Assistant Commissioner's recommendations. We noted that he had heard some strong evidence and had visited the areas to confirm that evidence. We accepted that the difficulties in crossing the River Wye did allow us to have regard to Rule 7 in this instance, despite the consequent increase in the disparity. We also noted that the proposals to change the name of the constituencies attracted no opposition.

17. Our revised recommendations were:-

	2000 electorate
Hereford and South Herefordshire CC	69,632
North Herefordshire CC	63,418
	<hr/> <hr/> <hr/>
	133,050

Further Representations

18. Following publication of our revised recommendations we received eleven representations, of which seven approved of the revised recommendations to include the Golden Valley North and Golden Valley South wards in Hereford and South Herefordshire CC. No objections to these proposals were received.

19. Two representations approved of both the constituencies, but objected to the name Hereford and South Herefordshire. One objector suggested Herefordshire South as an alternative, but the other did not suggest an alternative. Two further representations objected to the name North Herefordshire, and both suggested that this constituency should be renamed Leominster and East Herefordshire. The names of the two constituencies had been part of the first counter-proposal and had received support. No objections had been raised at the inquiry. Some, who were now objecting to the North Herefordshire name, had been represented at the inquiry, but had made no substantive comment.

Recommendation

20. We noted the support for, and the limited number of objections to, our revised recommendations. We considered that no new evidence had been submitted and we were satisfied that our revised recommendations did not need to be modified. We therefore recommend the adoption of the following constituencies containing the wards as listed in Appendix C:-

	2000 electorate
Hereford and South Herefordshire CC	69,632
North Herefordshire CC	63,418
	<hr/> <hr/> <hr/>
	133,050

HERTFORDSHIRE

The Number of Electors

1. There are currently eleven constituencies in the County of Hertfordshire:-

	2000 electorate
Broxbourne BC	67,800
Hemel Hempstead CC	73,265
Hertford and Stortford CC	74,400
Hertsmere CC	69,178
Hitchin and Harpenden CC	68,100
North East Hertfordshire CC	68,658
South West Hertfordshire CC	73,194
St Albans CC	66,810
Stevenage CC	68,590
Watford BC	76,351
Welwyn Hatfield CC	<hr/> 67,247 <hr/>
	<hr/> <hr/> 773,593

The Number of Constituencies

2. Hertfordshire had a 2000 parliamentary electorate of 773,593, which gave a theoretical entitlement to 11.06 constituencies. With eleven constituencies, the average constituency electorate would be 70,327, which is only 392 above the electoral quota. We therefore decided that the county should continue to be allocated eleven constituencies.

Provisional Recommendations

3. The electorates of the eleven existing constituencies in the county ranged from 66,810 in St Albans CC to 76,351 in Watford BC, a disparity of 9,541.

4. As a result of changes to the district ward boundaries, eight of the new wards are partly in one constituency and partly in another. We considered whether we should adopt the minimum amount of change necessary to realign the constituencies with these divided wards, or whether we should go further in order to address the slightly low electorate in St Albans CC (3,517 below the county average) and the slightly high electorate in Watford BC (6,024 above the county average).

5. We considered options for the transfer of one or two wards from Watford BC to St Albans CC in order to bring the electorates of the two constituencies closer together. However, we concluded that such a change would cause inconvenience and break local ties out of proportion to the gain in equalising the electorates. We also concluded that to equalise the electorates by making alterations to other constituencies would cause unnecessary disruption to constituencies where there was no problem of high or low electorates. Accordingly, our provisional recommendations realigned the constituency boundaries with the new ward boundaries.

6. A total of 3,005 electors would be transferred between eight of the constituencies. Although the changes would lead to a slightly increased disparity of fifty-two, we did not consider a disparity of 9,593 to be excessive.

7. Our provisional recommendations were:-

	2000 electorate
Broxbourne BC	67,800
Hemel Hempstead CC	72,019
Hertford and Stortford CC	73,717
Hertsmere CC	69,178
Hitchin and Harpenden CC	68,765
North East Hertfordshire CC	68,455
South West Hertfordshire CC	74,440
St Albans CC	66,738
Stevenage CC	68,903
Watford BC	76,331
Welwyn Hatfield CC	<hr/> 67,247 <hr/>
	<hr/> 773,593 <hr/>

Representations

8. Following publication of our provisional recommendations we received ninety-seven representations, of which ten supported all or part of our proposals, ten supported part of our proposals whilst objecting to other parts and seventy-six objected to all or part of our proposals. One representation commented on two of the constituencies, but did not specifically object to or approve of the proposals. The issues raised in the objections were principally contained in two counter-proposals:-

- a) the first transferred six Three Rivers District wards between South West Hertfordshire CC and Watford BC and transferred the divided East Hertfordshire District ward of Walkern together with the East Hertfordshire District ward of Datchworth & Aston to North East Hertfordshire CC, and the divided East Hertfordshire District ward of Hertford Rural South to Hertford and Stortford CC; and
- b) the second counter-proposal transferred Felden and Bourne End (part of the divided Dacorum District ward of Bovingdon, Flaunden & Chipperfield) from South West Hertfordshire CC to Hemel Hempstead CC.

9. We received other proposals which were not pursued or supported at the inquiry, save for one which proposed that a ward from the county of Essex (Lower Sheering) be included in Hertford and Stortford CC, contrary to Rule 4, and the Assistant Commissioner rejected all of them.

Local Inquiry and Assistant Commissioner's Report

10. We were required to hold an inquiry. Following the announcement of the inquiry, a further forty-six representations were received, but no new issues emerged. The main issues raised at the inquiry were the two counter-proposals described above.

The Three Rivers District wards

11. The first counter-proposal suggested that the Three Rivers District wards of Ashridge, Hayling and Northwick should be transferred from South West Hertfordshire CC to Watford BC and that the Three Rivers District wards of Abbots Langley, Langleybury and Leavesden should be transferred from Watford BC to South West Hertfordshire CC. A substantial volume of evidence was presented at the inquiry both for and against the counter-proposal. The Assistant Commissioner rejected the counter-proposal on the grounds that local ties would be broken if the changes were implemented, that over 18,000 electors would be moved and because it failed to achieve better electoral figures.

The Walkern ward

12. The Assistant Commissioner rejected our proposal and reported that the Walkern ward should become part of North East Hertfordshire CC as he considered this would best preserve local ties and reduce inconvenience. The resultant deviation of the electorate of Stevenage CC from the electoral quota was acceptable: the change had little effect on the electoral figures, the overall disparity in the county would not be affected and the shape of the two constituencies would be improved. He also accepted that this mainly rural ward had ties with the mainly rural constituency to its east.

The Datchworth & Aston ward

13. The Assistant Commissioner rejected the counter-proposed transfer of this ward from Stevenage CC to North East Hertfordshire CC. The case for transfer was less strong than it was for the Walkern ward, and the transfer would have a detrimental effect on the electorates, particularly if his recommendation for the Walkern ward was accepted.

The Hertford Rural South ward

14. The Assistant Commissioner reported that there were objections to our proposal from political parties, but none from the public and he was not persuaded by the evidence that the potential damage to local ties outweighed the inconvenience of moving the larger section of the newly created ward. Whilst he considered that our proposal did not produce an ideal situation, it was one he was able to recommend on the basis that it satisfied the requirements of the Rules in respect of electorates and local ties.

The Bovingdon, Flaunden & Chipperfield ward

15. The Assistant Commissioner reported that the counter-proposal, to leave the ward divided between constituencies, was inconvenient and unacceptable. He reported that to place the ward entirely in Hemel Hempstead CC, which would result in South West Hertfordshire CC being formed of two detached parts, would worsen the electorates, had not been proposed by anyone, and could be discounted. He upheld our proposal for the ward which he

considered achieved constituencies balanced in terms of size of electorate and involved the least amount of change.

Revised Recommendations

16. We agreed with all of the Assistant Commissioner's recommendations and accordingly published revised recommendations for the two constituencies of North East Hertfordshire CC and Stevenage CC. We also confirmed our provisional recommendations as final for the other nine constituencies. Our revised recommendations were:-

	2000 electorate
Broxbourne BC	67,800
Hemel Hempstead CC	72,019
Hertford and Stortford CC	73,717
Hertsmere CC	69,178
Hitchin and Harpenden CC	68,765
North East Hertfordshire CC	70,477
South West Hertfordshire CC	74,440
St Albans CC	66,738
Stevenage CC	66,881
Watford BC	76,331
Welwyn Hatfield CC	<u>67,247</u>
	<u>773,593</u>

Further Representations

17. Following publication of our revised recommendations we received eight representations of which two fully supported our revised recommendations, one partly supported our revised recommendations whilst objecting to other parts, three objected to our original recommendations, one proposed a change of name to a constituency and one representation submitted a completely new counter-proposal. All but one of the representations repeated objections which had already been considered and contained no new significant evidence. The only new issue was a completely new counter-proposal for all constituencies in Hertfordshire. We considered that, as this new counter-proposal had not been raised at the inquiry and other interested persons therefore had no opportunity to analyse and debate it, it should be rejected.

Recommendation

18. We therefore recommend the adoption of the following constituencies containing the wards as listed in Appendix C:-

2000 electorate

Broxbourne BC	67,800
Hemel Hempstead CC	72,019
Hertford and Stortford CC	73,717
Hertsmere CC	69,178
Hitchin and Harpenden CC	68,765
North East Hertfordshire CC	70,477
South West Hertfordshire CC	74,440
St Albans CC	66,738
Stevenage CC	66,881
Watford BC	76,331
Welwyn Hatfield CC	67,247
	<hr/>
	<u>773,593</u>

ISLE OF WIGHT

The Number of Electors

1. The County of the Isle of Wight currently forms one single constituency:-

Isle of Wight CC	2000 electorate
	103,480

The Number of Constituencies

2. The Isle of Wight had a 2000 parliamentary electorate of 103,480, which gave a theoretical entitlement to 1.48 constituencies. With one constituency, the electorate would be 33,545 above the electoral quota. With two constituencies, the average constituency electorate would be 18,195 below the electoral quota. Both would be significantly over our 10,000 threshold.

Provisional Recommendations

3. We considered a number of options for the Isle of Wight before making our provisional recommendations. We noted that the continued allocation of one whole constituency would result in the constituency continuing to have the largest electorate in England and that the division of the island would have resulted in two constituencies with the smallest electorates in England.

4. We considered pairing the Isle of Wight with part of the mainland for the purpose of allocating constituencies. However, we concluded that to sever part of the island and place it in a constituency with an area of the mainland would be likely to create confusion and a feeling of loss of identity amongst the island's electorate. We also considered that it would create a constituency where communications would be difficult both for the electorate and the Member of Parliament. We noted that, historically, the Isle of Wight had formed a single constituency and we felt that the division of the island would disregard the historical and unique geographical situation that existed.

5. We felt that, on balance, the merits of continuing with one constituency outweighed the justification for the allocation of two. We were also mindful of Rule 1 which places a limit on the total number of constituencies. We considered that one constituency would reflect the island status of the unitary authority. We concluded that the island was geographically isolated from neighbouring constituencies and so decided that the county should provisionally continue to be allocated one constituency.

6. Our provisional recommendations were:-

Isle of Wight CC	2000 electorate
	103,480

Representations

7. Following publication of our provisional recommendations we received six representations, of which four supported our proposals and two objected to the continued allocation of one constituency to the island instead of two constituencies.

Recommendation

8. No local inquiry was required to be held. We were satisfied that no compelling argument against our provisional recommendations had been put forward and, in the circumstances, we decided not to use our discretion to hold an inquiry. In view of this, and given the support received for our proposal for no change to the current seat, we therefore recommend that the county should continue to have the following constituency containing the electoral divisions as listed in Appendix C:-

	2000 electorate
Isle of Wight CC	103,480

KENT AND MEDWAY

The Number of Electors

1. There are currently seventeen constituencies in the Counties of Kent and Medway:-

	2000 electorate
Ashford CC	76,405
Canterbury CC	74,704
Chatham and Aylesford CC	70,140
Dartford CC	71,825
Dover CC	69,424
Faversham and Mid Kent CC	68,195
Folkestone and Hythe CC	68,608
Gillingham BC	72,189
Gravesham CC	70,098
Maidstone and The Weald CC	74,081
Medway CC	64,724
North Thanet CC	71,434
Sevenoaks CC	67,440
Sittingbourne and Sheppey CC	65,594
South Thanet CC	62,642
Tonbridge and Malling CC	65,969
Tunbridge Wells CC	<u>65,151</u>
	<u>1,178,623</u>

The Number of Constituencies

2. Following the Kent (Borough of Gillingham and City of Rochester upon Medway) (Structural Change) Order 1996, the Borough of Gillingham and the City of Rochester upon Medway ceased to form part of the County of Kent and became a new unitary authority named Medway. The remaining twelve districts in the county formed the County of Kent.

3. Kent had a 2000 parliamentary electorate of 997,157, which gave a theoretical entitlement to 14.26 constituencies. If reviewed separately and allocated fourteen constituencies, the county average of Kent is 71,226, which would be 1,291 above the electoral quota.

4. Medway had a 2000 parliamentary electorate of 181,466, which gave a theoretical entitlement to 2.59 constituencies. If reviewed separately and allocated three constituencies, the county average of Medway would be 60,489, which is 9,446 below the electoral quota. We noted that Medway had twenty-two wards with an average of 8,248 electors in each ward. If three constituencies were allocated, two would each contain seven wards with an average electorate of 57,736, which is 12,199 below the electoral quota and 2,199 over our 10,000 threshold. The third constituency would contain eight wards and have an average electorate of 65,984, which is 3,951 below the electoral quota.

5. The combined area of Kent and Medway currently has seventeen constituencies with a 2000 parliamentary electorate of 1,178,623, which gave a theoretical entitlement to 16.85 constituencies. With an allocation of seventeen constituencies the combined area would have a county average of 69,331, which is only 604 below the electoral quota. The electorates of the seventeen existing constituencies in Kent and Medway ranged from 76,405 in Ashford CC to 62,642 in South Thanet CC, a disparity of 13,763.

6. We therefore decided that the two areas should be reviewed together. Seventeen constituencies would be allocated whether they were reviewed separately or together. By reviewing them together we also noted that it would allow minimum change to be considered for some of the existing constituencies and would avoid an excessive disparity between neighbouring constituencies or between constituencies and the electoral quota.

Provisional Recommendations

7. As a result of changes to the district and borough ward boundaries, fourteen of the new wards in Kent and Medway are partly in one constituency and partly in another. Our provisional recommendations realigned the constituency boundaries with the new ward boundaries. We reduced the electoral disparity between constituencies by making further minor changes. It was not possible to propose the minimum amount of change necessary to realign constituency boundaries with the new ward boundaries in every case in Kent and Medway, but twelve of the fifteen divided wards would be included in the constituency where the majority of electors were already situated. The net effect would be change to fifteen of the seventeen constituencies, with Gravesham CC and Tonbridge and Malling CC remaining unchanged.

8. To address the low electorate of Medway CC, we decided that the divided Medway Borough ward of Rochester South and Horsted should be included in Medway CC rather than in Chatham and Aylesford CC. This change would increase the electorate of Medway CC from 64,724 to 69,032 and unite the three Rochester wards in the same constituency.

9. We noted that, if the divided Thanet District ward of Thanet Villages were to be included in South Thanet CC, rather than in North Thanet CC, six north-eastern City of Canterbury wards would be detached from the rest of North Thanet CC. To address this problem, we proposed that the ward of Thanet Villages should be included in North Thanet CC.

10. To increase further the electorate of South Thanet CC following the transfer of the Thanet District ward of Thanet Villages, we proposed transferring two north-eastern Thanet District wards from North Thanet CC to South Thanet CC. To bring the electorates of Canterbury CC and North Thanet CC closer to the county average and electoral quota, we proposed the transfer of the City of Canterbury ward of Chestfield and Swalecliffe from Canterbury CC to North Thanet CC. To bring the electorates of Maidstone and The Weald CC and Tunbridge Wells CC closer to the county average and the electoral quota, we proposed the transfer of the Tunbridge Wells Borough ward of Hawkhurst and Sandhurst from Maidstone and the Weald CC to Tunbridge Wells CC.

11. To bring the electorates of Dartford CC and Sevenoaks CC closer together, and to improve the shape of both constituencies, we proposed that the divided Sevenoaks District ward of Hartley and Hodsoll Street should be included in Sevenoaks CC rather than in Dartford CC.

12. We were concerned that the 76,405 electorate of Ashford CC was too high and that it was known to be an area of growth due to the development of the Channel Tunnel terminal. We were also aware of the recent announcement that identified Ashford as an area for further development and noted that the electorate of the constituency had already grown to 80,152 by December 2002. We considered that it needed to be reduced.

13. We therefore proposed that the three Ashford Borough wards of Biddenden, Downs North and Saxon Shore should be transferred to Maidstone and The Weald CC, Canterbury CC and Folkestone and Hythe CC, respectively. The continuing rise of the Ashford electorate and the need to transfer wards to adjacent constituencies, meant that both Ashford Borough and Shepway District would lose their coterminosity with constituency boundaries. We were aware that Ashford Borough would be divided between four constituencies, but we considered that we had a duty to deal with the high and continually increasing electorate of Ashford. The effect of these changes would reduce the disparity from 13,763 to 7,215.

14. Our provisional recommendations were:-

	2000 electorate
Ashford CC	68,655
Canterbury CC	70,229
Chatham and Aylesford CC	66,482
Dartford CC	68,028
Dover CC	69,932
Faversham and Mid Kent CC	68,422
Folkestone and Hythe CC	72,512
Gillingham BC	71,539
Gravesham CC	70,098
Maidstone and The Weald CC	71,759
Medway CC	69,032
North Thanet CC	70,452
Sevenoaks CC	71,237
Sittingbourne and Sheppey CC	65,297
South Thanet CC	69,501
Tonbridge and Malling CC	65,969
Tunbridge Wells CC	69,479
	<hr/>
	1,178,623

Representations

15. Following publication of our provisional recommendations, we received 139 representations, of which fifteen expressed support for all or part of our proposals, twenty-eight expressed support for part of our proposals whilst also objecting to other parts, and ninety-six objected to all or part of our proposals. There was overall acceptance of our decision to review Kent and Medway together and to maintain an allocation of seventeen

constituencies. The objections included fifteen counter-proposals. Several were wide-ranging, affecting many constituencies. Cumulatively several similar, or on occasions, conflicting alterations were proposed to the constituencies we had provisionally recommended. Only one proposed constituency, Gravesham CC, which we had left unaltered, remained unchallenged.

16. The main issues raised in the objections were examined and analysed by the Assistant Commissioner on a geographical basis, the constituencies falling conveniently into three geographical groups in the west, centre and east of the county. Adopting that division, the principal issues contained in the five counter-proposals were:-

- a) the west of the county: in Sevenoaks CC and Dartford CC the counter-proposals concerned the allocation between them of two divided wards; in Tonbridge and Malling CC the issue was the transfer from Tunbridge Wells CC to the constituency of the ward of Speldhurst and Bidborough; in Medway the issue concerned the allocation of two divided wards between Chatham and Aylesford CC and Medway CC and there was also a proposal that three Medway Borough wards should be divided between the same two constituencies using polling districts; and generally, there were representations to alter the names of the Tonbridge and Malling, Medway, Gillingham and Chatham and Aylesford constituencies;
- b) the centre of the county: in Sittingbourne and Sheppey CC and Faversham and Mid Kent CC the counter-proposals concerned the allocation between them of the divided Swale Borough ward of Teynham and Lynsted; Faversham and Mid Kent CC was further affected by the proposal to transfer to it the Maidstone Borough wards of Coxheath and Hunton, Marden and Yalding, and Staplehurst as well as the Boughton, Monchelsea and Chart Sutton ward; in Tunbridge Wells CC there were alternative proposals to transfer the Tunbridge Wells Borough wards of Benenden and Cranbrook, and Frittenden and Sissinghurst, to the constituency, and to transfer the Hawkhurst and Sandhurst, and Speldhurst and Bidborough wards from Tunbridge Wells CC variously to Maidstone and the Weald CC, to Ashford CC and to Tonbridge and Malling CC; in Maidstone Borough there were competing proposals to create a single urban Maidstone constituency, surrounded on the east and south by a seat comprising rural wards, which would replace the existing configuration of a central urban area divided east-west between the two constituencies; and in Ashford CC the reduction of its electorate was variously proposed by transferring from Ashford CC to its neighbouring constituencies a selection of Ashford Borough wards from amongst Biddenden, Boughton Aluph and Eastwell, Charing, Saxon Shore, Downs North, Downs West, Rolvenden and Tenterden West, St Michaels, Tenterden North, Tenterden South and Wye. In the contrary direction the transfer of the Ashford Borough ward of Biddenden from Maidstone and the Weald CC to Ashford CC was proposed; and
- c) the east of the county: in Canterbury CC the counter-proposals concerned the transfer to North Thanet CC of the Chestfield and Swalecliffe ward in exchange for the Marshside ward, with wider ranging proposals to transfer the four City of Canterbury wards of Little Stour, Marshside, Sturry North and Sturry South to a renamed and reconfigured West Thanet CC, alternatively, the Gorrell, Harbour, Seasalter and Tankerton wards to a differently configured North Kent Coast CC; in Thanet District the proposals concerned the creation of a Thanet East CC which involved the transfer to it of the Thanet District wards of Dane Valley, Margate

Central and Salmestone and the creation of either the renamed West Thanet CC or the differently configured North Kent Coast CC, to lie generally north and north-west of Canterbury and include City of Canterbury wards; and in Dover CC a change of name to Dover and Deal CC was proposed.

Local Inquiry and the Assistant Commissioner's Report

17. We were required to hold an inquiry. Following the announcement of the inquiry a further 109 representations were received, of which thirteen approved of our provisional recommendations, twenty-six expressed support for part whilst objecting to other parts and thirty-five objected to our proposals. Forty-five representations made other comments.

18. The Assistant Commissioner supported our decision to review the counties together and to continue the allocation of seventeen constituencies. He recommended adoption of the provisional recommendations for seven of the seventeen constituencies.

Dartford CC and Sevenoaks CC

19. Having considered the counter-proposals for these two constituencies, he recommended the inclusion of the divided Sevenoaks District ward of Hartley and Hodsell Street in Dartford CC rather than in Sevenoaks CC and the inclusion of the divided Sevenoaks District ward of Farningham, Horton Kirby and South Darenth in Sevenoaks CC rather than in Dartford CC. The three options he considered but rejected were our provisional recommendations, no change, or the inclusion of both wards in Dartford CC.

Tonbridge and Malling CC

20. Objections to our provisional recommendations for this constituency came from two objectors who proposed that the Tunbridge Wells Borough ward of Speldhurst and Bidborough should be transferred to Tonbridge and Malling CC from Tunbridge Wells CC to accommodate changes in their alternative proposals for Ashford CC and Tunbridge Wells CC. The Assistant Commissioner also noted the late representations suggesting renaming the constituency 'Tonbridge, Edenbridge and Malling CC'.

21. He reported that there was no support for either suggestion. He noted that the transfer of the Speldhurst and Bidborough ward would result in a chain of alterations elsewhere to compensate for the loss of electors. It would push the ward out over its coterminous borough and constituency boundary in that area and Tonbridge and Malling CC would become a constituency containing parts of three districts rather than parts of two. He considered that the proposal for a change of name came late, making it impossible to evaluate it in terms of public reaction and merit. He was reluctant to recommend a triple barrelled name where proposals had not been debated unless there were very good grounds for doing so. He rejected the proposals and recommended that our proposals should be adopted for this constituency.

Gravesend CC

22. He reported that our proposals for no change to this constituency were not challenged and recommended that they be adopted.

Gillingham BC

23. There were proposals to change the name to Gillingham and Rainham BC. He considered the support for the new name and the very mild objection. He reported that the current name was an anachronism and, that as the two towns were of almost equal size and status, he recommended that the name be changed to Gillingham and Rainham BC.

Medway CC

24. There were objections to the composition and name of the constituency. Some objectors proposed that the divided Medway Borough ward of Chatham Central should be included in this constituency rather than in Chatham and Aylesford CC, and that the divided Medway Borough ward of Rochester South and Horsted should be included in Chatham and Aylesford CC rather than in Medway CC. It was also suggested that three Medway Borough wards should be divided, by using polling districts, between Medway CC and Chatham and Aylesford CC. The alternative names of Rochester and Old Brompton CC, Rochester and Strood CC and Rochester CC had been proposed for Medway CC.

25. The Assistant Commissioner reported considerable support in favour of our proposed boundary and agreed with us on the balance of local ties. He also noted that the division of wards was not argued at the inquiry, that it would be contrary to our stated policy of not dividing wards and he gave it no further consideration. He also reported that, following the creation of the Medway unitary authority in 1996 and the confusion caused by the names, it was no longer appropriate for a constituency containing the towns of Rochester and Strood to be called Medway CC. He recommended that the constituency be renamed Rochester and Strood CC and that our proposed boundary should be adopted.

Chatham and Aylesford CC

26. He considered that the Medway Borough ward of Chatham Central should remain in this constituency. He also considered whether the name should be shortened to Chatham CC. However, in the absence of any enthusiasm for his tentative suggestion during the inquiry, he considered that this change would be confusing and unnecessary. He therefore recommended that our proposals should be adopted.

Sittingbourne and Sheppey CC

27. Our provisional recommendations received some support. However, others counter-proposed that the divided Swale Borough ward of Teynham and Lynsted should be included in this constituency rather than in Faversham and Mid Kent CC. The Assistant Commissioner considered that the electorates in the counter-proposals were acceptable and a good case could be made in view of the low and declining electorate of the constituency. The local ties of the ward were predominantly with Sittingbourne rather than Faversham. He concluded that both Rules 5 and 7 would be better served by the proposals to place the ward in Sittingbourne and Sheppey CC and recommended their adoption.

Faversham and Mid Kent CC

28. The Assistant Commissioner considered that our proposals for this constituency could not be sustained under Rule 5 with the adoption of his proposed change to Sittingbourne and

Sheppey CC. He considered that one of the counter-proposals usefully identified the Maidstone Borough ward of Boughton, Monchelsea and Chart Sutton as a replenishment for the transfer of the Swale Borough ward of Teynham and Lynsted. Another counter-proposal advocated a wholesale review of both constituencies, argued that Faversham and Mid Kent CC, created at the last general review, had not worked and proposed that Maidstone should have its own urban constituency. A third counter-proposal for an urban Maidstone constituency was even more radical.

29. In his view the constituency had not wholly failed and was not unworkable. He noted that, in terms of Rule 5, the size of the existing constituency had remained fairly stable for over a decade and afforded no reason for its refashioning. In terms of Rule 7, he noted that the area or character of the constituency had not apparently changed since the last review. He considered it would be wrong to “unglue” the constituency and that further radical change would not improve the situation. The transfer of the ward of Boughton, Monchelsea and Chart Sutton brought the electorate of the constituency to within an acceptable variance of the electoral quota, satisfying Rules 5 and 7. There were no objections to this proposal under Rule 7 and there was widespread support. He therefore recommended the adoption of this proposal. He reported that there was universal support for a change of name for the constituency and recommended Maidstone East and Faversham CC.

Tunbridge Wells CC

30. The Assistant Commissioner reported that our proposals rectified discrepancies in accordance with Rules 5 and 7, but that three counter-proposals for this area had emerged. The first had contended, for reasons of local ties, that the Tunbridge Wells Borough ward of Hawkhurst and Sandhurst could not be moved into this constituency in isolation from the two Tunbridge Wells Borough wards of Benenden and Cranbrook, and Frittenden and Sissinghurst. The second contended that both the Hawkhurst and Sandhurst and the Benenden and Cranbrook wards should be included in this constituency, but that the Frittenden and Sissinghurst ward should be transferred to Ashford CC. The third counter-proposal redressed the balance by transferring the Tunbridge Wells Borough ward of Speldhurst and Bidborough from this constituency to Tonbridge and Malling CC, but he noted that, under this proposal, the constituency would contain wards from three districts.

31. He considered that the first counter-proposal’s case for exercising discretion under Rule 7, which resulted in the transfer of all three wards, was difficult to sustain particularly when the local authorities with the most detailed knowledge of the area were in favour of our proposals. He rejected the first under Rules 5 and 7 and rejected the second and third in favour of our provisional recommendations.

Maidstone and The Weald CC

32. He reported that, with the transfer of the Boughton, Monchelsea and Chart Sutton ward from Maidstone and The Weald CC, the constituency electorate came very close to the electoral quota. Our proposals to include the Ashford Borough ward of Biddenden in this constituency would move the electorate further away from the electoral quota and break ties between Biddenden and Ashford. However, he deferred his decision about Biddenden until he had considered Ashford CC.

33. Other counter-proposals for this area had similar radical features in that they created an urban Maidstone BC, but he did not consider that Rule 7 allowed for such a refashioning of constituencies. He also reported that it was not possible to create a constituency that contained the whole of the urban Maidstone area because the electorate would be too high. He rejected these counter-proposals and recommended that, in order to avoid confusion with his renamed Maidstone East and Faversham CC, the name of the constituency should be changed to Maidstone West and the Weald CC.

Ashford CC and Folkestone and Hythe CC

34. The Assistant Commissioner reported that it was universally accepted that Ashford CC was too big, growing, and could no longer remain coterminous with Ashford Borough. We proposed removing three Ashford Borough wards. One of the counter-proposals only removed one, and two counter-proposals proposed greater changes.

35. He considered that the second counter-proposal to transfer a block of wards to Faversham and Mid Kent CC and to transfer the Tunbridge Wells Borough ward of Frittenden and Sissinghurst to Ashford CC, was not practicable. He reported that the proposers of one set of counter-proposals for this area altered their recommendations at the inquiry and that he considered that their final, consolidated view was late and radically different from anything previously raised. He rejected both these counter-proposals.

36. He reported that the transfer of the two Ashford Borough wards of Biddenden and Downs North, which we had proposed, had no support, was inconvenient, broke local ties and was not necessary. In noting the growth in the electorates of both Ashford CC and Folkestone and Hythe CC he reported that the considerable merit of the counter-proposal which moved only the single ward of Saxon Shore was to equalise two almost equally growing adjacent constituencies with the minimum of disruption.

37. There was evidence that the transfer of the Ashford Borough ward of Saxon Shore to Folkestone and Hythe CC would break strong ties with Ashford, but he considered that there were also ties with neighbouring villages in the Shepway District and it was the least disruptive option for reducing the electorate of Ashford CC. In his view the transfer of the Saxon Shore ward was in both the short and long term interests of Rules 5 and 7 for Ashford CC. He therefore recommended the adoption of this counter-proposal.

Canterbury CC

38. The Assistant Commissioner had already recommended the transfer of the Downs North ward from Canterbury CC to Ashford CC. He then considered the two City of Canterbury wards of Chestfield and Swalecliffe and of Marshside, and the principal counter-proposals affecting this area.

39. The first and least radical of these counter-proposals submitted that the ward of Chestfield and Swalecliffe should remain in Canterbury CC because its ties were with Canterbury and Whitstable, and that the transfer of the ward's large electorate was no longer needed to equalise the electorates if the Downs North ward were to be retained in Ashford CC. Instead, it was submitted that the smaller electorate of the Marshside ward would better equalise electorates and that the ward looked least towards Canterbury. The other counter-

proposals were radical, moved many more electors in clusters of wards, were inconvenient and disruptive of local ties, and he rejected them.

40. He considered that the evidence clearly showed that a serious breach of Rule 7 would occur if the Chestfield and Swalecliffe ward was transferred from Canterbury CC to North Thanet CC as we had proposed. He also reported that the Marshside ward was the most suitable ward to transfer to North Thanet CC. In his judgement, the first of the counter-proposals achieved the best balance and he recommended its adoption.

North Thanet CC and South Thanet CC

41. The Assistant Commissioner had already recommended the transfer of the Chestfield and Swalecliffe ward from North Thanet CC to Canterbury CC and the transfer of the Marshside ward from Canterbury CC to North Thanet CC. He rejected the other counter-proposals affecting this constituency, which he considered were too radical.

42. He noted that there were eight Margate wards and that it was generally accepted that the whole of the town could not be accommodated within one constituency. We had proposed the transfer of the two Cliftonville wards to South Thanet CC, whereas some of the other counter-proposals transferred five Margate wards to South Thanet CC. He reported that Cliftonville was a well defined area to the east of Margate centre, that it could be distinguished from the centre of Margate and that its transfer was the least inconvenient and disrupting to local ties. He recommended the adoption of our proposals.

Dover CC

43. The Assistant Commissioner reported that the name of the constituency was the only issue. There was strong support for the ancient and historic town of Deal to be included once again in the title of the constituency. The name of the town continued to be used today in all political and social life. He considered it was an anomaly that only Dover would be referred to in the constituency title, as Deal was a slightly larger town than Dover. He recommended that the name be changed to Dover and Deal CC.

Recommendation

44. We considered the Assistant Commissioner's report, the transcript of the inquiry and the written representations, and we reviewed the evidence area by area. We accepted his recommendations for changes to be made to the boundaries of some of our provisionally recommended constituencies as well as the recommendation for change to some of the constituency names, but we rejected other name changes.

45. Whilst we had proposed minimum change to the boundaries of the Gillingham and Medway constituencies, we agreed with him that a change of name for each was required to recognise that both constituencies contained wards from the Borough of Medway, as did Chatham and Aylesford CC. In renaming these two constituencies Gillingham and Rainham BC, and Rochester and Strood CC, we noted that all five Medway towns would be represented in constituency names.

46. Whilst we accepted his recommendation for the names of the Gillingham and Medway constituencies, we rejected his recommendation that Dover CC should be renamed Dover and Deal CC, that Faversham and Mid Kent CC should be renamed Maidstone East and Faversham CC, and that Maidstone and The Weald CC should be renamed Maidstone West and The Weald CC. Whilst these constituencies had undergone some slight changes, they were not sufficient to warrant changing their names and we considered that the existing names were still appropriate.

47. The Assistant Commissioner had rejected some of the counter-proposals he had heard. To establish whether the rejection of what were substantial counter-proposals was merited, we carefully considered the evidence. The Assistant Commissioner had rejected one substantial counter-proposal because he considered it would be too disruptive, affecting 123,914 electors, and it would cause greater inconvenience and break more local ties than our provisional recommendations. Also, it created a geographically larger Faversham and Mid Kent CC than had been provisionally recommended.

48. He had rejected another substantial counter-proposal because, in his view, it too would also have been disruptive, affecting 143,713 electors, and it would have caused greater inconvenience and would have broken more local ties than our provisional recommendations. In both instances we agreed with him and concluded that he was right to reject the counter-proposals on those grounds.

49. In the context of the combined area, we considered that the electorates of the existing constituencies were not so disparate as to require the degree of change proposed by these more radical counter-proposals. In particular we had proposed a minimum amount of change to realign constituency boundaries with the new ward boundaries, we had wished to bring about a reduction in the electorate of Ashford CC and we had brought about a reduction in the electoral disparity from 13,763 to 7,215, The Assistant Commissioner had supported this approach and had recommended few alterations. The electorate of Ashford CC had been reduced, although not by as much as we had proposed, and the electoral disparity had been further reduced from 13,763 to 6,776.

50. We accordingly published the following revised recommendations:-

	2000 electorate
Ashford CC	72,501
Canterbury CC	72,745
Chatham and Aylesford CC	66,482
Dartford CC	69,471
Dover CC	69,932
Faversham and Mid Kent CC	66,179
Folkestone and Hythe CC	72,512
Gillingham and Rainham BC	71,539
Gravesend CC	70,098
Maidstone and The Weald CC	68,014
North Thanet CC	66,026
Rochester and Strood CC	69,032
Sevenoaks CC	69,794
Sittingbourne and Sheppey CC	69,349

South Thanet CC	69,501
Tonbridge and Malling CC	65,969
Tunbridge Wells CC	69,479
	<hr/>
	1,178,623

Further Representations

51. Following publication of our revised recommendations we received twenty-five representations, of which eight approved of all or part of our revised recommendations, four approved of parts whilst objecting to other parts and eleven objected to them. Two representations commented on other matters.

The City of Canterbury ward of Marshside

52. One representation objected to the inclusion of the Marshside ward in North Thanet CC rather than in Canterbury CC. It was submitted that the move did not have the support of the electorate of the ward and that local ties would be broken. The representation also queried the analysis and decision made by the Assistant Commissioner on the evidence presented.

Faversham and Mid Kent CC and Maidstone and the Weald CC

53. One representation objected to the boundaries between these two constituencies and considered that the inquiry had been flawed. An alternative arrangement had been suggested that would create an urban Maidstone constituency and a Faversham and Mid Kent constituency. Another representation proposed an urban Maidstone constituency, but did not provide specific details.

The Swale Borough ward of Teynham and Lynsted

54. Four representations objected to the inclusion of the Teynham and Lynsted ward in Sittingbourne and Sheppey CC rather than in Faversham and Mid Kent CC. It was submitted that the revised recommendation for this ward would break community ties and that the Swale, the waterway separating Sheppey from Sittingbourne, had not been taken into account with regard to the transfer of the ward. It was further submitted that extensive local representations against the transfer had been received. However, we noted that support for this transfer had also been received.

The Sevenoaks District ward of Hartley and Hodsoll Street

55. An objection to the inclusion of the Hartley and Hodsoll Street ward in Dartford CC rather than in Sevenoaks CC submitted that this would break local ties, that a Dartford CC MP would have difficulties representing the interests of constituents from that ward and that Ash-cum-Ridley Parish would be divided between two constituencies.

The Ashford Borough ward of Saxon Shore

56. A representation objected to the inclusion of the Saxon Shore ward in Folkestone and Hythe CC rather than in Ashford CC. It was submitted that the transfer of the ward would not be in the interests of Rules 5 and 7, that there was strong local opposition to the recommendation and that the process would need to be reversed at the next review. However,

we had already confirmed our provisional recommendations as our final recommendations for Folkestone and Hythe CC.

Constituency names

57. There was objection to the name of Dover CC with Dover and Deal CC being suggested as being more appropriate. However, we had already confirmed our provisional recommendations as our final recommendations for Dover CC. It was also suggested that North Thanet CC should be named Wansum CC. As the Assistant Commissioner had accepted a counter-proposal for this constituency, which retained the existing constituency name, this new issue had not been discussed at the inquiry and we did not, therefore, think that there was any basis for reconsidering the name.

58. One representation objected to the name of Rochester and Strood CC and suggested that the existing constituency name of Medway CC should be retained. The names of Faversham and Mid Kent CC and Maidstone and The Weald CC were also opposed, with Maidstone East and Faversham CC and Maidstone West and The Weald CC, or Faversham and Maidstone East CC and Maidstone West CC being suggested as alternatives.

Recommendation

59. We noted the support for, and the very limited number of objections to, our revised recommendations. We decided that there was nothing in any of the points made about the Marshside ward of Canterbury which would persuade us to change our recommendations. On the other issues the Assistant Commissioner had heard all of the evidence, much of which had been conflicting, and had made his recommendations. We had agreed with his assessment of the evidence and his decisions in respect of the evidence. We were satisfied that our revised recommendations did not need to be modified. We therefore recommend the adoption of the following constituencies containing the wards as listed in Appendix C:-

	2000 electorate
Ashford CC	72,501
Canterbury CC	72,745
Chatham and Aylesford CC	66,482
Dartford CC	69,471
Dover CC	69,932
Faversham and Mid Kent CC	66,179
Folkestone and Hythe CC	72,512
Gillingham and Rainham BC	71,539
Gravesend CC	70,098
Maidstone and The Weald CC	68,014
North Thanet CC	66,026
Rochester and Strood CC	69,032
Sevenoaks CC	69,794
Sittingbourne and Sheppey CC	69,349
South Thanet CC	69,501
Tonbridge and Malling CC	65,969
Tunbridge Wells CC	<hr/> 69,479 <hr/> <hr/> 1,178,623

LANCASHIRE, BLACKBURN WITH DARWEN AND BLACKPOOL

The Number of Electors

1. There are currently fifteen constituencies in the Counties of Lancashire, Blackburn with Darwen and Blackpool:-

	2000 electorate
Blackburn BC	73,784
Blackpool North and Fleetwood BC	74,678
Blackpool South BC	74,495
Burnley BC	67,256
Chorley CC	77,204
Fylde CC	73,377
Hyndburn BC	67,041
Lancaster and Wyre CC	79,233
Morecambe and Lunesdale CC	68,044
Pendle BC	63,347
Preston BC	72,729
Ribble Valley CC	74,581
Rossendale and Darwen BC	70,913
South Ribble CC	73,854
West Lancashire CC	<u>73,739</u>
	<u>1,084,275</u>

The Number of Constituencies

2. Following the Lancashire (Boroughs of Blackburn and Blackpool) (Structural Change) Order 1996, Blackburn with Darwen, and Blackpool ceased to form part of the County of Lancashire and became new unitary authorities. The remaining twelve districts in the county formed the County of Lancashire.

3. Lancashire had a 2000 electorate of 870,485, which gave a theoretical entitlement to 12.45 constituencies. Blackburn with Darwen had a 2000 electorate of 101,866, which gave a theoretical entitlement to 1.46 constituencies. Blackpool had a 2000 electorate of 111,924, which gave a theoretical entitlement to 1.60 constituencies. If the three counties were reviewed individually, the county average in Blackburn with Darwen would be 19,002 below the electoral quota if two constituencies were allocated, or 31,931 above the electoral quota if one constituency were to be allocated. The county average of 55,962 in Blackpool would be 13,973 below the electoral quota. In each case the county average would be outside our 10,000 threshold. We therefore decided to review the three areas as one unit.

4. The combined area of Lancashire, Blackburn with Darwen, and Blackpool had a 2000 parliamentary electorate of 1,084,275, which gave a theoretical entitlement to 15.5040 constituencies. We noted that, if we were to continue the current allocation of fifteen constituencies, it might have been possible to minimise the amount of change required. However, we decided that we would round up the entitlement to the nearest whole number and allocate an extra, sixteenth, constituency. This is in accordance with our long established policy and would take account of the 2000 electorate with which we are statutorily required

to work. With sixteen constituencies, the average constituency electorate in the combined area would be 67,767, which is only 2,168 below the electoral quota.

5. The electorates of the fifteen existing constituencies in Lancashire, Blackburn with Darwen and Blackpool ranged from 79,233 in Lancaster and Wyre CC to 63,347 in Pendle BC, a disparity of 15,886.

Provisional Recommendations

6. As a result of changes to the district and borough ward boundaries, seventeen of the new wards in the combined area are partly in one constituency and partly in another. Our provisional recommendations realigned the constituency boundaries with the new ward boundaries. The creation of a new constituency would inevitably involve disruption and major change. The combined area has a clear rural/urban divide to the north and south of the Ribble Valley, which we respected, even though this limited the options as to where an extra constituency could be introduced. We decided to place the new constituency north of the Ribble Valley in the area to the north of Preston. Apart from the minor changes to realign constituency boundaries with the new ward boundaries, we decided to make no change to the existing constituencies of Blackburn BC, Burnley BC, Hyndburn BC, Morecambe and Lunesdale CC, Pendle BC, Rossendale and Darwen BC and West Lancashire CC. Our proposals allowed for Burnley BC and Pendle BC to remain coterminous with their Boroughs. The Boroughs of Fylde, Hyndburn and Ribble Valley were wholly included in their respective constituencies.

7. We proposed a new Wyre and Preston North CC that consisted of thirteen Wyre Borough wards and seven City of Preston wards; a renamed Lancaster and Fleetwood CC that included nine City of Lancaster wards and nine Wyre Borough wards (including Cabus); a renamed Blackpool North and Cleveleys BC that included nine Blackpool Borough wards and four Wyre Borough wards; a Blackpool South BC that consisted of twelve Blackpool Borough wards; and a Chorley CC consisting of eighteen of the twenty Chorley Borough wards.

8. We also proposed that Ribble Valley CC should consist of Ribble Valley Borough and ten South Ribble Borough wards (including the Charnock and Middleforth wards); South Ribble CC should consist of seventeen South Ribble Borough wards (including the Farington East and Farington West wards), two Chorley Borough wards (Eccleston and Mawdesley, and Lostock) and four West Lancashire District wards; Preston BC should consist of fourteen City of Preston wards; and Fylde CC should consist of Fylde Borough and one City of Preston ward (Lea). The disparity in the electorates of the proposed constituencies was reduced from 15,886 to 10,994.

9. Our provisional recommendations were:-

	2000 electorate
Blackburn BC	73,010
Blackpool North and Cleveleys BC	65,449
Blackpool South BC	64,002
Burnley BC	67,256
Chorley CC	68,899

Fylde CC	62,745
Hyndburn BC	68,030
Lancaster and Fleetwood CC	65,222
Morecambe and Lunesdale CC	67,514
Pendle BC	63,347
Preston BC	63,558
Ribble Valley CC	71,834
Rossendale and Darwen BC	70,698
South Ribble CC	71,533
West Lancashire CC	73,739
Wyre and Preston North CC	67,439
	<hr/>
	1,084,275

Representations

10. Following publication of our provisional recommendations, we received eighty representations, including three counter-proposals, of which seventeen expressed support for all or part of our proposals, thirteen expressed support whilst objecting to other parts of our proposals and forty-nine objected to our proposals. One representation made no substantive comments. Although one representation had contained the suggestion that fifteen rather than sixteen seats would be correct as a matter of principle, it was accepted generally that our proposal to allocate sixteen seats was appropriate, and no one had presented a fifteen seat scheme for consideration. Nor were there any objections to our proposals to make no changes to the composition of Burnley BC, Hyndburn BC and Pendle BC. The main issues raised in the objections were contained in two principal counter-proposals:-

- a) the first counter-proposal proposed that thirteen Wyre Borough wards, ten Fylde Borough wards and two City of Preston wards should be included in a new Amounderness CC; the Chorley Borough ward of Brindle and Hoghton should be included in Chorley CC; the two City of Preston wards of Cadley and College should be included in Preston BC; eleven Fylde Borough wards, four West Lancashire District wards, two South Ribble Borough wards and two Chorley Borough wards should be included in a new Ribble Estuary CC; the Borough of Ribble Valley, four City of Preston wards, two South Ribble Borough wards and the Chorley Borough ward of Brindle and Hoghton should be included in a new Ribble Valley and Fulwood CC; and twenty-three South Ribble Borough wards should be included in South Ribble CC. One other counter-proposal was identical to this first counter-proposal, save for some differing seat names; and
- b) the second principal counter-proposal proposed that thirteen Blackpool Borough wards should be included in a new Blackpool North BC; seven Blackpool Borough wards and eight Fylde Borough wards should be included in a new Blackpool South and Lytham BC; nine City of Lancaster wards and ten Wyre Borough wards should be included in a new Lancaster CC; the three City of Preston wards of College, Garrison and Sharoe Green should replace the two City of Preston wards of Ingol and Larches in Preston BC; thirteen Fylde Borough wards and seven City of Preston wards should be included in a new Preston West and Fylde CC; and sixteen Wyre Borough wards and the Blackpool Borough ward of Anchorholme should be included in a new Wyre CC.

Local Inquiry and the Assistant Commissioner's Report

11. We were required to hold an inquiry. Following the announcement of the inquiry a further sixty-seven representations were received, some of which were in response to the counter-proposals to our provisional recommendations.

12. The Assistant Commissioner supported our decision to increase the allocation of constituencies in the counties of Lancashire, Blackburn with Darwen and Blackpool from fifteen to sixteen. He further recommended adoption of the provisional recommendations for twelve of the sixteen constituencies.

Blackburn BC and Rossendale and Darwen BC

13. It was proposed that the Blackburn with Darwen Borough ward of Fernhurst should be included in Blackburn BC rather than in Rossendale and Darwen BC. The Assistant Commissioner acknowledged that there was a logical case for this transfer on geographical grounds and in respect of the shape of the constituency, but he considered that the ward equally had ties with the adjoining Rossendale and Darwen BC. He noted that, if the ward were to be included in Blackburn BC, the electorate would rise to 75,503 (5,568 above the electoral quota) and the constituency would then become the largest in the review area (7,736 above the county average). He also noted the level of general agreement that our proposals had achieved an acceptable compromise between the need to preserve local ties and the need to balance electorates and he further noted the lack of support for the counter-proposal. In rejecting it he endorsed our proposals for Blackburn BC.

Blackpool North and Cleveleys BC

14. He noted the concerns that our proposals would fragment Over Wyre communities that had been previously linked with either Blackpool or Lancaster and which would now be included in a new Wyre and Preston North CC. He also noted objections from those who considered that Fleetwood and Blackpool were part of the same conurbation and should not be divided and from others who considered that Thornton-Cleveleys was one town and should have one MP to represent it.

15. He acknowledged the evidence in support of regarding Fleetwood, Cleveleys and Blackpool as part of the same conurbation. However, following his visit to the area, he agreed with evidence submitted at the inquiry that Fleetwood was distinct from the Blackpool conurbation, where the fishing industry was still very important, and that its real links were with the Over Wyre communities to the east.

16. He sympathised with those objectors who considered that both Thornton and Cleveleys should be included in this constituency. However, he noted the evidence that Thornton, whilst having close links with Cleveleys, also had strong bonds with Poulton-le-Fylde to the south. He considered that the proposal to transfer wards to Blackpool North and Cleveleys BC from Wyre and Preston North CC would leave it with an unacceptably small electorate and would involve knock-on effects elsewhere which would make it difficult to balance electorates. He noted the overall level of support for our proposals and accordingly endorsed them.

Blackpool South BC

17. The Assistant Commissioner reported that the second counter-proposal suggested that the seven most southerly Blackpool Borough wards should join with the Lytham area wards of Fylde Borough and that the remaining wards of Blackpool Borough (except Anchorholme, which went to a proposed Wyre CC) should form Blackpool North BC. He considered that this would have a knock-on effect on other constituencies and would lead to unacceptably wide electoral disparities elsewhere, and this led him to reject the counter-proposal. His visit to Lytham further confirmed that it was very different in appearance and character from Blackpool. He also noted that our proposals had wide support and he endorsed them for Blackpool South BC.

Chorley CC

18. The Assistant Commissioner noted the wide support for our proposals for Chorley CC and also the several alternative counter-proposals for reducing the electorate of the existing Chorley CC, which:-

- a) transferred the Chorley Borough wards of Brindle and Hoghton, and Wheelton and Withnell from Chorley CC to Ribble Valley CC in exchange for the South Ribble Borough wards of Bamber Bridge East and Bamber Bridge West;
- b) transferred the Chorley Borough wards of Eccleston and Mawdesley, and Lostock to South Ribble CC and the Brindle and Hoghton ward to Ribble Valley CC; and
- c) transferred the Eccleston and Mawdesley, Lostock, and Brindle and Hoghton wards from Chorley CC to a new Ribble Estuary CC.

19. He reported that, after visiting the three constituencies concerned, he agreed that it was inappropriate to transfer any of the Bamber Bridge wards, which were urban in character, to Chorley CC. Although he accepted that a case could be made for a transfer of the wards of Brindle and Hoghton, and Wheelton and Withnell into Ribble Valley CC, overall he could see no reason to alter our proposals and in endorsing them he rejected all the counter-proposals.

Fylde CC

20. There was both support for and objection to our proposals, including the two principal counter-proposals. The objectors contended that the City of Preston ward of Lea should be included in Preston BC and not in Fylde CC. The two counter-proposals would either result in a new Preston West and Fylde CC, which included the eastern part of Fylde Borough, or in two new constituencies named Amounderness CC and Ribble Estuary CC which divided the District of Fylde between them.

21. Although he was sympathetic to the inclusion of the City of Preston ward of Lea in Preston BC, the Assistant Commissioner reported that, if it were to be removed from Fylde CC then another ward or wards would have to be added. He viewed the area and noted that Lea town, the main built up area of the ward, was separated from the other western suburbs of Preston by a stretch of open countryside and by the Lancaster Canal. He concluded that this physical separation made Lea the most suitable candidate for inclusion in Fylde CC.

22. He endorsed our proposals and rejected the two counter-proposals as they would divide the Borough of Fylde, cause inconvenience and break local ties.

Hyndburn BC

23. It was proposed that the name of this constituency should be changed to Hyndburn and Haslingden BC, but the Assistant Commissioner rejected the proposal due to a lack of support.

Lancaster and Fleetwood CC and Morecambe and Lunesdale CC

24. There was widespread support for our proposals for these constituencies. However, there were four main objections to them, namely that:-

- a) there were no ties between Fleetwood and Lancaster; Fleetwood's links were with Blackpool and the neighbouring parts of West Wyre, and the present Lancaster and Wyre CC best reflected residents' wishes. Our proposals fragmented Wyre, did not make sense geographically and were confusing;
- b) the Wyre Borough ward of Cabus should be transferred to Wyre and Preston North CC;
- c) the Wyre Borough ward of Wyresdale should be transferred to Wyre and Preston North CC; and
- d) the City of Lancaster ward of Lower Lune Valley should be in Morecambe and Lunesdale CC and the City of Lancaster wards of Skerton East and Skerton West should be in Lancaster and Fleetwood CC. Additionally, there was what amounted to a conflicting proposal that the wards of Halton and Aughton, and Upper Lune Valley should be added to Lancaster and Fleetwood CC on the grounds they had a much greater connection with Lancaster than with Morecambe.

25. The Assistant Commissioner considered that Fleetwood could not support a constituency on its own. Although it appeared to have little in common with Lancaster, and the transport links were difficult, he did not think that these reasons alone would significantly affect the efficient functioning of the constituency we had proposed. He noted the evidence of ties between Fleetwood and the Over Wyre communities, where there was a great deal of support for Fleetwood being linked to communities to the east, up to Lancaster. He considered that the advantages of such a link being recognised in parliamentary terms outweighed the disadvantages. He also rejected a proposal to rename the proposed Lancaster and Fleetwood constituency Lancaster and North Wyre CC because he believed that the main urban area in the west of the constituency, Fleetwood, should be mentioned in the title.

26. After viewing the Wyre Borough ward of Cabus, he reported that his observations fully supported the impression of its linkage with the Wyre Borough ward of Garstang. There was a continuous line of development from Cabus into Garstang and he accepted that Cabus was so closely linked to Garstang as to make it highly desirable they remain in the same constituency. He therefore recommended that Cabus be moved to Wyre and Preston North CC to retain its link with Garstang.

27. He reported similar arguments regarding ties of the Wyre Borough ward of Wyresdale. However, he considered that this was a large and sparsely populated rural ward and that the physical link with Garstang was not nearly as strong. He considered that the knock-on effects of moving the Cabus ward to Lancaster and Fleetwood CC would be exacerbated by transferring the Wyresdale ward as well.

28. He considered that there was no merit in re-arranging any of the wards of the City of Lancaster since they were presently divided north and south of the River Lune, which he said constituted a substantial physical divide. He considered that moving any of the wards would be a departure from Rules 5 and 7 without any countervailing advantages. Additionally, changes elsewhere would have to be made to reach acceptable constituency electorates.

29. He recommended that, subject to the Cabus ward being transferred to Wyre and Preston North CC, our proposals for Lancaster and Fleetwood CC and Morecambe and Lunesdale CC had received broad support and should be adopted.

Preston BC

30. The Assistant Commissioner rejected the objections to the inclusion of the City of Preston ward of Ingol (which was currently in Fylde CC) in this constituency. He accepted that, if the ward remained in Fylde CC it would bring its electorate closer to the electoral quota. However, the electorate of Preston BC would decrease, meaning another ward would have to be added. One solution proposed would be to retain the City of Preston ward of Lea in Preston BC, but he had already indicated that this was impracticable because of the effect on Fylde CC.

31. He considered the two counter-proposals. The first was similar to our proposals, but with the addition of the two City of Preston wards of Cadley and College moving to Preston BC. Taken in isolation, he felt this proposal had some merit, but the problems created by the transfer had knock-on effects to the north and were part of a counter-proposal for the combined area that he had already rejected.

32. The second counter-proposal divided Preston into Preston East and Preston West constituencies, with both containing wards from neighbouring boroughs to achieve acceptable electorates. He rejected it as it contained unacceptable flaws, such as a detached ward.

33. He rejected a proposal to rename the constituency Preston South BC because there was no corresponding constituency contained within the city boundaries in the north and there was no support for this name. He endorsed our proposals.

Ribble Valley CC

34. He accepted that including the whole of Ribble Valley Borough in one constituency had merit and that the problem was what should be added to it. There were objections to the inclusion of the South Ribble Borough wards of Middleforth, Bamber Bridge East and Bamber Bridge West because they were urban and industrial in nature. It was suggested that they had nothing in common with the constituency and would upset the essentially rural equilibrium.

35. It was also suggested that the Bamber Bridge East and Bamber Bridge West wards should transfer to Chorley CC in exchange for the Chorley Borough wards of Wheelton and Withnell, and Brindle and Hoghton, which were described as essentially rural and having a great deal in common with the Ribble Valley Borough wards. An alternative suggestion retained the two City of Preston wards of Preston Rural North and Preston Rural East, or the Chorley Borough ward of Pennine, in the constituency.

36. There was objection to the inclusion of South Ribble Borough wards in Ribble Valley CC. It was said that the ideal arrangement would be a South Ribble CC that was coterminous with the Borough, but it was recognised that the electorate would be too high. It had been acknowledged that our proposals were an improvement on the present arrangements, where the Borough was divided between three constituencies, but it was proposed that the South Ribble constituency should be wholly contained within South Ribble Borough and the size of the constituency should be reduced by transferring some areas into adjoining constituencies.

37. From his visit to the area, the Assistant Commissioner considered that there was little difference between the Bamber Bridge North ward and the other two Bamber Bridge wards. Although the Bamber Bridge East and Bamber Bridge West wards were more industrial in character, he saw nothing wrong in principle with these areas being linked to the large rural area to the east. He considered that Ribble Valley Borough had to be linked to other areas to create a viable constituency that would inevitably comprise a mix of rural, suburban and urban communities and with the advantage of only containing wards from two local authorities rather than three.

38. Objectors to the inclusion of the South Ribble Borough wards of Charnock and Middleforth in Ribble Valley CC submitted that this would divide the town of Penwortham between Ribble Valley CC and South Ribble CC. When he visited Penwortham, the Assistant Commissioner noticed that it had the feel of a town and, although it has sprawled, he accepted that it did have a character of its own and could see that dividing the town between two constituencies would be strongly resented by residents.

39. A counter-proposal suggested the transfer of the Charnock and Middleforth wards to South Ribble CC and the South Ribble Borough wards of Farington East and Farington West to Ribble Valley CC, slightly affecting the electorates of Ribble Valley CC and South Ribble CC. He noted the large number of written objections to the counter-proposal, stressing the close links between the Farington wards and the neighbouring Leyland wards, and the inconvenience that would be caused if the Farington wards were to be included in Ribble Valley CC.

40. After reviewing all the evidence, the Assistant Commissioner acknowledged that there were important links between Farington and Leyland, particularly because Leyland Motors remained a large local employer. However, he concluded that the advantage was just with transferring the Charnock and Middleforth wards to South Ribble CC and transferring Farington East and Farington West wards to Ribble Valley CC, whilst conceding that this had some disadvantages for the Farington wards. He considered that transferring the Charnock and Middleforth wards to South Ribble CC would preserve the integrity of Penwortham and the status quo, which was of particular importance locally. Apart from his recommended exchange of the Charnock and Middleforth wards for the two Farington wards, he endorsed our proposals for this constituency, which he considered an improvement on the present arrangements.

South Ribble CC

41. The Assistant Commissioner noted that the largest volume of objection concerned the Farington East, Farington West, Charnock and Middleforth wards that he had already dealt with in discussing Ribble Valley CC. In South Ribble the first counter-proposal affected fifteen of the seventeen South Ribble Borough wards in the provisionally recommended South Ribble CC, plus the Bamber Bridge, Tardy Gate, Walton-le-Dale, Charnock and Middleforth wards. A similar counter-proposal for this constituency affected thirteen South Ribble Borough wards, four Chorley Borough wards and four West Lancashire wards.

42. He considered that the first counter-proposal had some merit in maintaining the cohesiveness of Penwortham, Bamber Bridge and Leyland, but thought that it could not be considered in isolation. Both counter-proposals would result in a materially worse outcome under Rules 5 and 7. Except for his recommendations mentioned above for Ribble Valley CC, he agreed with our proposals.

West Lancashire CC

43. Apart from a single representation, concerned with shopping habits, which was not supported at the inquiry and received no other support, our proposals for this constituency were generally accepted and were described by the Assistant Commissioner as “neat and logical”.

Wyre and Preston North CC

44. The Assistant Commissioner had already dealt with the Wyre Borough wards of Cabus and Wyresdale. He could see no scope for any other transfers in or out of the constituency and rejected suggestions that Preston Rural North and/or Preston Rural East wards should be transferred to Ribble Valley CC.

45. He had already rejected proposals regarding the transfer of Wyre Borough wards to Blackpool and Cleveleys BC as well as rejecting the two counter-proposals which divided the District of Fylde. He further disagreed with a suggestion that the constituency should be named South Wyre and Preston North CC, considering that the provisionally recommended name was appropriate. He noted that our proposals for this constituency had been widely accepted and that one supporter had described it as a robust and logical construction. He endorsed our proposals for this constituency, with the addition of the Cabus ward.

Revised Recommendations

46. We agreed with all of the Assistant Commissioner’s recommendations. We noted that he had taken into account well argued evidence and that he had visited the areas. We accepted that his recommendations represented a better balance of all the factors. We accordingly published revised recommendations for the four constituencies of Lancaster and Fleetwood CC, Ribble Valley CC, South Ribble CC and Wyre and Preston North CC, and confirmed our provisional recommendations as final for the other twelve constituencies. Our revised recommendations were:-

	2000 electorate
Blackburn BC	73,010
Blackpool North and Cleveleys BC	65,449
Blackpool South BC	64,002
Burnley BC	67,256
Chorley CC	68,899
Fylde CC	62,745
Hyndburn BC	68,030
Lancaster and Fleetwood CC	63,849
Morecambe and Lunesdale CC	67,514
Pendle BC	63,347
Preston BC	63,558
Ribble Valley CC	71,997
Rosendale and Darwen BC	70,698
South Ribble CC	71,370
West Lancashire CC	73,739
Wyre and Preston North CC	68,812
	<hr/> <hr/> 1,084,275

Further Representations

47. Following publication of our revised recommendations we received twelve representations, of which three approved of all or part of our revised recommendations, one approved of parts whilst objecting to other parts and a further six objected. Two representations commented on other matters.

48. Five representations objected to the inclusion of the Farington East and Farington West wards in Ribble Valley CC rather than in South Ribble CC. It was submitted that the cultural, geographical and historical ties of the wards were with Leyland, that these ties would be severed as a result of the revised recommendations and that the wards had no links with the Ribble Valley. One representation objected to the inclusion of Fleetwood in Lancaster and Fleetwood CC, preferring the retention of the current Blackpool North and Fleetwood BC. One of the representations also objected to the name of Wyre and Preston North CC and suggested that the constituency be renamed ‘Wyre and Rural Preston CC’. One representation objected to the inclusion of the three Bamber Bridge wards in Ribble Valley CC instead of in Preston BC.

Recommendation

49. We decided that there were no material points made about the Farington wards of South Ribble Borough which would persuade us to change our recommendations. We noted that the Farington wards had been one of the main issues at the inquiry, that they had been fully discussed and that either Farington or Penwortham had to be included in Ribble Valley CC to equalise the constituency electorates. After weighing the evidence and inspecting the area, the Assistant Commissioner had favoured the transfer of Farington. We agreed that this was the least worst option and noted the support for the transfer that had been received.

50. We noted that the issue of including Fleetwood in Lancaster and Fleetwood CC, rather than retaining the current Blackpool North and Fleetwood BC, had also been fully discussed at the local inquiry and that we had subsequently confirmed our provisional recommendations as our final recommendations for Blackpool North and Cleveleys BC. We also noted the support received for our proposed Lancaster and Fleetwood CC.

51. The proposal to rename Wyre and Preston North CC had only been made after publication of our revised recommendations and, as the Assistant Commissioner had agreed with our name for the constituency and had rejected an alternative name, the issue was not discussed at the inquiry.

52. The inclusion of the three Bamber Bridge wards in Ribble Valley CC had been fully discussed at the inquiry. We had subsequently announced final recommendations for Preston BC. We considered that there was no new evidence in this objection.

53. We were satisfied that our revised recommendations did not need to be modified. We therefore recommend the adoption of the following constituencies containing the wards as listed in Appendix C:-

	2000 electorate
Blackburn BC	73,010
Blackpool North and Cleveleys BC	65,449
Blackpool South BC	64,002
Burnley BC	67,256
Chorley CC	68,899
Fylde CC	62,745
Hyndburn BC	68,030
Lancaster and Fleetwood CC	63,849
Morecambe and Lunesdale CC	67,514
Pendle BC	63,347
Preston BC	63,558
Ribble Valley CC	71,997
Rosendale and Darwen BC	70,698
South Ribble CC	71,370
West Lancashire CC	73,739
Wyre and Preston North CC	<u>68,812</u>
	<u>1,084,275</u>

LEICESTER

The Number of Electors

1. There are currently three constituencies in the City of Leicester:-

	2000 electorate
Leicester East BC	65,253
Leicester South BC	73,327
Leicester West BC	65,297
	<hr/>
	203,877
	<hr/>

The Number of Constituencies

2. Following the Leicestershire (City of Leicester and District of Rutland) (Structural Change) Order 1996, the City of Leicester ceased to form part of the County of Leicestershire and became a new unitary authority.

3. Leicester had a 2000 parliamentary electorate of 203,877, which gave a theoretical entitlement to 2.92 constituencies. With three constituencies, the average constituency electorate in the county would be 67,959, which is 1,976 less than the electoral quota. We provisionally decided that Leicester should continue to be allocated three constituencies and be reviewed separately from Leicestershire. The electorates of the three existing constituencies ranged from 65,253 in Leicester East BC to 73,327 in Leicester South BC, a disparity of 8,074.

Provisional Recommendations

4. As a result of changes to ward boundaries, three of the new wards are divided between constituencies. Our provisional recommendations proposed minimum change and realigned the constituency boundaries with the new ward boundaries.

5. We considered that changes to reduce the disparity would cause unnecessary disruption to the existing constituencies which, apart from minor changes to take account of altered local government boundaries, had been in place since 1970. Under our proposals, the disparity would increase from 8,074 to 9,099. We noted that, despite the higher disparity, the electorates of all three constituencies would be within 5,634 of the electoral quota.

6. Our provisional recommendations were:-

	2000 electorate
Leicester East BC	66,176
Leicester South BC	73,400
Leicester West BC	64,301
	<hr/>
	203,877
	<hr/>

Representations

7. Following publication of our provisional recommendations, we received twenty-three representations of which eighteen expressed support for all or part of our proposals, one expressed support for part of our proposals whilst objecting to other parts and four objected to our proposals. The objections included a petition containing 215 names. The objectors submitted that wards which were currently divided between constituencies should remain divided in order to preserve ties.

Local Inquiry and Assistant Commissioner's Report

8. We were required to hold an inquiry. Following the announcement of the inquiry a further two representations were received, one approving of our provisional recommendations and one making no formal comment.

9. The Assistant Commissioner reported that the central issue was whether the boundary between Leicester East BC and Leicester West BC should be realigned with the new Latimer ward boundary as we had recommended, or whether the ward should remain divided between constituencies. He reported that objectors submitted that the Latimer ward should remain divided and that, in order to balance the constituency electorates, the Abbey ward should also remain divided.

10. There were two principal objections: first, that long-established ties would be broken between that part of the Latimer ward currently in Leicester West BC, which we proposed should be transferred to Leicester East BC, and the rest of Leicester West BC; and second, that realignment would have a serious adverse affect on community relations. It was claimed that two multi-racial constituencies would result and one (Leicester West BC) would have a predominantly white electorate.

11. However, there was also support for our provisional recommendations and objection to the counter-proposal. Supporters considered that the provisional recommendations would unite the Latimer community in one constituency and that the Belgrave Road was a focus for the community rather than a dividing feature. It was also submitted that the Grand Union Canal and the River Soar formed a natural boundary between the two constituencies.

12. The Assistant Commissioner not only considered the written representations and evidence submitted at the inquiry but, in forming his conclusions, he also considered our policy on using wards as building blocks for constituencies, the statutory Rules that governed our work and other legislation.

13. He dismissed the contention of the objectors that local ties would be broken by our provisional recommendations. He considered that the Belgrave Road was the heart of the local community and that the Grand Union Canal and the River Soar formed a very real natural barrier between the Belgrave and Abbey Lane areas. He also reported that he did not consider that race relations was a criterion relevant to the redrawing of parliamentary constituencies and that the current Race Relations legislation did not apply to our work. He reported that he considered that the local ties criterion (Rule 7) was sufficiently broad to take account of racial issues and that he did not consider that race relations in the City of Leicester would, in any way, be adversely affected by our provisional recommendations.

14. He accordingly recommended rejection of the counter-proposal and the confirmation of our provisional recommendations.

Recommendation

15. We agreed with the Assistant Commissioner that Section 71(1) of the Race Relations Act 1976 did not apply to our work and that the local ties criterion in Rule 7 was sufficiently broad and flexible to take account of different aspects of community relations. Having considered all the evidence, including the local ties, we decided that our provisional recommendations should be confirmed in full.

16. We accordingly recommend the adoption of the following constituencies containing the wards as listed in Appendix C:-

	2000 electorate
Leicester East BC	66,176
Leicester South BC	73,400
Leicester West BC	<u>64,301</u>
	<u><u>203,877</u></u>

LEICESTERSHIRE AND RUTLAND

The Number of Electors

1. There are currently seven constituencies in the Counties of Leicestershire and Rutland:-

	2000 electorate
Blaby CC	73,521
Bosworth CC	69,563
Charnwood CC	75,151
Harborough CC	72,318
Loughborough CC	70,086
North West Leicestershire CC	67,534
Rutland and Melton CC	<u>71,987</u>
	<u>500,160</u>

The Number of Constituencies

2. Following The Leicestershire (City of Leicester and District of Rutland) (Structural Change) Order 1996, the City of Leicester and the District of Rutland ceased to form parts of the County of Leicestershire and became new unitary authorities. The remaining seven districts in the county formed the County of Leicestershire.

3. Leicestershire had a 2000 parliamentary electorate of 474,745, which gave a theoretical entitlement to 6.79 constituencies. Rutland had a 2000 parliamentary electorate of 25,415, which was too small to form a constituency on its own. The combined area of Leicestershire and Rutland had a 2000 parliamentary electorate of 500,160, which gave a theoretical entitlement to 7.15 constituencies, producing a county average of 71,451, which would be only 1,516 above the electoral quota.

4. We therefore decided to treat Leicestershire and Rutland together as one review area and to retain the allocation of seven constituencies. The electorates of the existing constituencies in Leicestershire and Rutland ranged from 67,534 in North West Leicestershire CC to 75,151 in Charnwood CC, a disparity of 7,617.

5. Having noted that the City of Leicester had a theoretical entitlement to 2.92 constituencies, we provisionally decided that it should continue to be allocated three constituencies and that it should be reviewed separately from Leicestershire and Rutland.

Provisional Recommendations

6. As a result of changes to the ward boundaries, five of the new wards in Leicestershire are partly in one constituency and partly in another. None of the wards in Rutland are divided between constituencies. Our provisional recommendations realigned the constituency boundaries with the new ward boundaries in a way that ensured, with the exception of one ward, the minimum number of electors would be transferred.

7. The exception to minimum realignment was the inclusion of the Hinckley and Bosworth Borough ward of Ratby, Bagworth and Thornton in the Bosworth constituency. We noted that, if we had included the ward in the Charnwood constituency, the Hinckley and Bosworth Borough ward of Markfield, Stanton and Fieldhead would have become detached from the rest of the Bosworth constituency. We also noted that, by placing the Ratby, Bagworth and Thornton ward in the Bosworth constituency it would be included in the same constituency as the majority of the other Hinckley and Bosworth Borough wards and that the electorates of the neighbouring Bosworth and Charnwood constituencies would be within 2,079 of each other.

8. Under our proposals, the electorates of all seven constituencies in Leicestershire and Rutland were within 3,013 of the electoral quota and the disparity between constituency electorates was reduced from 7,617, to 5,414.

9. Our provisional recommendations were:-

	2000 electorate
Blaby CC	72,731
Bosworth CC	72,948
Charnwood CC	70,869
Harborough CC	72,881
Loughborough CC	70,983
North West Leicestershire CC	67,534
Rutland and Melton CC	<u>72,214</u>
	<u>500,160</u>

Representations

10. Following publication of our provisional recommendations, we received twenty representations of which eighteen expressed support for all or part of our proposals and two expressed support for constituency boundaries whilst objecting to constituency names. One of the objections submitted that Blaby CC should be named South Leicestershire CC. The other objection, which came from outside the review area, submitted alternative names for four constituencies.

Local Inquiry and Assistant Commissioner's Report

11. Although we were not statutorily required to hold a local inquiry, we decided to exercise our discretion to hold one. We restricted the scope of the inquiry to the name of Blaby CC, as this was the only local objection. Following the announcement of the inquiry a further five representations were received, two approving of our provisional recommendations in general, two supporting the submission for Blaby CC to be named South Leicestershire CC and one making no formal comment.

12. The Assistant Commissioner considered the historical nature of the Blaby name, the composition of the constituency, particularly with respect to the districts contained in the constituency, and the recent growth of certain villages in the constituency that are now larger than Blaby. He considered that the name Blaby CC was no longer appropriate because of the significant demographic changes that had taken place in recent years.

13. He reported that there had been rapid growth of villages such as Broughton Astley and Lutterworth to the extent that the ‘centre of gravity’ of electors could no longer be said to lie with Blaby, being more evenly spread around the constituency. He considered that the name Blaby CC was now a cause for confusion and that nobody spoke at the inquiry against the proposal for a change of name. He accordingly recommended that our provisional recommendations be altered to change the name of Blaby CC to South Leicestershire CC, which, he said, was both supported and more satisfactory.

Revised Recommendations

14. We agreed with the Assistant Commissioner’s recommendation that the name of Blaby CC should be altered to South Leicestershire CC. Although we noted that only 790 electors would be transferred as a result of the realignment of the Blaby constituency boundary with the boundary of the new Bosworth ward of Harborough District, and that Blaby District still formed a large part of the constituency, the town of Blaby represented a much smaller proportion.

15. We accordingly published the following revised recommendations:-

	2000 electorate
Bosworth CC	72,948
Charnwood CC	70,869
Harborough CC	72,881
Loughborough CC	70,983
North West Leicestershire CC	67,534
Rutland and Melton CC	72,214
South Leicestershire CC	<u>72,731</u>
	<u>500,160</u>

Further Representations

16. Following publication of our revised recommendations we received fifteen representations, of which six supported our proposal for the change of name from Blaby CC to South Leicestershire CC. Eight representations objected to the change of name and one approved of the change whilst objecting to the composition of the constituency, despite the fact we had already published our final recommendations for constituency boundaries.

Recommendation

17. We considered that the representations contained no new evidence about the renaming of Blaby CC as South Leicestershire CC. We were satisfied that our revised recommendations did not need to be modified. We therefore recommend the adoption of the following constituencies containing the wards as listed in Appendix C:-

2000 electorate

Bosworth CC	72,948
Charnwood CC	70,869
Harborough CC	72,881
Loughborough CC	70,983
North West Leicestershire CC	67,534
Rutland and Melton CC	72,214
South Leicestershire CC	72,731
	<hr/>
	<u>500,160</u>

LINCOLNSHIRE

The Number of Electors

1. There are currently seven constituencies in the County of Lincolnshire:-

	2000 electorate
Boston and Skegness CC	69,053
Gainsborough CC	65,672
Grantham and Stamford CC	74,748
Lincoln BC	65,555
Louth and Horncastle CC	70,763
Sleaford and North Hykeham CC	73,720
South Holland and The Deepings CC	72,908
	<hr/>
	492,419

The Number of Constituencies

2. Lincolnshire had a 2000 parliamentary electorate of 492,419 which gave a theoretical entitlement to 7.04 constituencies. With seven constituencies retained, the average constituency electorate in the county would be 70,346, which is only 411 above the electoral quota. We decided, therefore, to recommend that the county should continue to be allocated seven constituencies. The electorates of the seven existing constituencies ranged from 65,555 in Lincoln BC to 74,748 in Grantham and Stamford CC, a disparity of 9,193. Our provisional recommendations, which took account of ward boundary changes, increased this marginally to 9,314.

Provisional Recommendations

3. As a result of changes to the district ward boundaries, ten of the new wards in the county are partly in one constituency and partly in another. Our provisional recommendations realigned the constituency boundaries with the new ward boundaries.

4. We were unable to keep changes to a minimum as this would have resulted in the town of Stamford being detached from Grantham and Stamford CC as well as producing a disparity of 12,644 between constituencies, which we considered too high. To meet these difficulties and to align ward boundaries we proposed that Gainsborough CC should include the whole of West Lindsey District together with the East Lindsey District ward of Wragby. We proposed that Louth and Horncastle CC should contain the remainder of the East Lindsey District wards (including the divided Binbrook, Ludford and Stickney wards), save that the whole of the divided Croft ward and the other nine wards of East Lindsey District currently in Boston and Skegness CC, together with Boston District, would form our proposed Boston and Skegness CC.

5. We proposed that the whole of the divided South Kesteven District ward of Truesdale should be included in Grantham and Stamford CC so that Stamford town was not isolated, and that the whole of the divided South Kesteven District wards of Ermine and Witham Valley, together with the wards of Barrowby and Peascliffe and the whole of the divided

North Kesteven District ward of Heighington and Washingborough should be included in Sleaford and North Hykeham CC.

6. We also proposed that the two North Kesteven District wards of Bracebridge Heath and Waddington East, and Skellingthorpe should be included in Lincoln BC. Under our proposals, the electorates of all seven constituencies would be within 6,324 of the county average.

7. Our provisional recommendations were:-

	2000 electorate
Boston and Skegness CC	69,329
Gainsborough CC	64,022
Grantham and Stamford CC	73,336
Lincoln BC	70,135
Louth and Horncastle CC	72,137
Sleaford and North Hykeham CC	73,058
South Holland and The Deepings CC	<hr/> 70,402
	<hr/> <hr/> 492,419

Representations

8. Following publication of our provisional recommendations, we received ninety-three representations, of which five supported all or parts of our proposals, eight supported parts of our proposals whilst objecting to other parts and seventy-eight objected to all or parts of our proposals. Two representations noted our proposals.

9. The main issues raised in the objections were contained in five counter-proposals. The principal and most contentious issue was the configuration of the wards surrounding the City of Lincoln, excepting along its northern boundary, and the counter-proposals shared the common feature of proposing alternative configurations for those wards. No one suggested dividing the city and each proposal differed from the others in the wards which it suggested should be joined with the city. The proposals variously treated the City of Lincoln by:-

- a) including it with the five North Hykeham wards of North Kesteven District. One counter-proposal then also placed the two North Kesteven District wards of Bracebridge Heath and Waddington East, and Skellingthorpe in a renamed Sleaford CC, and another also placed the two North Kesteven District wards of Eagle and North Scarle, and Skellingthorpe in Gainsborough CC, and the North Kesteven District ward of Bracebridge Heath and Waddington East in a renamed Sleaford and Mid Kesteven CC;
- b) including it with the North Kesteven District ward of Waddington West;
- c) leaving Lincoln BC as we had proposed it, but placing the two North Kesteven District wards of Branston and Mere, and Heighington and Washingborough in Gainsborough CC, and the North Kesteven District ward of Bracebridge Heath and Waddington East in Sleaford and North Hykeham CC; and

d) forming a constituency on its own, without the addition of other wards.

10. In addition, one of the counter-proposals placed the divided East Lindsey District wards of Ludford and Binbrook in Gainsborough CC and another placed only Ludford in Gainsborough CC.

11. The counter-proposals also contained proposals to:-

- a) include the South Kesteven District wards of Aveland, Lincrest and Toller in a renamed Sleaford and Mid Kesteven CC;
- b) include the South Kesteven District wards of Barrowby and Peascliffe in Grantham and Stamford CC; and
- c) it was also submitted that the South Kesteven District ward of Truesdale should be divided between constituencies to recognise the ties of the villages of Baston and Langtoft with the two South Kesteven District wards of Deeping St James, and Market and West Deeping, which were in South Holland and The Deepings CC.

Local Inquiry and Assistant Commissioner's Report

12. We were required to hold an inquiry. Following the announcement of the inquiry a further eighty representations were received, sixty-eight of which expressed support for our provisional recommendations, one supported parts of our proposals whilst objecting to other parts, ten objected to all or parts of our proposals and one made no comment. The Assistant Commissioner reported that the main issues raised at the inquiry were the same as those listed above.

Lincoln BC and the five North Hykeham wards

13. The Assistant Commissioner reported that two of the counter-proposals suggested the inclusion of the town of North Hykeham in Lincoln BC. It was argued that the town was adjacent to, and had strong ties with, the City of Lincoln. He noted that the town had been part of Lincoln BC prior to 1997. However, there was also considerable opposition to the proposal.

The Bracebridge Heath and Waddington East, Skellingthorpe and Waddington West wards

14. The Assistant Commissioner noted that whilst our provisional recommendations divided the parish of Waddington between constituencies, there was evidence of close links between the Waddington West ward and the North Hykeham Witham ward. He reported that, whilst the Skellingthorpe ward was essentially rural, there was evidence of the ward's close ties with the City of Lincoln.

The City of Lincoln

15. The Assistant Commissioner reported that the counter-proposal which submitted that the City of Lincoln should form a constituency on its own, with no need to include wards from North Kesteven District in Lincoln BC, had argued that there would be significant growth in the electorate of the City of Lincoln, which would increase the electorate closer to the county average. He also reported that there was considerable opposition not only to our provisionally recommended Lincoln BC, but also to the two alternative counter-proposals.

16. He considered that the City of Lincoln was too small to form a constituency on its own and that wards from North Kesteven District should be included in Lincoln BC. He also considered that the evidence of significant growth in the electorate in the City of Lincoln was speculative and rejected it. He decided not to recommend the inclusion of the five North Hykeham wards in Lincoln BC, nor the inclusion of the Bracebridge Heath and Waddington East and the Waddington West wards, as proposed, and supported our provisional recommendations for Lincoln BC.

Gainsborough CC

17. The Assistant Commissioner reported that there was considerable opposition to the counter-proposals which suggested the inclusion of wards from North Kesteven District in Gainsborough CC. He noted the evidence that the boundary between the North Kesteven and West Lindsey Districts, which is the River Witham and the Foss Dyke Navigation Canal, formed a natural barrier between the two districts, with very few crossing points outside of the City of Lincoln itself and he considered it was inappropriate that any of the wards should be in a constituency to the north of the city. He saw no merit in the transfer of any of them.

18. He reported that there was strong evidence that the villages of Binbrook and Ludford had ties with Market Rasen, which is in Gainsborough CC, but he noted that the majority of the Ludford ward, both in electoral and geographical terms, is currently in Louth and Horncastle CC.

19. He rejected the counter-proposals to include any other East Lindsey District wards in Gainsborough CC. He considered that to include either, or both, of the Binbrook and Ludford wards wholly in the constituency would break the local ties that the majority of the electorate had with other East Lindsey District wards and unnecessarily disregarded the district boundary. He therefore rejected the counter-proposals and endorsed our provisionally recommended Gainsborough CC.

The Frithville, Sibsey and Stickney wards

20. The Assistant Commissioner reported that there were a number of objections to the proposal to include the East Lindsey District wards of Frithville and Sibsey in Louth and Horncastle CC, noting the evidence that these wards had close ties with the town of Boston. He agreed, and found there were no grounds to move them. He rejected the counter-proposal to include them in Louth and Horncastle CC. He did, however, accept the arguments in support of the counter-proposal to include the divided East Lindsey District ward of Stickney in Boston and Skegness CC, in order to recognise that ward's ties with the town of Boston, thereby equalising the electorates of the two constituencies and improving the shape of Boston and Skegness CC.

The Aveland, Barrowby, Lincrest, Peascliffe and Toller wards

21. The Assistant Commissioner reported that there was considerable and strong opposition to the proposal to include the South Kesteven District wards of Aveland, Lincrest and Toller in Sleaford and North Hykeham CC, and that there was general acceptance of our recommendation to include the wards of Barrowby and Peascliffe in Sleaford and North Hykeham CC. He therefore rejected the counter-proposal.

The Truesdale ward

22. The Assistant Commissioner reported that he fully endorsed our policy of not dividing local government wards between constituencies and noted that the inclusion of the South Kesteven District ward of Truesdale in South Holland and The Deepings CC would result in the town of Stamford being detached from the remainder of Grantham and Stamford CC, which was also against our stated policy of not creating constituencies with detached parts.

23. Having only recommended the transfer of one ward between our provisionally recommended constituencies, he concluded that there was no need to alter any of the names of the proposed constituencies.

Revised Recommendations

24. We agreed with the Assistant Commissioner's recommendations that the only change to our provisional recommendations should be that the East Lindsey District ward of Stickney should be included in Boston and Skegness CC, instead of Louth and Horncastle CC.

25. We accordingly published revised recommendations for the two constituencies of Boston and Skegness CC and Louth and Horncastle CC, and confirmed our provisional recommendations as final for the five other constituencies. Our revised recommendations were:-

	2000 electorate
Boston and Skegness CC	71,003
Gainsborough CC	64,022
Grantham and Stamford CC	73,336
Lincoln BC	70,135
Louth and Horncastle CC	70,463
Sleaford and North Hykeham CC	73,058
South Holland and The Deepings CC	<hr/> 70,402 <hr/>
	<hr/> <hr/> 492,419

Further Representations

26. Following publication of our revised recommendations we received seven representations. Five representations approved of the revisions and two objected to them. One representation objected to the inclusion of the East Lindsey District ward of Ludford in Louth and Horncastle CC and the North Kesteven District ward of Waddington West in Lincoln BC. The other representation objected to the inclusion of the East Lindsey District wards of Frithville, Sibsey and Stickney in Boston and Skegness CC. We considered that these issues

had been fully considered by the Assistant Commissioner and that there was no new significant evidence to justify modifying our recommendations.

Recommendation

27. We therefore recommended the adoption of the following constituencies containing the wards as listed in Appendix C:-

	2000 electorate
Boston and Skegness CC	71,003
Gainsborough CC	64,022
Grantham and Stamford CC	73,336
Lincoln BC	70,135
Louth and Horncastle CC	70,463
Sleaford and North Hykeham CC	73,058
South Holland and The Deepings CC	<u>70,402</u>
	<u><u>492,419</u></u>

MILTON KEYNES

The Number of Electors

1. There are currently two constituencies in the County of Milton Keynes:-

	2000 electorate
Milton Keynes South West BC	76,011
North East Milton Keynes CC	74,983
	<hr/> <hr/> <hr/>
	150,994

The Number of Constituencies

2. Following the Buckinghamshire (Borough of Milton Keynes) (Structural Change) Order 1995, Milton Keynes ceased to form part of the County of Buckinghamshire and became a new unitary authority.

3. Milton Keynes had a 2000 parliamentary electorate of 150,994, which gave a theoretical entitlement to 2.16 constituencies. We decided that the county should continue to be allocated two constituencies. With two constituencies being retained, the average constituency electorate in the county would be 75,497, which is 5,562 above the electoral quota. The electorates of the two existing constituencies ranged from 76,011 to 74,983, a disparity of 1,028.

Provisional Recommendations

4. As a result of changes to the ward boundaries, five of the new wards in Milton Keynes are partly in one constituency and partly in another. Our provisional recommendations realigned the constituency boundaries with the new ward boundaries.

5. We decided that we could bring the electorates of the two existing constituencies closer to the county average by recommending minor changes. We proposed that the divided Wolverton ward should be included in North East Milton Keynes CC, rather than in Milton Keynes South West BC, and that the Danesborough ward and the divided Walton Park ward should be transferred from North East Milton Keynes CC to Milton Keynes South West BC. Under our proposals both constituencies would have electorates within 185 of the county average of 75,497 and the disparity between them would be reduced to 370.

6. As our proposed changes altered the shapes of the two existing constituencies, we considered that the new names of Milton Keynes North CC and Milton Keynes South BC would be more appropriate.

7. Our provisional recommendations were:-

	2000 electorate
Milton Keynes North CC	75,312
Milton Keynes South BC	75,682
	<hr/> <hr/> <hr/>
	150,994

Representations

8. Following publication of our provisional recommendations, we received eighteen representations, of which fourteen expressed support for all of our proposals and four objected to them.

9. The main issues raised in the objections were principally contained in two counter-proposals:-

- a) the first proposed that the Stony Stratford ward should be included in Milton Keynes North CC and that the Middleton ward should be included in Milton Keynes South BC; and
- b) the second proposed that the Danesborough and Walton Park wards should be included in Milton Keynes North CC and that the Wolverton ward should be included in Milton Keynes South BC. It also suggested that their names should revert to North East Milton Keynes CC and Milton Keynes South West BC.

Local Inquiry and the Assistant Commissioner's Report

10. We were required to hold an inquiry. Following the announcement of the inquiry a further seven representations were received, but no new issues were raised.

Counter-proposals

11. The Assistant Commissioner reported that there were no special geographical considerations or local ties that would justify the electoral disparity of 12,264 produced by the first counter-proposal. In the absence of any support he therefore rejected it.

12. He reported that our proposals were numerically superior to the second counter-proposal, but that our proposals transferred 25,717 electors against 7,294 in the second counter-proposal. It was argued that our proposals involved a greater change in the character of the constituencies, with both becoming a mix of urban and rural, whereas under the second counter-proposal, one constituency would remain predominantly urban. He considered that these factors should not carry great weight with regard to the convenience of the MP, which he believed to be irrelevant, but considered that, with a larger electorate in one of the constituencies, the second counter-proposal would create more inconvenience to the electorate by reducing individual access to the MP.

13. Both our proposal and the second counter-proposal produced constituencies that were relatively compact, easily accessible, and with no specific geographical problems. He reported that two points were forcefully argued at the inquiry. First, that the Stony Stratford and Wolverton wards should be kept together in the same constituency as in the second counter-proposal. Secondly, that the Danesborough and Walton Park wards had insufficient connection with the Bletchley and Fenny Stratford ward to justify including them in a south constituency, as in our proposals.

14. He noted that Stony Stratford and Wolverton had historically been considered as creating a group of “northern towns” with similar communities and shared services and that both had links with Bletchley. Furthermore, it was submitted that, although Danesborough and Walton Park were close to Bletchley, they should not be included in Milton Keynes South, as their social compositions were different. He noted that there was some force in these arguments and that the counter-proposal found substantial support from local residents. He believed the links between the Wolverton and Stony Stratford wards to be the only factor suggesting that the counter-proposal was preferable to our proposals.

15. He considered that the A5 was not the great divide between the northern towns that it appeared to be from the map and that there was easy access between them with several ways of crossing it. However, despite this, he perceived that Stony Stratford and Wolverton were clearly separate communities. He considered that the desire to keep the two wards together was not sufficient to justify the greater disparity between the constituencies or the 11.7% deviation from the electoral quota that would exist under the second counter-proposal.

16. He therefore recommended that our proposals, which had received support, should have preference over the two counter-proposals and recommended their adoption. He also recommended the adoption of the constituency names that we had proposed.

Interim Review

17. The Assistant Commissioner reported that a high rate of growth was planned for Milton Keynes and considered that, by the time the new constituencies were introduced, the electorates might have grown substantially and not necessarily at the same rate, and that the growth in the electorate might even entitle Milton Keynes to a third constituency. It was submitted to him that an interim review of Milton Keynes should be held on more up-to-date figures. He agreed and recommended that an interim review be held at the appropriate time.

Recommendation

18. We agreed with all of the Assistant Commissioner’s recommendations. We therefore recommend the adoption of the following constituencies containing the wards as listed in Appendix C:-

	2000 electorate
Milton Keynes North CC	75,312
Milton Keynes South BC	75,682
	<hr/> <hr/> <hr/> 150,994

19. We have monitored the electorate of Milton Keynes. We note that its electorate has increased from 150,994 in 2000 to 159,464 in 2006, an increase of 8,470 or 5.6%. We concluded that an interim review is not required at this time. However, we will continue to monitor the electorate.

NORFOLK

The Number of Electors

1. There are currently eight constituencies in the County of Norfolk:-

	2000 electorate
Great Yarmouth CC	69,086
Mid Norfolk CC	78,212
North Norfolk CC	80,008
North West Norfolk CC	78,209
Norwich North BC	75,266
Norwich South BC	70,775
South Norfolk CC	82,673
South West Norfolk CC	<hr/> 83,007 <hr/> <hr/> 617,236

The Number of Constituencies

2. Norfolk had a 2000 parliamentary electorate of 617,236, which gave a theoretical entitlement to 8.83 constituencies. We decided to allocate an extra, ninth, constituency. With nine constituencies Norfolk would have a county average of 68,582, which is 1,353 below the electoral quota.

3. The electorates of the eight existing constituencies ranged from 83,007 in South West Norfolk CC to 69,086 in Great Yarmouth CC, a disparity of 13,921.

Provisional Recommendations

4. As a result of changes to the borough and district ward boundaries, five of the new wards in Norfolk are partly in one constituency and partly in another. Our provisional recommendations realigned the constituency boundaries with the new ward boundaries.

5. It was not possible to propose the minimum amount of change necessary to realign constituency boundaries with the new ward boundaries because the high disparity of 13,921 would have been unaffected and it was inevitable that widespread changes would have to be made because of the allocation of the extra constituency. However, no change was proposed to Great Yarmouth CC which, with an electorate of 69,086, was close to the electoral quota and county average and remained coterminous with Great Yarmouth Borough. The high electorate of North Norfolk CC (80,008) meant that the constituency could not remain coterminous with North Norfolk District. The electorates of the other constituencies were reduced to accommodate the extra constituency.

6. Apart from realignment with new ward boundaries, no change was made to the boundary between Norwich North BC and Norwich South BC. We proposed that the divided Broadland District ward of Hellesdon North West and the divided City of Norwich ward of Crome should be included in a reduced Norwich North BC, which contained nine Broadland District wards and four City of Norwich wards. The divided City of Norwich ward of Thorpe Hamlet and the divided South Norfolk District ward of New Costessey were included in a

reduced Norwich South BC, which contained nine City of Norwich wards and one South Norfolk District ward. The divided South Norfolk District ward of Cringleford was included in a reduced South Norfolk CC, which contained twenty-eight South Norfolk District wards, instead of in Norwich South BC.

7. To reduce the high electorates and disparity of the existing constituencies and to create an additional constituency, we proposed that substantial changes should be made to the existing Mid Norfolk CC, which currently contained wards from both Broadland and Breckland Districts.

8. We proposed creating a new Broadland CC containing all sixteen Broadland District wards currently in Mid Norfolk CC, together with two further Broadland District wards (Taverham North and Taverham South) and six North Norfolk District wards in the Fakenham area. The transfer of these six North Norfolk District wards from North Norfolk CC reduced the high electorate of that constituency, which would contain twenty-eight North Norfolk District wards. The transfer of the two Taverham wards from Norwich North BC reduced the high electorate of that constituency.

9. We proposed a revised Mid Norfolk CC containing all fourteen Breckland District wards currently in Mid Norfolk CC, together with nine further Breckland District wards in the Watton and Attleborough areas and seven South Norfolk District wards in the Wymondham area. The transfer of these seven South Norfolk District wards from South Norfolk CC reduced the high electorate of that constituency. The transfer of the nine Breckland District wards from South West Norfolk CC, in conjunction with further change to this constituency, would reduce the high electorate of the constituency.

10. We also proposed transferring the five King's Lynn and West Norfolk Borough wards to the south-west of King's Lynn from North West Norfolk CC to South West Norfolk CC. North West Norfolk CC would therefore contain twenty-five King's Lynn and West Norfolk Borough wards and its high electorate would be reduced. As a result of the proposed changes, South West Norfolk CC would contain seventeen King's Lynn and West Norfolk Borough wards and thirteen Breckland District wards. Our provisional recommendations reduced the disparity in Norfolk from 13,921 to 2,880.

11. Our provisional recommendations were:-

	2000 electorate
Broadland CC	67,627
Great Yarmouth CC	69,086
Mid Norfolk CC	68,328
North Norfolk CC	66,811
North West Norfolk CC	69,461
Norwich North BC	68,120
Norwich South BC	68,763
South Norfolk CC	69,691
South West Norfolk CC	<u>69,349</u>
	<u>617,236</u>

Representations

12. Following publication of our provisional recommendations, we received 158 representations, of which forty-three expressed support for all or part of our proposals, thirty-five expressed support whilst objecting to other parts of our proposals and eighty objected to our proposals. The principal issues raised in the objections which were required to be resolved were contained in three counter-proposals:-

- a) the first proposed a new Broadland CC which excluded Fakenham, Drayton and Taverham and contained sixteen Broadland District wards and seven South Norfolk District wards (excluding Wymondham). Mid Norfolk CC would contain the twenty-three Breckland District wards that we had provisionally recommended and the six North Norfolk District wards referred to as the Fakenham wards (Astley, Lancaster North, Lancaster South, the Raynhams, Walsingham and Wensum). Norwich North BC would contain eleven Broadland District wards (including Drayton, Hellesdon and Taverham) and three City of Norwich wards. Norwich South BC would consist of ten City of Norwich wards and South Norfolk CC would consist of twenty-nine South Norfolk District wards (including Wymondham). Other counter-proposals were identical to all or parts of this first counter-proposal;
- b) the second proposed that Broadland CC should consist of the eighteen Broadland District wards that we had provisionally recommended and six eastern North Norfolk District wards; and that North Norfolk CC should consist of the remaining twenty-eight North Norfolk District wards (including Fakenham). Other counter-proposals, one of which suggested different names for four of the constituencies, were identical to this second counter-proposal; and
- c) the third involved an east and west division of the seats to the north of Norwich. It proposed a new Broadland CC containing eleven Broadland District wards (including Taverham) and thirteen eastern North Norfolk District wards. North Norfolk CC would contain seven western Broadland District wards and the remaining twenty-one North Norfolk District wards (including Fakenham). We noted that this counter-proposal detached and isolated the two Taverham wards from the rest of Broadland CC.

Local Inquiry and Assistant Commissioner's Report

13. We were required to hold an inquiry. Following the announcement of the inquiry a further fifteen representations were received, of which three approved of our provisional recommendations and eleven objected to our proposals. One representation made other comments.

The Fakenham wards

14. The Assistant Commissioner reported that the electors of these North Norfolk District wards preferred to remain in North Norfolk CC as recommended in two of the counter-proposals. However, the electorate of North Norfolk CC had to be reduced and he reported that the case for removing the wards had to be assessed in the light of the alternatives. He considered whether the Fakenham wards should remain in North Norfolk CC, due to their ties with Wells, Holt and Cromer. It was argued that North Norfolk District was predominately

coastal in character and if part of it had to be detached, it made sense to detach the inland part. He noted that these wards had only been in North Norfolk CC since 1983, having previously been in North West Norfolk CC.

15. In considering the links between Fakenham and Broadland CC, he noted the difficult road links between Fakenham and Aylsham. He heard evidence that there were no links between these wards and much of the rest of Broadland CC, but that there were links between Fakenham and Dereham in Mid Norfolk CC. He agreed that North Norfolk District was mostly coastal in character and that the Fakenham wards were more inland in nature and he considered it acceptable to remove them from North Norfolk CC. He also accepted that the links between these wards and Mid Norfolk CC were significantly stronger than those with Broadland CC, and that if they were to be moved, it should be to Mid Norfolk CC. However, he reported that the movement of these wards to Broadland CC would also be an acceptable solution.

The eastern North Norfolk District wards

16. As an alternative to the inclusion of the Fakenham wards, the inclusion of the six eastern North Norfolk District wards in Broadland CC was proposed in the second and third counter-proposals. It was submitted that five of the wards could not be described as coastal and that there were strong ties between the North Norfolk District ward of Hoveton and the Broadland District ward of Wroxham. The Assistant Commissioner reported that, while the River Bure constituted a boundary between the two districts at the eastern end, this was not the position west of Hoveton. The main argument against the counter-proposals was that these wards had been in North Norfolk CC for a considerable period of time and their removal would break local ties. However, whilst he accepted that there were strong ties between Hoveton and Wroxham, he did not agree that there were ties between the other five eastern North Norfolk District wards and Broadland CC. He considered that the case for moving these wards from North Norfolk CC to Broadland CC had not been made out.

The Wymondham wards

17. It was also proposed in the first counter-proposal that five of the seven South Norfolk District wards should remain in South Norfolk CC, rather than be transferred to Mid Norfolk CC. He considered that, as the electorate of South Norfolk CC had to be reduced, this would be the obvious part to detach from the constituency. He also considered that transferring the other two South Norfolk District wards in the Wymondham area (Hingham and Deopham and Wicklewood) to Broadland CC would break ties. The Assistant Commissioner heard objections against the transfer of Wymondham and that it would be wrong to remove from South Norfolk CC one of its major population centres. Although there were links between Wymondham and Attleborough, it was said that ties would be broken if Wymondham were removed from South Norfolk CC.

18. He was not persuaded that there would be serious inconvenience or damage to local ties if Wymondham were to be transferred to Mid Norfolk CC. He concluded that anyone faced with the task of reducing the electorate of South Norfolk CC would identify from a map that the Wymondham wards together with Hingham and Deopham and Wicklewood were prime candidates for transfer.

The Taverham wards

19. These Broadland District wards, together with the Broadland District wards of Drayton North and Drayton South, were in Mid Norfolk CC until 1997 when they were transferred to Norwich North BC. There was opposition at the previous local inquiry on the grounds that they were rural wards with village identities. However, the previous Assistant Commissioner had concluded that Drayton and Taverham were essentially suburban in nature and could be said to form part of the conurbation of Norwich. The Assistant Commissioner now reported opposition to the inclusion of the Taverham wards in Broadland CC. In support of the first counter-proposal, he heard that the ties of these wards were with the other Broadland District wards in Norwich North BC and that there were few ties with adjoining wards in Broadland CC. It was submitted that Taverham, like Drayton, was part of the urban fringe of Norwich, that there was continuous development between them and that the suburban character of Taverham had been enhanced since the last inquiry by the development of Thorpe Marriot. He also considered whether Taverham and Drayton should be in the same constituency, as he heard that the proposed boundary between them was not readily distinguishable.

20. An alternative submission was that Taverham electors would not find being in Broadland CC either strange or confusing. Taverham was part of a broader fringe of Norwich, including villages that would undoubtedly be in Broadland CC and that the fringe had to be divided somewhere. It was suggested that Thorpe Marriot should be contained within one constituency to retain community links and that this could be achieved by transferring Drayton as well as Taverham to Broadland CC. The Assistant Commissioner believed that there was no serious objection to the inclusion of the Taverham wards in Broadland CC and noted that they were in Broadland District. The natural boundary between Norwich and its urban fringe was between Hellesdon and Drayton, which are divided by a significant area of open space. He considered that there was significantly greater objection to the separation of Taverham from Drayton and the consequent breaking of strong ties.

21. He considered that the transfer of the Drayton wards to Broadland CC had considerable merit, provided a more satisfactory boundary, retained Taverham and Drayton in the same constituency and did not divide Thorpe Marriot. However, there were objections: it moved more electors, increased the electoral disparity, did not form part of any counter-proposal and was therefore denied public scrutiny and discussion. He noted however, that this suggestion had been raised in representations, that it had been canvassed with a witness in evidence and that the issue had been fully addressed in closing submissions. He did not consider that this suggestion should be rejected and he noted that the argument that Drayton and Taverham should remain together, albeit in Norwich North BC, was part of the first counter-proposal which had been fully debated. He considered that transferring the Drayton wards also to Broadland CC would be a satisfactory solution to the objections.

The Walpole and Walton wards

22. The Assistant Commissioner considered that this issue was self-contained, as it affected only North West Norfolk CC and South West Norfolk CC. It had not been part of any formal counter-proposals but had been discussed in evidence during the course of the inquiry. He noted that the King's Lynn and West Norfolk ward of Walpole lay to the north of the A47, which runs south-west from King's Lynn, and part of it, Walpole Cross Keys, is north of the A17, which runs almost due west from King's Lynn. The major ties of the

Walpole ward are with King's Lynn and it has few, if any, ties with South West Norfolk CC. He believed the only reason for transferring this ward to South West Norfolk CC would be to equalise electorates. He endorsed the retention of the ward in North West Norfolk CC. He was not able to recommend that the King's Lynn and West Norfolk ward of Walton be retained in North West Norfolk CC. He noted that the ward lay to the south of the Walpole ward and was significantly closer to the remainder of South West Norfolk CC and he considered that its retention in North West Norfolk CC did not justify the resulting increased disparity in the constituency electorates.

The northern South Norfolk District wards

23. The first counter-proposal placed seven northern South Norfolk District wards in Broadland CC. It was submitted that this was a credible alternative to the removal of Wymondham from South Norfolk CC and part of an acceptable overall scheme for dealing with the problems of Wymondham, Fakenham and Taverham. However, he noted that it would create a poorly-shaped Broadland CC. He considered that these wards did not have any existing connections with Broadland CC, that direct communication between them was difficult and that if the counter-proposal were adopted, Broadland CC would consist of two distinct parts almost unconnected with each other.

The first counter-proposal

24. In considering the counter-proposals, he rejected the first counter-proposal which had placed seven South Norfolk District wards in Broadland CC. He acknowledged that it provided for a more suitable location for Fakenham, but considered that it was weakened by the need to separate the Hingham and Deopham, and Wicklewood wards from Wymondham. He considered that the inclusion in Broadland CC of the Fakenham wards would be more acceptable than the inclusion of the northern South Norfolk District wards. He also did not regard the counter-proposal as an acceptable means of solving the Taverham problem.

The second counter-proposal

25. He decided that the Fakenham wards were the most appropriate to move from North Norfolk CC and rejected the second counter-proposal which retained them in this constituency. He considered that the long-standing ties of the eastern wards, except for Hoveton, were predominantly with North Walsham and North Norfolk CC and would be broken by the move, and that they were stronger than those of Fakenham with North Norfolk CC.

Other counter-proposals

26. He rejected the third counter-proposal which detached the Taverham wards from the rest of Broadland CC and divided North Norfolk CC between two districts. A further counter-proposal altering the three constituencies around Norwich was not advanced at the inquiry and in the absence of any investigation of its implications, the Assistant Commissioner rejected it. He also rejected the various alternative names that were proposed, considering there was no adequate reason to change existing names, and that Broadland was an entirely appropriate name for the new constituency.

Revised recommendations

27. We agreed with the Assistant Commissioner's recommendations. We noted that he had heard some firmly argued evidence and had visited the areas. We also noted that he had considered the representation that mentioned the possibility of moving Drayton into Broadland CC. We accepted that his recommendations would better reflect local ties.

28. We accordingly published revised recommendations for the four constituencies of Broadland CC, North West Norfolk CC, Norwich North BC and South West Norfolk CC, and confirmed our provisional recommendations as final for the other five constituencies:-

	2000 electorate
Broadland CC	71,241
Great Yarmouth CC	69,086
Mid Norfolk CC	68,328
North Norfolk CC	66,811
North West Norfolk CC	71,144
Norwich North BC	64,506
Norwich South BC	68,763
South Norfolk CC	69,691
South West Norfolk CC	<u>67,666</u>
	<u><u>617,236</u></u>

Further Representations

29. Following publication of our revised recommendations we received eight representations, of which two approved of all or part of our revised recommendations, one approved of parts whilst objecting to other parts and five objected.

30. One representation objected to the inclusion of the Broadland District wards of Drayton North and Drayton South in Broadland CC rather than in Norwich North BC, preferring our provisional recommendations and the inclusion of the two wards in Norwich North BC. It was said this would ensure that the electorate of Norwich North BC would be nearer the electoral quota and county average. Whilst the representation accepted the strong arguments that the Broadland District wards of Taverham North and Taverham South should be included in the same constituency with the Drayton wards, it was submitted that these arguments related to their inclusion together in their current constituency (Norwich North BC), rather than in Broadland CC.

31. Two representations objected to the inclusion of the six North Norfolk District Fakenham wards in Broadland CC rather than in North Norfolk CC. One representation contended that these wards should be retained in North Norfolk CC at the expense of the six eastern North Norfolk District wards of Hoveton, Scottow, St Benet, Stalham and Sutton, Waterside and Waxham. Failing this, it was suggested that, as an alternative, the Fakenham wards should be incorporated within Mid Norfolk CC.

32. Three representations objected to the inclusion of the King's Lynn and West Norfolk Borough ward of Walton in South West Norfolk CC, rather than in North West Norfolk CC. All three representations submitted that the local ties of the ward were with the Walpole ward

and the town of King's Lynn in North West Norfolk CC and that they had no ties with South West Norfolk CC.

Recommendation

33. We noted that, under the revised recommendations, Broadland CC with 71,241 electors was closer to the electoral quota than under the provisional recommendations, and that the 64,506 electorate of Norwich North BC was further from the electoral quota. We also noted that there was acceptance that the four wards of Drayton North, Drayton South, Taverham North and Taverham South should be in the same constituency. However, if the four wards were transferred from Broadland CC to Norwich North BC, the electorates of the constituencies would be 59,634 and 76,113 respectively, with a disparity of 16,479.

34. We also noted that the Assistant Commissioner had reported that, ideally, Fakenham should remain in North Norfolk CC but, if it had to move, it should be moved to Mid Norfolk CC rather than to Broadland CC. However, after considering all the proposals before him, he had concluded that our proposals for Fakenham were the best for the county overall.

35. We noted the support for, and the very limited number of objections to, our revised recommendations. All the issues raised in the representations had been fully discussed at the inquiry and had been dealt with by the Assistant Commissioner in his report. We considered that no new compelling evidence had been submitted to justify modification of the revised recommendations.

36. We were satisfied that our revised recommendations did not need to be modified. We therefore recommend the adoption of the following constituencies containing the wards as listed in Appendix C:-

	2000 electorate
Broadland CC	71,241
Great Yarmouth CC	69,086
Mid Norfolk CC	68,328
North Norfolk CC	66,811
North West Norfolk CC	71,144
Norwich North BC	64,506
Norwich South BC	68,763
South Norfolk CC	69,691
South West Norfolk CC	<hr/> 67,666 <hr/>
	<hr/> <hr/> 617,236

NORTHAMPTONSHIRE

The Number of Electors

1. There are currently six constituencies in the County of Northamptonshire:-

	2000 electorate
Corby CC	72,053
Daventry CC	85,568
Kettering CC	78,133
Northampton North BC	72,829
Northampton South BC	83,024
Wellingborough CC	<u>77,025</u>
	<u>468,632</u>

The Number of Constituencies

2. Northamptonshire had a 2000 parliamentary electorate of 468,632 which gave a theoretical entitlement to 6.70 constituencies. If six constituencies were retained, the average constituency electorate would be 78,105, which is 8,170 more than the electoral quota, whereas with seven constituencies, the county average would be 66,947, which is 2,988 less than the electoral quota. We therefore provisionally decided to allocate an extra, seventh, constituency. The electorates of the six existing constituencies ranged from 72,053 in Corby CC to 85,568 (the second largest electorate in England) in Daventry CC, a disparity of 13,515.

Provisional Recommendations

3. As a result of changes to ward boundaries, eight of the new wards in the county are partly in one constituency and partly in another. Our provisional recommendations realigned the constituency boundaries with the new ward boundaries. The allocation of an additional constituency meant that we would have to recommend major changes to some of the existing constituencies. However, we tried to keep these changes to a minimum. The geographical shape of the county and the distribution of the electorate made it difficult to create constituencies which did not divide some districts between constituencies and break local ties.

4. We proposed that Corby CC should remain unchanged, and continue to include the whole of the Borough of Corby and a large part of the District of East Northamptonshire. We provisionally recommended that Kettering CC should become coterminous with the Borough of Kettering and that its electorate should be reduced by transferring the seven easternmost Daventry District wards to Daventry CC.

5. We proposed that five wards from South Northamptonshire District which lay to the west of the Borough of Northampton, including the wards of Cote and Downs, and the three Borough of Wellingborough wards of Earls Barton, North and West should be transferred to a revised Daventry CC which included the whole of the District of Daventry. Wellingborough CC would remain unchanged, apart from the transfer of the three wards.

6. We proposed that the remaining twenty-six South Northamptonshire District wards should be joined with three wards from the southern edge of the Borough of Northampton to create a new South Northamptonshire CC. We also proposed that the Northampton Borough wards of Ecton Brook and Lumbertubs should be transferred from Northampton North BC to Northampton South BC.

7. As a result of our recommendations, Corby CC would be unaltered, Kettering CC would become coterminous with the Borough of the same name, and the District of Daventry would no longer be divided between constituencies. However, the Borough of Northampton would be divided between three constituencies. We considered that its electorate of 144,033 was too large to be divided between two constituencies. If Northampton Borough were wholly contained within two constituencies, the electorates of those two constituencies would be above the county average, others within the county would consequently have electorates below the county average and there would be too wide a disparity in the electorates. Under our proposals, the electorates of all seven constituencies would be within 5,106 of the county average and the disparity would be reduced to 9,801.

8. Our provisional recommendations were:-

	2000 electorate
Corby CC	72,053
Daventry CC	68,989
Kettering CC	62,813
Northampton North BC	64,093
Northampton South BC	62,252
South Northamptonshire CC	68,773
Wellingborough CC	<hr/> 69,659
	<hr/> 468,632

Representations

9. Following publication of our provisional recommendations we received a total of 154 representations which included four counter-proposals. The majority of the representations opposed parts of our recommendations, though many approved of other parts, and no one argued against the allocation of an additional, seventh, constituency. The main issues, all of which were included in one or more of the counter-proposals, were:-

- a) the division of Northampton Borough into three parts, each joined to rural areas from surrounding districts to create three constituencies;
- b) the inclusion of the Lumbertubs ward of Northampton Borough in Northampton South BC instead of in Northampton North BC;
- c) the continued inclusion of the Irthlingborough ward of East Northamptonshire District in Corby CC instead of in Wellingborough CC, with the consequent move of three southern wards of the Borough of Wellingborough to a counter-proposed Daventry and Brixworth constituency;

- d) the inclusion of the Earls Barton, North and West wards of the Borough of Wellingborough in Daventry CC; and
- e) the inclusion of the Cote and Downs wards of South Northamptonshire District in Daventry CC.

Local Inquiry and Assistant Commissioner's Report

10. We were required to hold an inquiry. Following the announcement of the inquiry a further 407 representations were received, most of which were in response to the counter-proposals. A further thirty-two representations were received after the inquiry had closed.

The Borough of Northampton

11. The Assistant Commissioner reported that one counter-proposal divided Northampton Borough into three parts and that each part was joined with rural areas from neighbouring districts. One constituency was centred on Northampton Borough and reached to the county boundary in the north with another constituency, also containing part of Northampton Borough, reaching to the county boundary in the south. It included proposals that the Earls Barton and West wards of the Borough of Wellingborough should be in a Northampton East constituency and that the North ward of the Borough of Wellingborough should be retained in Wellingborough CC.

12. He reported that the counter-proposal had some merit. The disparity in the electorates was the same as in our proposals. No constituency contained more than parts of two districts, whereas our proposed Daventry CC contained parts of three districts. However, major disruption, confusion and breaking of local ties would be caused, particularly in Northampton, and there was political but no public support for it. He concluded that the disadvantages outweighed the advantages and rejected the counter-proposal. However, in his consideration of the western wards of the Borough of Wellingborough, he recommended that the North ward be retained in Wellingborough CC.

The Lumbertubs ward

13. The Assistant Commissioner reported that there was evidence of ties between the Northampton Borough wards of Lumbertubs and Thorplands in Northampton North BC and of ties between the Spencer, New Duston and Old Duston wards in Northampton South BC. There was local support for the exchange of the Lumbertubs and Spencer wards between the two constituencies. He recommended that the two wards should be transferred as counter-proposed.

The Irthlingborough ward

14. The Assistant Commissioner reported that there was much debate at the inquiry about the Irthlingborough ward of East Northamptonshire District and the counter-proposal to transfer it to Wellingborough CC with the consequent move of the Great Doddington and Wilby, South and Wollaston wards of the Borough of Wellingborough to a Daventry and Brixworth constituency. After considering the evidence, the many objections to the transfer of Great Doddington, and having inspected the areas, he rejected these moves. He concluded that Irthlingborough had been in Corby CC since 1983, it had never been part of the Borough

of Wellingborough, its transfer would break local ties and cause inconveniences, and there was an overwhelming number of objections from the Great Doddington area.

The Earls Barton, North and West wards

15. The Assistant Commissioner heard evidence of local ties between the Earls Barton, North and West wards of the Borough of Wellingborough and Wellingborough town but he reported that the creation of a seventh constituency for the county, which everyone accepted and he supported, could not be achieved without change. He recommended that the Earls Barton and West wards should be in Daventry CC, as we had proposed. Their retention in Wellingborough CC would have created a significant electoral disparity between the two constituencies. However, he concluded that the North ward looked less to other rural wards because of its position between Kettering and Wellingborough and had a small enough electorate to be retained in Wellingborough CC without causing a significant effect on the electorate of the two constituencies.

The Cote and Downs wards

16. The Assistant Commissioner reported a lack of widespread support for the counter-proposal that the South Northamptonshire District wards of Cote and Downs should be included in South Northamptonshire CC and he rejected it.

Revised Recommendations

17. We agreed with all of the Assistant Commissioner's recommendations and, accordingly, published the following revised recommendations:-

	2000 electorate
Corby CC	72,053
Daventry CC	67,256
Kettering CC	62,813
Northampton North BC	64,212
Northampton South BC	62,133
South Northamptonshire CC	68,773
Wellingborough CC	<u>71,392</u>
	<u>468,632</u>

Further Representations

18. Following publication of our revised recommendations we received 117 representations (including a petition containing 2,144 names). Ten representations approved of the recommendations and three supported part of them but objected to other parts. One representation supported two of the constituencies but made a completely new counter-proposal for the other five, while 103 representations, including the petition, objected to the recommendations. Most of the representations repeated objections to the transfer of the Earls Barton and West wards from Wellingborough CC to Daventry CC, which had already been considered. The representations contained no new significant evidence.

19. The only new issue was from a resident of another county who made a new counter-proposal for Northamptonshire. This counter-proposal did not comment specifically on the revised recommendations and, as others had not had the opportunity to analyse and debate it, we decided to reject it.

Recommendation

20. We were satisfied that our revised recommendations did not need to be modified. We therefore recommend the adoption of the following constituencies containing the wards as listed in Appendix C:-

	2000 electorate
Corby CC	72,053
Daventry CC	67,256
Kettering CC	62,813
Northampton North BC	64,212
Northampton South BC	62,133
South Northamptonshire CC	68,773
Wellingborough CC	<u>71,392</u>
	<u>468,632</u>

NORTH SOMERSET

The Number of Electors

1. There are currently two constituencies in the Unitary Authority of the County of North Somerset:-

	2000 electorate
Weston-Super-Mare CC	73,952
Woodspring CC	<u>71,127</u>
	<u><u>145,079</u></u>

The Number of Constituencies

2. Following the Avon (Structural Change) Order 1995, the County of North Somerset became one of four unitary authorities created out of the former County of Avon, which was abolished on 31 March 1996. We provisionally considered reviewing each unitary authority separately. North Somerset had a 2000 parliamentary electorate of 145,079 which gave a theoretical entitlement to 2.07 constituencies. With two constituencies, the average electorate in the county would be 72,540, which is 2,605 above the electoral quota. We decided, therefore, to recommend that North Somerset should continue to be allocated two constituencies.

Provisional Recommendations

3. As a result of changes to the ward boundaries, one of the new wards in North Somerset is partly in one constituency and partly in another.

4. We decided to keep change to a minimum and our provisional recommendations retained the constituencies wholly within the boundary of the unitary authority, and realigned the constituency boundaries with the new ward boundaries. This would result in two constituencies within 1,232 of the county average and a disparity of 2,463, compared to the existing disparity of 2,825. We decided that Woodspring CC should be renamed North Somerset CC, because the existing name related to the former district, which had been abolished in 1996.

5. Our provisional recommendations were:-

	2000 electorate
North Somerset CC	71,308
Weston-Super-Mare CC	<u>73,771</u>
	<u><u>145,079</u></u>

Representations

6. Following publication of our provisional recommendations, we received twenty-six representations. Of these, twenty-five supported our proposals. The one objection concerned the proposed name of North Somerset CC. We did not consider that this representation was

sufficient to warrant the holding of a local inquiry and decided not to use our discretion to hold one.

Recommendation

7. We recommend the adoption of the following constituencies containing the wards as listed in Appendix C:-

	2000 electorate
North Somerset CC	71,308
Weston-Super-Mare CC	<u>73,771</u>
	<u><u>145,079</u></u>

NORTHUMBERLAND

The Number of Electors

1. There are currently four constituencies in the County of Northumberland:-

	2000 electorate
Berwick-upon-Tweed CC	57,117
Blyth Valley BC	62,657
Hexham CC	60,120
Wansbeck CC	<u>63,329</u>
	<u>243,223</u>

The Number of Constituencies

2. Northumberland had a 2000 parliamentary electorate of 243,223, which gave a theoretical entitlement to 3.48 constituencies. With four constituencies retained, the average constituency electorate in the county would be 60,806, which is 9,129 less than the electoral quota. We noted that the special geographical considerations, which had led to the allocation of a fourth constituency at the third general review, still pertained. The majority of the electorate continued to be concentrated in the south-east corner of the county, with the north and west being sparsely populated. We also noted that the theoretical entitlement of the county had continued to increase since the fourth general review.

3. We decided, therefore, to recommend that the county should continue to be allocated four constituencies. The electorates of the four existing constituencies ranged from 57,117 in Berwick-upon-Tweed CC to 63,329 in Wansbeck CC, a disparity of 6,212.

Provisional Recommendations

4. As a result of changes to the district ward boundaries, one of the new wards in the county was partly in one constituency and partly in another. Our provisional recommendations realigned the constituency boundary with the new ward boundary. We decided to keep change to a minimum and recommended no change to Blyth Valley BC and Wansbeck CC. We proposed that the whole of the divided Castle Morpeth Borough ward of Hartburn be included in Berwick-upon-Tweed CC. Only Castle Morpeth Borough would be divided between constituencies. Under our proposals, the electorates of the four constituencies would be within 3,235 of the county average and the disparity would be reduced from 6,212 to 5,758.

5. Our provisional recommendations were:-

	2000 electorate
Berwick-upon-Tweed CC	57,571
Blyth Valley BC	62,657
Hexham CC	59,666
Wansbeck CC	<u>63,329</u>
	<u>243,223</u>

Representations

6. Following publication of our provisional recommendations, we received eleven representations, of which five supported our proposals. The main issue raised was whether the Hebron, Hepscott and Mitford ward should be included in Berwick-upon-Tweed CC or in Wansbeck CC.

Local Inquiry and Assistant Commissioner's Report

7. We were required to hold an inquiry. Following the announcement of the inquiry a further six representations were received, four of which were in support of our provisional recommendations. The Assistant Commissioner reported that there was universal agreement that Northumberland should continue to be allocated four constituencies and that there had been acceptance of our proposal to incorporate the divided Hartburn ward in Berwick-upon-Tweed CC.

Berwick-upon-Tweed CC and Wansbeck CC

8. The Assistant Commissioner rejected the counter-proposal to include the Castle Morpeth Borough ward of Hebron, Hepscott and Mitford in Berwick-upon-Tweed CC. It had been argued that the inclusion of the ward would reduce the disparity between the electorates of the four constituencies and recognise the more rural nature of the ward. However, he considered that to include the ward would sever ties between the ward and the town of Morpeth and increase the geographical size of the already large Berwick-upon-Tweed CC.

9. The Assistant Commissioner recommended that there should be no alterations to the boundaries of the four provisionally recommended constituencies.

Constituency names

10. The Assistant Commissioner reported that there had been objections to the names of Berwick-upon-Tweed CC, Hexham CC and Wansbeck CC. He considered that there was little support for the alternative names for Hexham CC and Wansbeck CC and rejected the alternatives. However, he considered that a case had been made for a change to the name of Berwick-upon-Tweed CC. He noted that Berwick-upon-Tweed CC was an historic constituency name and rejected the alternative of North Northumberland CC, but recommended that we consider naming the constituency Berwick-upon-Tweed and Mid Northumberland CC.

11. We considered that the name recommended by the Assistant Commissioner was unwieldy. We also noted that it was our policy not to alter the name of an existing constituency unless a change to the constituency boundaries made the name inappropriate. We considered that there had not been sufficient change to the constituency which would require us to change the name and we therefore decided not to adopt the Assistant Commissioner's recommendation.

Recommendation

12. We were satisfied that our provisional recommendations did not need to be revised. We therefore recommend the following constituencies containing the wards listed in Appendix C:-

	2000 electorate
Berwick-upon-Tweed CC	57,571
Blyth Valley BC	62,657
Hexham CC	59,666
Wansbeck CC	<u>63,329</u>
	<u><u>243,223</u></u>

NORTH YORKSHIRE

The Number of Electors

1. There are currently four whole constituencies and parts of three others in the County of North Yorkshire. The electoral figures set out below for the three parts of constituencies relate only to those electors who are within the County of North Yorkshire:-

	2000 electorate
Harrogate and Knaresborough BC	65,743
Richmond (Yorks) CC	66,752
Ryedale CC (part)	49,110
Scarborough and Whitby CC	76,572
Selby CC (part)	58,614
Skipton and Ripon CC	74,192
Vale of York CC (part)	<u>47,760</u>
	<u>438,743</u>

The Number of Constituencies

2. Following the North Yorkshire (District of York) (Structural and Boundary Changes) Order 1995, the former City of York was enlarged, acquired unitary authority status and ceased to form part of the County of North Yorkshire. North Yorkshire had a 2000 parliamentary electorate of 438,743, which gave a theoretical entitlement to 6.27 constituencies. The County and City of York had a 2000 parliamentary electorate of 142,773, which gave a theoretical entitlement to 2.04 constituencies. With six constituencies allocated the average constituency electorate in North Yorkshire would be 73,124, which is 3,189 above the electoral quota, and the average constituency electorate of the County and City of York, with two constituencies, would be 71,387, which is only 1,452 above the electoral quota. After careful consideration, we provisionally decided to review North Yorkshire and the County and City of York separately and to allocate six constituencies to North Yorkshire.

Provisional Recommendations

3. The creation of two constituencies wholly contained within the City of York meant that the electorates of the surrounding constituencies would be considerably reduced by the loss of the wards taken from them to become part of the City of York constituencies. The need to reduce the disparities which this created in the North Yorkshire constituencies led us to distribute the wards of the former Vale of York CC remaining in North Yorkshire between the five county constituencies which had bordered it, which in turn led to the abolition of the Vale of York constituency. We further noted that five of the new wards in Harrogate Borough were divided between constituencies. Accordingly, we recommend changes to five of the six constituencies to reduce the disparity between the constituencies with the highest and lowest electorates. Our provisional recommendations also realigned the constituency boundaries with the new ward boundaries.

4. We proposed that the four Harrogate Borough wards of Marston Moor, Ouseburn, Spofforth with Lower Wharfedale and Ribston should be transferred to Selby CC, which would no longer contain any City of York wards. We also proposed that the whole of the

divided Harrogate Borough ward of Saltergate and the Harrogate Borough wards of Claro and Killinghall should be transferred to Harrogate and Knaresborough BC, so as to increase its electorate. As a result of including these rural wards in Harrogate and Knaresborough BC, we proposed that the constituency be designated as a county constituency. We further proposed that the three Harrogate Borough wards of Boroughbridge, Newby and Wathvale should be included in Skipton and Ripon CC.

5. We proposed that the Hambleton District wards of Bedale, Crakehall, Leeming and Tanfield should be transferred to Richmond (Yorks) CC so as to increase its electorate. We also proposed that the twelve wards in the south of Hambleton District should be included in Ryedale CC, which would no longer contain any City of York wards, and that there would be no change to Scarborough and Whitby CC.

6. We noted that our proposals involved radical change to the existing pattern of constituencies in North Yorkshire, but we considered that this was inevitable if we were to recognise the new county boundary following the change in the status of the County and City of York. Our proposals reduced the disparity between the North Yorkshire constituencies with the highest and lowest electorates from 10,829 to 8,863, and all six constituencies have electorates that would be within 5,415 of the county average.

7. Our provisional recommendations were:-

	2000 electorate
Harrogate and Knaresborough CC	71,742
Richmond (Yorks) CC	74,434
Ryedale CC	73,534
Scarborough and Whitby CC	76,572
Selby CC	67,709
Skipton and Ripon CC	<u>74,752</u>
	<u>438,743</u>

Representations

8. Following publication of our provisional recommendations we received 115 representations, of which ten supported all or parts of our proposals, ten supported parts of them, whilst objecting to other parts, one made no comment and ninety-four objected to all or part of them. The objections included one petition containing a total of 475 signatures.

9. A number of the initial objections were not supported or pursued further. At the inquiry those that remained in issue comprised four counter-proposals which affected the composition of five of the six constituencies and the names of the proposed Selby and Ryedale constituencies. Of the counter-proposals:-

- a) the first raised the issue whether North Yorkshire and York should be treated as separate review areas, or whether it was preferable to include the Harrogate Borough wards of Marston Moor, Ouseburn, Ribston and Spofforth with Lower Wharfedale in Harrogate and Knaresborough CC rather than in Selby CC as we had proposed, and place the City of York wards of Bishopthorpe, Fulford, Heslington and Wheldrake in Selby CC;

- b) the second was that the Harrogate Borough ward of Claro should be included in Selby CC and it was also proposed that in exchange the Harrogate Borough ward of Spofforth with Lower Wharfedale should be included in Skipton and Ripon CC;
- c) the third was that the Harrogate Borough ward of Boroughbridge should be included in Harrogate and Knaresborough CC; and
- d) the fourth was that the Scarborough Borough wards of Filey and Hertford should be included in Scarborough and Whitby CC and the Scarborough Borough wards of Danby, Derwent Valley and Esk Valley should be included in Ryedale CC.

Local Inquiry and Assistant Commissioner's Report

10. We were required to hold an inquiry. We decided that we would hold a single inquiry at which our provisional recommendations for North Yorkshire and York could be considered, thereby allowing for any cross-border issues to be dealt with at the same time. Following the announcement of the inquiry, a further sixteen representations were received, of which four supported all or parts of our proposals and twelve opposed all or parts of them.

Treating North Yorkshire and York as one review area

11. The Assistant Commissioner reported that the counter-proposal to include City of York wards in Selby CC, thereby effectively treating North Yorkshire and York as one review area, was based on the argument that these wards had closer ties with Selby CC than did the four wards from Harrogate Borough, as we had provisionally recommended. However, he considered that wards from the City of York should be part of a City of York constituency, that the Harrogate Borough wards should be part of Selby CC, and that Rule 7, which concerns the respecting of local ties, did not give us the discretion to disregard Rule 4, which concerns the crossing of county boundaries. He therefore rejected this counter-proposal which suggested crossing the county boundary between York and North Yorkshire.

12. In rejecting the part of the counter-proposal that objected to the inclusion of the four Harrogate Borough wards in Selby CC, he considered that, as Selby District was not large enough to form a constituency on its own, the Harrogate Borough wards were the only wards that could be included in Selby CC. He also considered that the exclusion of the Harrogate Borough ward of Spofforth with Lower Wharfedale alone from Selby CC, which was also proposed, would reduce the electorate of the smallest constituency in the county still further and would unnecessarily increase the disparity between the smallest and largest constituencies. He agreed with our provisional recommendation and rejected these elements of the counter-proposals.

The Harrogate Borough ward of Claro

13. With regard to the evidence presented at the inquiry, the Assistant Commissioner considered that, although the Harrogate Borough ward of Claro was rural in nature, it had strong ties with the town of Harrogate and had been in a Harrogate constituency until 1997 when it was included in the newly formed Vale of York CC. As Vale of York CC was to disappear, he could see no reason why the Claro ward should not again form part of

Harrogate and Knaresborough CC. He therefore rejected this element of the counter-proposals.

The Harrogate Borough ward of Boroughbridge

14. He reported that, with the proposed abolition of the current Vale of York CC, the Harrogate Borough ward of Boroughbridge would need to be included in another constituency. He noted that Skipton and Ripon CC was a very large constituency geographically and that it did not need the additional burden of an above-average electorate. He therefore accepted the suggestion expressed in a number of objections that the Boroughbridge ward should be included in Harrogate and Knaresborough CC.

The Scarborough Borough wards of Danby, Derwent Valley, Esk Valley, Filey and Hertford

15. He reported that moving the Scarborough Borough wards of Filey and Hertford into Scarborough and Whitby CC and the wards of Danby, Derwent Valley and Esk Valley into Ryedale CC, would affect a total of 18,415 electors. Although the Filey and Hertford wards had close ties with the town of Scarborough, he was unconvinced that those ties were any greater than those that the Danby, Derwent Valley and Esk Valley wards had with the towns of Scarborough and Whitby. He considered that there was no justification for such disruption to the electors involved and rejected this element of the counter-proposals.

Names of the proposed constituencies

16. The Assistant Commissioner recommended that Selby CC should be renamed Selby and Ainsty CC to reflect the inclusion of Harrogate Borough wards in the revised Selby constituency.

17. He reported that, with the alterations to the existing Ryedale CC, it was considered that a new name should be given to the constituency. It was suggested that the name should be Thirsk and Malton CC, but that consideration should also be given to the inclusion of Filey. He accepted this proposal and accordingly recommended that the constituency should be renamed Thirsk, Malton and Filey CC.

Revised Recommendations

18. We considered the Assistant Commissioner's report, the transcript of the inquiry and the written representations and we reviewed the evidence. We agreed with his findings that the provisional recommendations for four of the six constituencies should be revised. We noted the support expressed for the transfer of the Harrogate Borough ward of Boroughbridge to Harrogate and Knaresborough CC and accepted his recommendation for change. We also accepted his recommendation for the revised name for the Selby constituency. However, we considered that the support for the name proposed by the Assistant Commissioner, for the Ryedale constituency, was not as strong as he had suggested. We decided that the revised name should be Thirsk and Malton CC and accordingly published the following revised recommendations:-

	2000 electorate
Harrogate and Knaresborough CC	73,962
Richmond (Yorks) CC	74,434
Scarborough and Whitby CC	76,572
Selby and Ainsty CC	67,709
Skipton and Ripon CC	72,532
Thirsk and Malton CC	<u>73,534</u>
	<u>438,743</u>

Further Representations

19. Following publication of our revised recommendations we received twenty representations, of which ten supported our proposals. Of the ten representations objecting to our revised recommendations, two objected to the inclusion of the Harrogate Borough ward of Killinghall in Harrogate and Knaresborough CC and five objected to the inclusion of the four Harrogate Borough wards in Selby and Ainsty CC. These representations repeated objections which had either not been supported or pursued at the inquiry or had already been considered by the Assistant Commissioner and contained no significant new evidence. We therefore saw no reason to modify our recommendations. Two representations suggested alternative names for the Thirsk and Malton constituency, but we considered that there was no evidence to suggest that any alternative name would be more supported than Thirsk and Malton CC.

20. One of the objections called for a second local inquiry to examine fully the composition of the proposed Selby and Ainsty CC. It also argued that Rule 6 allowed us to depart from Rules 4 and 5. However, we did not consider that special geographical considerations applied to North Yorkshire. We noted that there was no direct road link between Selby District and the four Harrogate Borough wards, but we did not consider that this rendered the wards inaccessible from the rest of the constituency and did not consider that there was sufficient reason to hold a further inquiry.

21. It was also submitted that a review of North Yorkshire be delayed to await the outcome should there be a referendum on regional government in Yorkshire and the Humber. We considered that the review could not be delayed should there be a referendum as we were statutorily required to take account of the local government boundaries that were in operation on 12 April 2005 (the tenth anniversary of the submission of our last report); any changes to local government boundaries resulting from the creation of Regional Assemblies would not come into effect before that date. In the event, no referendum was held and consequently no regional assembly for Yorkshire and the Humber was established.

Recommendation

22. We were satisfied that our revised recommendations did not need to be modified. We therefore recommend the adoption of the following constituencies containing the wards as listed in Appendix C:-

2000 electorate

Harrogate and Knaresborough CC	73,962
Richmond (Yorks) CC	74,434
Scarborough and Whitby CC	76,572
Selby and Ainsty CC	67,709
Skipton and Ripon CC	72,532
Thirsk and Malton CC	73,534
	<hr/>
	<hr/>
	438,743

NOTTINGHAM

The Number of Electors

1. There are currently three constituencies in the City of Nottingham:-

	2000 electorate
Nottingham East BC	65,712
Nottingham North BC	65,405
Nottingham South BC	<u>73,595</u>
	<u>204,712</u>

The Number of Constituencies

2. Following The Nottinghamshire (City of Nottingham) (Structural Changes) Order 1996, the City of Nottingham ceased to form part of the County of Nottinghamshire and became a new unitary authority. The remaining seven districts in the county formed the County of Nottinghamshire.

3. Nottingham had a 2000 parliamentary electorate of 204,712, which gave a theoretical entitlement to 2.93 constituencies. With three constituencies, the average constituency electorate in the county would be 68,237, which is 1,698 less than the electoral quota. We therefore provisionally decided to treat Nottingham separately from Nottinghamshire and to retain an allocation of three constituencies. The electorates of the three existing constituencies ranged from 65,405 in Nottingham North BC to 73,595 in Nottingham South BC, a disparity of 8,190.

Provisional Recommendations

4. As a result of changes to the ward boundaries, six of the new wards in Nottingham are partly in one constituency and partly in another. Our provisional recommendations realigned the constituency boundaries with the new ward boundaries, without recommending any other change. This included placing the whole of the divided wards of Bestwood and Arboretum in Nottingham North BC and Nottingham East BC, respectively. We further recognised that with twenty wards to be divided between three constituencies, it was likely that there would be some disparity between the electorates of the three constituencies. Our provisional recommendations slightly increased the disparity from 8,190 to 8,227.

5. Our provisional recommendations were:-

	2000 electorate
Nottingham East BC	64,173
Nottingham North BC	68,139
Nottingham South BC	<u>72,400</u>
	<u>204,712</u>

Representations

6. Following publication of our provisional recommendations, we received 138 representations, the majority of which expressed support for all or part of our proposals. Five expressed support whilst objecting to other parts of our proposals and eleven objected to our proposals. There was general agreement with the allocation of three whole constituencies to the city. The only issues raised in the representations were:-

- a) a counter-proposal affecting three wards and all three constituencies, which placed the Bestwood ward in Nottingham East BC and the Arboretum ward in Nottingham South BC. It also moved the Wollaton West ward from Nottingham South BC to Nottingham North BC; and
- b) whether the Bridge ward should be included in Nottingham South BC or Nottingham East BC.

Local Inquiry and Assistant Commissioner's Report

7. We were required to hold an inquiry, which included an evening session. Following the announcement of the inquiry a further seventy-five representations were received. The majority of these objected to the counter-proposal, whilst a smaller number supported it. The counter-proposal was the main issue discussed at the inquiry.

The counter-proposal

8. The Assistant Commissioner reported that the supporters of the counter-proposal stated that it would reduce the disparity from 8,227 to 667, result in an equal allocation of councillors between constituencies, and would enhance the democratic process. Evidence was submitted relating to proposed building developments and population increases in the city centre and in Nottingham South BC which, it was submitted, would worsen the disparity in the provisional recommendations if not addressed. It was further argued that the three affected wards did not have strong ties with the other wards in the provisionally recommended constituencies and that, whilst there was a greater movement of electors than under our provisional recommendations, the counter-proposal offered long-term stability in relation to the number of electors across constituencies.

9. He reported that the reviewing of a constituency boundary was not just a numerical exercise, but an undertaking that sought to strike a balance between several factors. He reported that the Apsley, Basford, Bestwood, Bilborough, Bulwell and Bulwell Forest wards of Nottingham North BC formed one homogenous area, and that the Bestwood ward had strong local ties with the Bulwell ward. He also noted that the electorate of Nottingham North BC was within 100 of the county average under our provisional recommendations.

10. He considered that, with respect to Nottingham South BC, Wollaton Park served to unite, rather than divide the two wards of Wollaton West and Wollaton East and Lenton Abbey. He also considered that there were no community ties between the wards of Wollaton West and Bilborough in Nottingham North BC, with the railway line forming a readily identifiable boundary.

11. The Assistant Commissioner reported that he was unable to take into account electoral growth or decline since the enumeration date as changes in the way data had been compiled made comparison unreliable. He also considered trends and projections based on planned building developments to be uncertain and speculative. He concluded that our provisional recommendations were to be preferred to the counter-proposal in that they sought to preserve existing local ties and resulted in the least disruption to electorates. It was his view that the improvement to the disparity under the counter-proposal could not be justified by the disruption to 35,888 electors and the breaking of local ties across all three constituencies. He accordingly rejected the counter-proposal.

The Bridge ward

12. The Assistant Commissioner reported that a submission sought to reduce the electoral disparity between the three constituencies from 8,227 to 6,489 by moving the Bridge ward from Nottingham South BC to Nottingham East BC. No change was proposed to Nottingham North BC. Those supporting the proposal submitted that it would unify the city centre and restore the ward to the constituency of which it was a part prior to 1983. Furthermore, it was said that a boundary formed by Maid Marion Way and the Nottingham Canal, together with the River Trent, would improve the boundaries between Nottingham East BC and Nottingham South BC. It was also submitted that the electorate of Nottingham South BC should be reduced to take account of forecast increases in the electorate.

13. He reported that objectors to the proposal submitted that the transfer of Bridge ward would create unsatisfactory shapes for Nottingham East BC and Nottingham South BC and would isolate the Clifton North and Clifton South wards from the remainder of Nottingham South BC.

14. He considered that the arguments were finely balanced. However, he could not take account of the evidence put forward for electoral growth based on population growth and projected housing developments. He also reported that the proposed change resulted in a minimal improvement to the disparity of only 1,738, for a greater disruption to the electorate than would be the case under our provisional recommendations. He accordingly rejected the proposed change.

Recommendation

15. We agreed with the Assistant Commissioner's findings that the changes proposed by the objectors would be too disruptive to the existing community links and the electorate. We also noted that there had been a significant level of support for our provisional recommendations. We decided to accept the Assistant Commissioner's recommendation and, accordingly, recommend the adoption of the following constituencies containing the wards listed in Appendix C:-

	2000 electorate
Nottingham East BC	64,173
Nottingham North BC	68,139
Nottingham South BC	<hr/> 72,400 <hr/>
	204,712

NOTTINGHAMSHIRE

The Number of Electors

1. There are currently eight constituencies in the County of Nottinghamshire:-

	2000 electorate
Ashfield CC	73,422
Bassetlaw CC	68,698
Broxtowe CC	74,325
Gedling CC	69,095
Mansfield CC	67,974
Newark CC	70,697
Rushcliffe CC	81,474
Sherwood CC	<u>75,526</u>
	<u>581,211</u>

The Number of Constituencies

2. Following The Nottinghamshire (City of Nottingham) (Structural Changes) Order 1996, the City of Nottingham ceased to form part of the County of Nottinghamshire and became a new unitary authority. The remaining seven districts in the county formed the County of Nottinghamshire.

3. Nottinghamshire had a 2000 parliamentary electorate of 581,211 which gave a theoretical entitlement to 8.31 constituencies. With eight constituencies, the average constituency electorate in the county would be 72,651, which is 2,716 more than the electoral quota. Having decided that Nottingham should be treated separately from Nottinghamshire, we decided to retain eight constituencies in the county. The electorates of the eight existing constituencies ranged from 67,974 in Mansfield CC to 81,474 in Rushcliffe CC, a disparity of 13,500.

Provisional Recommendations

4. As a result of changes to the district ward boundaries, nine of the new wards in the county are partly in one constituency and partly in another. Our provisional recommendations realigned the constituency boundaries with the new ward boundaries.

5. In forming our proposals we recognised that a certain degree of change was necessary across several constituencies. However, we tried to keep these changes to a minimum. In order to reduce the existing disparity and the high electorate in Rushcliffe CC, we proposed that the five north-eastern wards of Rushcliffe Borough should be included in a revised Newark CC.

6. We further proposed that the electorate of the revised Newark CC should be reduced by transferring the four Bassetlaw District wards that comprised East Retford and the whole of the divided Bassetlaw District ward of Sutton to a revised Bassetlaw CC. We also proposed that the Bassetlaw District ward of Rampton should be transferred from Bassetlaw CC to Newark CC and that the Newark and Sherwood District ward of Lowdham should be

transferred from Sherwood CC to Newark CC, thereby improving the shapes of the three constituencies.

7. To reduce the electorate in Bassetlaw CC we proposed that the two Mansfield District wards of Birklands and Meden should be included in a revised Mansfield CC, thereby including the whole of Mansfield District in one constituency. We noted that the electorate would be the largest in the county but considered that it was within an acceptable level, given that the electorate had been very stable over the preceding decade.

8. We proposed that the electorate of Gedling CC should be brought nearer to the county average by including the whole of the divided Gedling Borough wards of Bestwood Village, Calverton and Newstead in Sherwood CC, and the whole of the divided Gedling Borough wards of Bonington and Lambley in Gedling CC. We further proposed that the Gedling Borough ward of Woodborough should be moved from Sherwood CC to Gedling CC.

9. We provisionally decided to include the whole of the Broxtowe Borough ward of Eastwood North and Greasley (Beauvale) in Ashfield CC to equalise the electorates of Ashfield CC and Broxtowe CC.

10. The overall effect of these changes would be to reduce the disparity between the electorates of the eight constituencies from 13,500 to 10,726. Under our proposals the electorates of all eight constituencies would be within 5,853 of the county average and 7,589 of the electoral quota.

11. Our provisional recommendations were:-

	2000 electorate
Ashfield CC	74,674
Bassetlaw CC	75,036
Broxtowe CC	73,073
Gedling CC	73,819
Mansfield CC	77,524
Newark CC	69,803
Rushcliffe CC	70,484
Sherwood CC	<u>66,798</u>
	<u>581,211</u>

Representations

12. Following publication of our provisional recommendations, we received 102 representations, of which sixty-eight objected to our proposals. One representation suggested that there should be a reduction in the number of constituencies allocated to the county. However, apart from that one representation, the allocation of eight constituencies was accepted. Thirty-two representations expressed support for all or parts of our provisionally recommended constituencies.

13. The main issues raised were in a counter-proposal which reduced the number of wards that would be transferred and provided a lower electoral disparity by including:-

- a) the five Rushcliffe Borough wards of Bingham East, Bingham West, Cranmer, Oak and Thoroton in Rushcliffe CC;
- b) the four Bassetlaw District wards that comprise East Retford in Newark CC;
- c) the Mansfield District wards of Birklands and Meden in Bassetlaw CC;
- d) the Gedling Borough wards of Lambley and Woodborough in Sherwood CC; and
- e) the Newark and Sherwood District ward of Lowdham in Sherwood CC.

Local Inquiry and Assistant Commissioner's Report

14. We were required to hold an inquiry. Following the announcement of the inquiry a further thirteen representations were received, four of which approved of our provisional recommendations and nine objected. The Assistant Commissioner reported that the main issues raised at the inquiry were the same as those listed above.

The counter-proposal

15. Those supporting the counter-proposal submitted that the existing boundaries were well established and had remained unchanged at the last review. They considered our proposals to be too widespread and submitted that only three Rushcliffe Borough wards needed to be moved into Newark CC to reduce the electorate of Rushcliffe CC, and that the Bingham East and Bingham West wards should remain in Rushcliffe CC. They considered that no further wards needed to be moved to alter the electorate of Newark CC, or to alter the electorates of the Bassetlaw, Mansfield, Sherwood or Gedling constituencies. The effect of the counter-proposal would be a reduction in the disparity from 10,726 to 8,697.

The Bingham East, Bingham West, Cranmer, Oak and Thoroton wards

16. The Assistant Commissioner reported that it was reluctantly accepted that the electorate of Rushcliffe CC had to be reduced and that the nature of the boundaries of Rushcliffe Borough limited change to the boundary between the districts of Rushcliffe and Newark. He further reported that there was strong representation against our provisional recommendations. However, there was also some support.

17. He reported that there was opposition to the movement of all five Rushcliffe Borough wards on the grounds that there were clear social and economic links between the five wards and that the long-standing constituency, which is coterminous with the borough boundary, should be retained. It was also submitted, as part of the counter-proposal, that it was not necessary to move the Bingham East and Bingham West wards as their retention in Rushcliffe CC produced an electorate of 76,671, which was acceptable. The supporters of the provisional recommendations opposed the counter-proposal. They reluctantly accepted that the electorate of Rushcliffe CC had to be reduced and preferred that all five wards should be moved as a whole.

18. He noted that there was evidence submitted in favour of maintaining the status quo with the five Rushcliffe Borough wards being retained in Rushcliffe CC. However, he also accepted that the electorate of the constituency had to be reduced, despite inevitably affecting local ties. It was his view that any change should include all five wards, otherwise they would suffer a

double inconvenience and breaking of local ties. He recommended that all five wards be moved to Newark CC.

The East Retford wards

19. The Assistant Commissioner reported that submissions in support of the counter-proposal suggested that East Retford should remain in Newark CC, that both East Retford and Newark were market towns and that they shared common road and rail links. Furthermore, the transfer of the wards into Bassetlaw CC was a knock-on effect of unnecessarily moving the Rushcliffe Borough wards of Bingham East and Bingham West into Newark CC.

20. He reported that the evidence submitted in favour of the East Retford wards forming part of Bassetlaw CC was that they were an integral part of the Bassetlaw District Council area and because the preponderance of the links were with Worksop. He reported that other submissions commented upon the improved shape of Bassetlaw CC in our provisional recommendations. He noted evidence that the inclusion of the East Retford wards in Bassetlaw CC would be of benefit to both Bassetlaw CC and Newark CC.

21. He also reported that, whilst he accepted that East Retford had been a part of Newark CC for many years, it was still the main market town for that part of Bassetlaw District and its absence from the constituency made it look as if the heart of the area had been removed. He agreed with our provisional recommendations that the East Retford wards should be included in Bassetlaw CC.

The Birklands and Meden wards

22. The Assistant Commissioner reported that the evidence submitted predominantly objected to the inclusion of Warsop (the Birklands and Meden wards) in Mansfield CC as we had proposed. He noted the evidence that employment and shopping links between Warsop and Worksop in Bassetlaw CC were well developed and resulted in a strong bond between the two areas. He reported that those supporting our provisional recommendations submitted that, although Warsop became part of Bassetlaw CC following boundary changes in 1983, it had never been a part of Bassetlaw District. He agreed that Warsop's links were with Mansfield to the south and considered that, on balance, the two wards should be included in Mansfield CC.

The Lambley and Woodborough wards

23. The Assistant Commissioner reported that the arguments in favour of the Lambley and Woodborough wards remaining in Sherwood CC focused on their shared rural nature and their close social and cultural ties with the Calverton ward. He noted that the counter-proposal resulted in nearly equal electorates between Sherwood CC and Gedling CC.

24. He reported that the evidence submitted by those in favour of our provisional recommendations demonstrated that the inclusion of the two wards in Gedling CC improved the shape of the constituency, and it was claimed that they looked towards Gedling and not Sherwood. It was also stated that the two wards had historically been part of a Gedling constituency. He noted that the two wards contained both urban and rural parts and that they had ties with both Gedling CC and Sherwood CC.

25. He considered that the evidence seemed fairly balanced and that the improved shape of the constituency was a factor in favour of the provisional recommendations. He recommended that the two wards should be included in Gedling CC.

The Lowdham ward

26. The Assistant Commissioner reported that the evidence in favour of retaining the Newark and Sherwood District ward of Lowdham in Sherwood CC was that Lowdham had close ties with villages in Lambley and Woodborough rather than with Newark. However, he noted that the inclusion of the Lowdham ward in Newark CC greatly improved the shape of the constituency and that the ward also had links with Newark.

27. He reported that our recommendations for the Lowdham ward had generated very little interest at the inquiry. As the evidence suggested that the ward had links both ways, and that its inclusion in Newark CC improved the shape of the constituency, he recommended that our provisional recommendations with regard to the ward should not be altered.

Revised Recommendations

28. We considered the Assistant Commissioner's report, the transcript of the inquiry, all the written representations, and we reviewed the evidence. We agreed with the Assistant Commissioner's findings that the provisional recommendations should be endorsed for most of the county. However, we decided to revise our recommendations so as to retain the Lambley and Woodborough wards in Sherwood CC, as set out in the counter-proposal.

29. We noted that the Assistant Commissioner had rejected the counter-proposal in its entirety. However, we considered that as far as Gedling CC and Sherwood CC were concerned the counter-proposal was free-standing and was not dependent upon any other part of it being adopted. We noted the strong body of evidence opposed to the provisional recommendations for these two wards, both in the written representations and in opinions expressed at the inquiry, and it was clear that both wards had links with Calverton in Sherwood CC.

30. We also noted that, if the two wards were to be included in Sherwood CC, the electorate of the constituency would increase from 66,798 to 70,042, and that of Gedling CC would decrease, from 73,819 to 70,575, thereby reducing the disparity between the two constituencies from 7,021 to just 533. We further noted that the disparity in the county as a whole would be reduced from 10,726 to 7,721. Although the shape of the two constituencies under our provisional recommendations was considered to be better, we did not consider that the shape of the constituencies should be a determining factor.

31. Whilst we rejected the Assistant Commissioner's recommendations for Gedling CC and Sherwood CC, we accepted his recommendations for the other six constituencies in the county. We accordingly published the following revised recommendations:-

2000 electorate

Ashfield CC	74,674
Bassetlaw CC	75,036
Broxtowe CC	73,073
Gedling CC	70,575
Mansfield CC	77,524
Newark CC	69,803
Rushcliffe CC	70,484
Sherwood CC	70,042
	<hr/>
	581,211
	<hr/>

Further Representations

32. Following publication of our revised recommendations we received twenty-three representations. Of these, seventeen approved of the revised recommendations in their entirety and only six objected. Five of the objections opposed the inclusion of the Lambley and Woodborough wards in Sherwood CC and supported the implementation of our provisional recommendations. The issues regarding these wards had already been considered and the representations did not contain any new significant evidence.

33. One objection was received which submitted that the Bassetlaw District ward of Sturton should be included in Newark CC. It was suggested that the ward had long-standing ties with the Rampton ward and that its transfer to Newark CC would improve the electoral disparity between the two constituencies. We noted that the only references to the Sturton ward and its links at the inquiry were regarding its undisputed links with areas to its east. One witness who supported the counter-proposal suggested it might have been better had its supporters considered putting the ward and other villages into Newark CC, but no proposal to transfer it was made or was discussed at the inquiry. Its retention in Bassetlaw CC was not challenged in the representations or at the inquiry and was reflected in our recommendations, which had been approved by the Assistant Commissioner.

Recommendation

34. We noted the support for our revised recommendations and were satisfied that they did not need to be modified. We therefore recommend the adoption of the following constituencies containing the wards as listed in Appendix C:-

2000 electorate

Ashfield CC	74,674
Bassetlaw CC	75,036
Broxtowe CC	73,073
Gedling CC	70,575
Mansfield CC	77,524
Newark CC	69,803
Rushcliffe CC	70,484
Sherwood CC	70,042
	<hr/>
	581,211
	<hr/>

OXFORDSHIRE

The Number of Electors

1. There are currently six constituencies in the County of Oxfordshire:-

	2000 electorate
Banbury CC	82,524
Henley CC	68,345
Oxford East BC	71,597
Oxford West and Abingdon CC	79,447
Wantage CC	74,969
Witney CC	<u>75,147</u>
	<u><u>452,029</u></u>

The Number of Constituencies

2. Oxfordshire had a 2000 parliamentary electorate of 452,029, which gave a theoretical entitlement to 6.46 constituencies. With six constituencies being retained, the average constituency electorate in Oxfordshire would be 75,338, which is 5,403 above the electoral quota. If an extra, seventh, constituency were allocated, the county average would be 64,576, which is 5,359 below the electoral quota. Therefore, the seven constituency county average would be forty-four closer to the electoral quota than the six constituency county average.

3. In deciding whether an extra constituency should be allocated to Oxfordshire, we were mindful of the provisions of Rule 1, which placed a limit on the total number of constituencies to be allocated. We decided that it would be desirable to try to limit the expected increase in the number of constituencies allocated to England. However, we also decided that we would not adopt a fixed policy in respect of allocating constituencies where the theoretical entitlement was below the arithmetic mean (as is the case in Oxfordshire), because to do so would fetter our discretion. In such cases, we decided we would only allocate an extra constituency if it would bring about a significant improvement in the closeness of the constituency electorates to the electoral quota.

4. In considering alternatives for the distribution of constituencies in Oxfordshire, we decided that the slight numerical advantage of allocating an extra constituency was more than outweighed by the considerable disruption that would be caused to the existing constituencies, contrary to Rule 7, by the introduction of an extra constituency. We noted that between the start of the last general review and the start of the current general review (1991 - 2000) the electorate in Oxfordshire had grown from 420,055 to 452,029 and that, in all likelihood, it would continue to grow. However, we are required by the 1986 Act, as amended, to base our proposals on the number of electors on the electoral register at the start of the general review. We considered that the decision was finely balanced and concluded that the allocation of an extra constituency to the county was a matter best determined at the next general review. We therefore provisionally decided to continue the allocation of six constituencies to Oxfordshire.

5. The electorates of the six existing constituencies ranged from 82,524 in Banbury CC to 68,345 in Henley CC, a disparity of 14,179.

Provisional Recommendations

6. As a result of changes to the district ward boundaries, ten of the new wards in Oxfordshire are partly in one constituency and partly in another. Our provisional recommendations realigned the constituency boundaries with the new ward boundaries.

7. It was not possible to propose the minimum amount of change necessary to realign constituency boundaries with the new ward boundaries in every case. This was because the whole of the divided Cherwell District ward of Yarnton, Gosford and Water Eaton would have been wholly included in Witney CC rather than in Oxford West and Abingdon CC and would have detached and isolated the two Cherwell District wards of Kidlington North and Kidlington South from the rest of Oxford West and Abingdon CC.

8. We proposed that the disparity should be reduced and four of the six constituencies brought closer to the county average by recommending minor changes. The remaining two constituencies, Wantage CC and Witney CC, were left virtually unchanged, with Witney CC becoming coterminous with West Oxfordshire District following realignment with new ward boundaries. Seven of the ten divided wards were wholly included in the constituency where the majority of electors were already situated.

9. We proposed that the Cherwell District ward of Otmoor should be transferred from Banbury CC to Henley CC and that the whole of the Cherwell District ward of Kirtlington should be included in Henley CC. We further proposed that the whole of the Cherwell District ward of Yarnton, Gosford and Water Eaton should be included in Oxford West and Abingdon CC rather than in Witney CC. We also proposed that the City of Oxford ward of North should be transferred from Oxford West and Abingdon CC to Oxford East BC in exchange for the whole of the City of Oxford ward of Holywell.

10. These changes would reduce the high electorate of Banbury CC from 82,524 to 78,817 and increase the electorate of Henley CC from 68,345 to 72,331. The disparity in the electorates of the proposed constituencies would be reduced to 6,542 and all six constituencies would have electorates within 3,479 of the county average of 75,338.

11. Our provisional recommendations were:-

	2000 electorate
Banbury CC	78,817
Henley CC	72,331
Oxford East BC	78,576
Oxford West and Abingdon CC	75,256
Wantage CC	74,774
Witney CC	<u>72,275</u>
	<u>452,029</u>

Representations

12. Following publication of our provisional recommendations, we received thirty-five representations, of which twenty expressed support for all or part of our proposals, four expressed support whilst objecting to other parts of our proposals and nine objected to our

proposals. Two counter-proposals were received late and received no support, either in writing or at the inquiry, and were rejected by the Assistant Commissioner.

13. The main issues raised in the objections were contained in three principal counter-proposals:-

- a) the first counter-proposal, which supported six constituencies for the county, proposed that the Cherwell District ward of Ambrosden and Chesterton should be included in Henley CC; the City of Oxford ward of Carfax should be wholly included in Oxford East BC; and the City of Oxford ward of North should be included in Oxford West and Abingdon CC;
- b) the second counter-proposal included an alternative. The first option, which underwent amendment both before and during the inquiry, suggested an extra, seventh constituency, and in reducing constituency electorates, proposed wide ranging alterations to all the constituencies proposed by us. Other representations supporting a seventh constituency had identical or similar features to all or parts of this counter-proposal; and
- c) the second option of the second counter-proposal proposed that there should be six constituencies, that our proposed constituencies of Banbury CC, Wantage CC and Witney CC should be unchanged, and proposed significant changes in the other three constituencies based on using the River Cherwell as the boundary in and beyond the City of Oxford.

Local Inquiry and Assistant Commissioner's Report

14. We were required to hold an inquiry. After the representation period had closed, and during the inquiry, a further twenty representations were received.

Seven constituency counter-proposals

15. The Assistant Commissioner acknowledged the support that the counter-proposals suggesting seven constituencies had received, but also noted the considerable opposition to them.

16. He noted that those proposing seven constituencies argued that Rule 5 should have primacy and that our interpretation of Rule 1 was inappropriate. It was further contended that we had misinterpreted Rule 7 to override Rule 5.

17. He considered that there was a tension between the Rules that could not be easily reconciled. He rejected the view that Rule 5 should have primacy over the other Rules and believed that we were correct in our discretionary, rather than mandatory, use of this Rule. He also confirmed that the allocation of a seventh constituency was marginal and would have been contrary to Rule 1. He noted that the allocation of an extra, seventh, constituency would bring the county average closer to the electoral quota by only forty-four electors, which he did not consider was significant. Moreover, he considered that our provisional recommendations, which kept disruption to a minimum and moved fewer than 17,000 electors, were less disruptive than the seven constituency counter-proposals, which would inevitably break existing local ties and move in excess of 90,000 electors.

18. He noted that the statistical evidence presented in support of seven constituencies was based on regional groupings of areas that had been reviewed up to that point. It was suggested that, if an extra constituency were allocated, the overall match of constituency sizes to the electoral quota would improve the South East regional average by some 900 electors and that the average electorate in Oxfordshire would compare favourably with that of neighbouring Warwickshire and Wiltshire. It was also suggested that the county would no longer have two constituencies in the ‘top ten’ of over-large constituencies and that such an allocation would anticipate any potential future growth in Banbury CC, therefore causing less disruption at the next general review.

19. He considered that the statistics revealed anomalies that were the product of the Rules and their application and carried very limited weight when supporting a case for seven constituencies. Furthermore, he considered that there was nothing in the Rules that required decisions to be based on regional averages and the figures failed to show any excessive disparities within the county. He confirmed that any predictions of future growth were speculative and that the allocation of constituencies had to be by reference to the electorate at the enumeration date.

20. It had been submitted, under Rule 7, that an allocation of seven constituencies would provide the opportunity to improve local ties by restoring links that had once existed. However, he concluded that the restoration of local ties did not fall within the scope of Rule 7 and supported our view that the Rule related to the breaking of local ties by new proposals rather than the restoration of old ties. Additionally, he found that our six constituency proposal would be far less disruptive than the seven constituency alternative.

21. After considering the seven constituency counter-proposals, he concluded that the case for seven constituencies had not been made. He also noted the very limited number of objections from the public to our six constituency proposal and the lack of clear public support for the seven constituency options.

Six constituency counter-proposals

22. He rejected the part of the first counter-proposal which included the Cherwell District ward of Ambrosden and Chesterton in Henley CC as he considered that it was essentially based on numerical considerations at the expense of breaking local ties. He also noted that no witnesses were called by the supporters of the first counter-proposal during the inquiry. There was, however, considerable evidence from those objecting to this part of the counter-proposal and from those supporting the provisional recommendations.

23. With regard to the changes to Henley CC, Oxford East BC and Oxford West and Abingdon CC contained in the alternative to the second counter-proposal, he reported that the main argument centred around the River Cherwell, which it was contended should be seen as a clear boundary between East and West Oxford. He considered that the changes made beyond the City of Oxford appeared largely to follow from this starting point. It was argued that this second counter-proposal would avoid some of the anomalies of our provisional recommendations, which were considered to be the failure to respect the River Cherwell as the boundary between East and West Oxford, the failure to provide a clear dividing line in Oxfordshire, the splitting of natural communities, the destruction of West Oxford in parliamentary terms and the division of Oxford University between two constituencies.

24. All of these issues were debated in some detail during the inquiry and attracted a degree of disagreement. When testing the proposals and counter-proposals against the Rules, he saw much to commend our proposals and little to suggest that this six constituency counter-proposal should be preferred. He therefore rejected the counter-proposal because it would be more disruptive without gaining any significant numerical advantage. The disparity would not be reduced as Banbury CC and Witney CC would remain the largest and smallest constituencies respectively, and although the two City of Oxford constituencies would be closer to the electoral quota, this advantage would be offset by a substantial increase to the electorate of Henley CC and by the breaking of local ties.

The boundary between the constituencies of Oxford East BC and Oxford West and Abingdon CC

25. The Assistant Commissioner noted the support for our provisional recommendations for Oxford East BC and Oxford West and Abingdon CC, but during the inquiry there was also forceful and substantial objection to this element of our proposals. He noted that there was a good deal of support for the part of the first counter-proposal that concentrated on the two City of Oxford wards of Carfax and North.

26. He acknowledged that there was little numerical difference between the two alternatives and that the communities were now reflected to a marked degree by the administrative arrangements that the local council had put in place. The City now operated with six area committees; the North ward was included in the North Area Committee, while the Carfax ward was included in the Central, South and West Area Committee. The objectors' proposals would ensure that the whole of the North Area Committee would remain within Oxford West and Abingdon CC. He considered that the ties between the North and St Margaret's wards within the North Area Committee and the ties between the Carfax and Holywell wards within the Central, South and West Area Committee were evident.

27. After visiting the areas, he concluded that there was a strong case for recognising a North Oxford Community, the ties between the North and St Margaret's wards (that were previously largely one ward), and the ties between those two wards and the Summertown and Wolvercote wards.

28. He noted that our proposals to include the Carfax and Holywell wards in different constituencies, despite links between the two, would result in the division of the city-centre colleges between constituencies whereas the alternative proposal included most in the city centre. He therefore recommended the adoption of that part of the first counter-proposal that wholly included the Carfax ward in Oxford East BC and included the North ward in Oxford West and Abingdon CC.

Constituency names

29. Several representations suggested that the names of some of the constituencies should be changed. However, he noted that there was no consensus on the need for change generally or on any specific new names. He considered that names containing compass points, as was proposed for four constituencies, would lead to confusion with district council and existing constituency names. The inclusion of two towns in the name of a constituency was more attractive, but he was not persuaded that any name changes were appropriate.

Revised Recommendations

30. We agreed with the Assistant Commissioner's recommendations and accordingly published the following revised recommendations:-

	2000 electorate
Banbury CC	78,817
Henley CC	72,331
Oxford East BC	78,679
Oxford West and Abingdon CC	75,153
Wantage CC	74,774
Witney CC	<u>72,275</u>
	<u>452,029</u>

Further Representations

31. Following publication of our revised recommendations we received four representations, of which three approved of the revised recommendations. One representation objected to the name Oxford West and Abingdon CC and suggested Oxford West, Abingdon and Cherwell CC as an alternative. However, this representation had not been suggested or debated at the inquiry and we did not consider a three-name constituency would attract consensus or was appropriate.

Recommendation

32. We were satisfied that our revised recommendations did not need to be modified. We therefore recommend the adoption of the following constituencies containing the wards as listed in Appendix C:-

	2000 electorate
Banbury CC	78,817
Henley CC	72,331
Oxford East BC	78,679
Oxford West and Abingdon CC	75,153
Wantage CC	74,774
Witney CC	<u>72,275</u>
	<u>452,029</u>

PORPSMOUTH

The Number of Electors

1. There are currently two constituencies in the City of Portsmouth:-

	2000 electorate
Portsmouth North BC	65,258
Portsmouth South BC	<u>77,387</u>
	<u><u>142,645</u></u>

The Number of Constituencies

2. Following The Hampshire (Cities of Portsmouth and Southampton) (Structural Change) Order 1995, the cities of Portsmouth and Southampton ceased to form part of the county of Hampshire and became new unitary authorities. The remaining eleven districts in the county formed the County of Hampshire.

3. Portsmouth had a 2000 parliamentary electorate of 142,645, which gave a theoretical entitlement to 2.04 constituencies. With two constituencies, the average constituency electorate would be 71,323, which is only 1,388 above the electoral quota. We provisionally decided that Portsmouth should continue to be allocated two constituencies and reviewed separately from Hampshire and Southampton.

Provisional Recommendations

4. As a result of changes to the ward boundaries, three of the new wards are divided between constituencies. Our provisional recommendations realigned the constituency boundaries with the new ward boundaries and placed the divided Charles Dickens and Copnor wards in Portsmouth South BC and Portsmouth North BC, respectively. We proposed that the divided Baffins ward should be included in Portsmouth North BC. Although this did not represent minimum change realignment, it did have the effect of reducing the disparity between the two constituencies from 12,129 to only 903.

5. Our provisional recommendations were:-

	2000 electorate
Portsmouth North BC	70,871
Portsmouth South BC	<u>71,774</u>
	<u><u>142,645</u></u>

Representations

6. Following publication of our provisional recommendations, we received eight representations, five of which approved of our proposals. The only issue raised in the objections was a counter-proposal which exchanged the Baffins and Charles Dickens wards between Portsmouth North BC and Portsmouth South BC.

Local Inquiry and Assistant Commissioner's Report

7. We decided to exercise our discretion and hold an inquiry. Following the announcement of the inquiry no further representations were received but a total of nine documents were presented at the inquiry itself.

8. The Assistant Commissioner reported that the only issue raised was in which constituency the divided wards of Baffins and Charles Dickens should be included. He considered that, on the electoral figures alone, there was no clear case in favour of either our provisional recommendations or the counter-proposal, although he noted that the counter-proposal involved the transfer of 13,883 electors against 7,411 electors in the provisional recommendations, for an improvement in the disparity of just 528.

9. He explored the ties between the Charles Dickens and Nelson wards and between the Baffins and Milton wards that the supporters of the counter-proposal submitted would be broken and considered whether the counter-proposal produced a clearer boundary. However, it was his view that placing the Charles Dickens ward in Portsmouth North BC would break ties whereas moving the Baffins ward had no significant effect on existing ties and he concluded that, when taking the electoral arithmetic into account, there was an overwhelming case for rejecting the counter-proposal. He accordingly recommended that our provisional recommendations be confirmed as final.

Recommendation

10. We therefore recommend the adoption of the following constituencies containing the wards as listed in Appendix C:-

	2000 electorate
Portsmouth North BC	70,871
Portsmouth South BC	<u>71,774</u>
	<u><u>142,645</u></u>

SHROPSHIRE AND TELFORD AND WREKIN

The Number of Electors

1. There are currently five constituencies in the Counties of Shropshire, and Telford and Wrekin:-

	2000 electorate
Ludlow CC	63,052
North Shropshire CC	72,964
Shrewsbury and Atcham CC	74,984
Telford BC	60,245
The Wrekin CC	<u>65,685</u>
	<u><u>336,930</u></u>

The Number of Constituencies

2. Following The Shropshire (District of The Wrekin) (Structural Change) Order 1996, the District of The Wrekin ceased to form part of the County of Shropshire. The area of the former District of The Wrekin became a new unitary authority named The Wrekin. The authority is now known as the Borough of Telford and Wrekin. The remaining five districts in the county formed the County of Shropshire.

3. Shropshire had a 2000 parliamentary electorate of 221,624, which gave a theoretical entitlement to 3.17 constituencies. The Borough of Telford and Wrekin had a 2000 parliamentary electorate of 115,306, which gave a theoretical entitlement to 1.65 constituencies. The combined electorate of 336,930 gave a theoretical entitlement to 4.82 constituencies. We noted that, whether the two areas were reviewed separately or together, the overall allocation of constituencies would be five. However, if treated separately, the county average in Telford and Wrekin would be very low at 57,653 which is 12,282 below the electoral quota and 2,282 over our 10,000 threshold. We therefore provisionally decided to review Shropshire and Telford and Wrekin together. The continued allocation of five constituencies to the combined area would produce a county average of 67,386, which is only 2,549 below the electoral quota.

4. The electorates of the five existing constituencies in Shropshire and Telford and Wrekin ranged from 74,984 in Shrewsbury and Atcham CC to 60,245 in Telford BC, a disparity of 14,739.

Provisional Recommendations

5. As a result of changes to the borough ward boundaries four of the new wards, namely, Horsehay and Lightmoor, Ketley and Oakengates, Priorslee and Wrockwardine are divided between constituencies. By treating Shropshire and Telford and Wrekin as one review area, we were able to propose minimum change by realigning the constituency boundary between Telford BC and The Wrekin CC with these four wards. Our proposals transferred only 3,731 electors between constituencies, and reduced the disparity between constituencies from 14,739 to 12,960.

6. Our provisional recommendations were:-

	2000 electorate
Ludlow CC	63,052
North Shropshire CC	72,964
Shrewsbury and Atcham CC	74,984
Telford BC	63,906
The Wrekin CC	62,024
	<hr/>
	<hr/>
	336,930

Representations

7. Following publication of our provisional recommendations, we received twenty-one representations. Eighteen representations expressed support for our proposals, two objected to them and one offered no comment.

8. One objection submitted that, as the boundary between the Telford and Wrekin Borough wards of Donnington and Wrockwardine Wood and Tench was unsatisfactory, the constituency boundary was also unsatisfactory. It was also submitted that the transfer of the Wrockwardine Wood and Tench ward from Telford BC to The Wrekin CC would take better account of population growth. We noted that the boundary between the Donnington and Wrockwardine Wood and Tench wards had been recommended by the Boundary Committee for England and that the wards had come into effect at the local government elections in May 2003. We also noted that if the transfer were made, the electoral disparity between the constituencies with the highest and lowest electorates in the review area would increase to 16,301 and that the electorate of Telford BC would be very low, at 58,683. We therefore rejected the suggestion.

9. The second objection proposed that the Shrewsbury and Atcham Borough ward of Severn Valley should be transferred from Shrewsbury and Atcham CC to The Wrekin CC. This proposal was otherwise not supported and, if implemented, would break the coterminosity between the constituency and the borough boundary. We rejected it.

Recommendation

10. No local inquiry was required to be held. We were satisfied that no compelling argument against our provisional recommendations had been put forward and, in the circumstances, we decided not to use our discretion to hold an inquiry. In view of this, and given the support received for our proposals, we recommend the adoption of the following constituencies containing the wards as listed in Appendix C:-

	2000 electorate
Ludlow CC	63,052
North Shropshire CC	72,964
Shrewsbury and Atcham CC	74,984
Telford BC	63,906
The Wrekin CC	62,024
	<hr/>
	<hr/>
	336,930

SOMERSET

The Number of Electors

1. There are currently five constituencies in the County of Somerset:-

	2000 electorate
Bridgwater CC	73,940
Somerton and Frome CC	75,199
Taunton CC	81,375
Wells CC	74,064
Yeovil CC	<u>76,073</u>
	<u>380,651</u>

2. Somerset had a 2000 parliamentary electorate of 380,651 which gave a theoretical entitlement to 5.44 constituencies. With five constituencies, the average constituency electorate in the county would be 76,130, which is 6,195 more than the electoral quota. We decided to allocate five constituencies. The electorates of the five existing constituencies range from 81,375 in Taunton CC to 73,940 in Bridgwater CC, a disparity of 7,435.

Provisional Recommendations

3. As a result of changes to the district ward boundaries, five of the new wards in the county are partly in one constituency and partly in another. Our provisional recommendations realigned the constituency boundaries with the new ward boundaries.

4. Three south-eastern South Somerset District wards are divided between Somerton and Frome CC and Yeovil CC. We proposed minor alterations to the constituencies in order to realign their boundaries with the new ward boundaries. Accordingly, we proposed that the Blackmoor Vale and Camelot wards should be placed wholly within Somerton and Frome CC and that the Ivelchester ward should be placed wholly in Yeovil CC.

5. Two West Somerset District wards are divided between Bridgwater CC and Taunton CC. We proposed that the Aville Vale and Brompton Ralph and Haddon wards should be placed wholly within Bridgwater CC. In order to reduce the disparity between the electorates of the two constituencies, to bring the electorate of Taunton CC closer to the electoral quota, and to make Taunton CC coterminous with Taunton Deane Borough, we also proposed that the three West Somerset District wards of Dulverton and Brushford, Exmoor and Quarne should be transferred from Taunton CC to Bridgwater CC. As a further consequence, the entire District of West Somerset would be contained within Bridgwater CC, rather than being divided between Taunton CC and Bridgwater CC. The electorate of Taunton CC would be reduced from 81,375 to 77,535 and the electorate of Bridgwater CC would be increased from 73,940 to 77,780.

6. Under our proposals, the electorates of all five constituencies would be within 2,066 of the county average and the disparity would be reduced from 7,435 to 3,716.

7. Our provisional recommendations were:-

	2000 electorate
Bridgwater CC	77,780
Somerton and Frome CC	74,223
Taunton CC	77,535
Wells CC	74,064
Yeovil CC	<u>77,049</u>
	<u><u>380,651</u></u>

Representations

8. Following publication of our provisional recommendations we received a total of 185 representations. The majority of the representations opposed our recommendations. The issues raised were:-

- a) the inclusion of the five West Somerset District wards of Aville Vale, Brompton Ralph and Haddon, Dulverton and Brushford, Exmoor and Quarne in Bridgwater CC;
- b) the inclusion of the two divided South Somerset District wards of Blackmoor Vale and Camelot in Somerton and Frome CC; and
- c) the names of the Bridgwater and Taunton constituencies.

Local Inquiry and Assistant Commissioner's Report

9. We were required to hold an inquiry. Following the announcement of the inquiry, one further representation was received, which reiterated a previous objection.

The five District of West Somerset wards

10. The Assistant Commissioner reported that the main reasons for the large number of written objections were issues that related to local ties, which were considered to be with Taunton and not with Bridgwater, as well as the difficulty of travelling to see an MP based in Bridgwater and the geographical barrier of the Brendon Hills.

11. He reported that he visited these areas and recognised that local ties between the West Somerset wards and Taunton would be broken, in constituency terms, under our proposals. He also recognised that there would be some inconvenience in having to visit an MP based in Bridgwater. However, he considered that the arguments that constituencies and local authority areas should be coterminous and the reduction of the high electorate of Taunton, outweighed the arguments of the objectors.

The two District of South Somerset wards

12. The Assistant Commissioner noted that a small number of objections were received regarding our proposals for these wards. The main reasons for the objections related to issues of local ties, which were considered to be with Yeovil and not with Somerton or Frome, as

well as the difficulty of visiting an MP based in either Somerton or Frome, rather than in Yeovil.

13. He recognised that local ties between the two wards and Yeovil would be broken, in constituency terms, under our proposals. He also recognised that there would be some inconvenience in having to visit an MP based in either Somerton or Frome. However, he also noted evidence that ninety-six per cent of the electorate of the Blackmoor Vale ward and seventy-two per cent of the electorate of the Camelot ward were currently in Somerton and Frome CC. He further noted that if the two wards were located in Yeovil CC, the South Somerset District ward of Milborne Port would have to be transferred from Somerton and Frome CC to Yeovil CC, as it would otherwise become detached from Somerton and Frome CC. As this proposal would greatly increase the Yeovil electorate (to 85,347), he rejected the objections and recommended that our proposals should be adopted.

The names of Bridgwater CC and Taunton CC

14. The Assistant Commissioner noted that representations had also been made to the effect that Bridgwater CC should be renamed Bridgwater and West Somerset CC, as the West Somerset District would be wholly included in the constituency, and that Taunton CC should be renamed Taunton Deane CC because the constituency would be coterminous with Taunton Deane Borough. He considered that there was merit in both these proposals and accordingly recommended them.

Revised Recommendations

15. We agreed with all the Assistant Commissioner's recommendations and, accordingly, published the following revised recommendations:-

	2000 electorate
Bridgwater and West Somerset CC	77,780
Somerton and Frome CC	74,223
Taunton Deane CC	77,535
Wells CC	74,064
Yeovil CC	<u>77,049</u>
	<u><u>380,651</u></u>

Further Representations

16. Following publication of our revised recommendations we received four representations. Three of these representations repeated objections regarding the West Somerset wards, which had already been considered. The representations contained no new significant evidence.

17. The only new issue was from a resident of another county who made a new counter-proposal that paired Somerset with Wiltshire and allocated a combined total of ten constituencies. We considered that the counter-proposal would disrupt local ties and, as no proposals for the county boundary between Somerset and Wiltshire to be crossed were made in any other representation, or at the inquiry, we decided to reject it.

Recommendation

18. We were satisfied that our revised recommendations did not need to be modified. We therefore recommend the adoption of the following constituencies containing the wards as listed in Appendix C:-

	2000 electorate
Bridgwater and West Somerset CC	77,780
Somerton and Frome CC	74,223
Taunton Deane CC	77,535
Wells CC	74,064
Yeovil CC	<u>77,049</u>
	<u>380,651</u>

SOUTH GLOUCESTERSHIRE

The Number of Electors

1. There is currently one whole constituency, Northavon CC, and parts of three others in the unitary authority of the County of South Gloucestershire. The electoral figures set out below for these three constituencies relate only to those electors who are within the County of South Gloucestershire:-

	2000 electorate
Northavon CC	79,837
Bristol North West BC (part)	32,041
Wansdyke CC (part)	11,870
Kingswood BC (part)	<u>62,807</u>
	<u><u>186,555</u></u>

The Number of Constituencies

2. Following the Avon (Structural Change) Order 1995, the County of South Gloucestershire became one of four unitary authorities created out of the former County of Avon, which was abolished on 31 March 1996. We provisionally considered reviewing each unitary authority separately. South Gloucestershire had a 2000 parliamentary electorate of 186,555 which gave a theoretical entitlement to 2.67 constituencies. With three constituencies, the average electorate in the county would be 62,185, which is 7,750 below the electoral quota. We decided, therefore, to recommend that South Gloucestershire should be allocated three constituencies.

Provisional Recommendations

3. As a result of changes to the ward boundaries, five of the new wards in South Gloucestershire are partly in one constituency and partly in another. Our provisional recommendations realigned the constituency boundaries with the new ward boundaries.

4. In forming our proposals we recognised that considerable change was required to create three constituencies within South Gloucestershire, as we were in effect creating an extra constituency in the county to reflect the increase in the electorate that there had been in that part of the former County of Avon since the last general review. We decided to recommend a constituency, to be called Filton CC, centred on the part of Bristol North West BC now in South Gloucestershire. We proposed that it should include the Almondsbury and Pilning and Severn Beach wards from the existing Northavon CC, and the Downend and Staple Hill wards from the existing Kingswood BC. The two divided wards of Bradley Stoke Bowsland and Winterbourne would also be included in the constituency. We also proposed that the Bitton and Oldland Common wards should be transferred from the current Wansdyke CC to be included in Kingswood BC and that the remaining fifteen wards of the current Northavon CC should be included in a constituency named Thornbury and Yate CC.

5. We recognised that, as each proposed constituency would be more than 6,500 below the electoral quota, there were arguments for considering whether South Gloucestershire should be paired with a neighbouring authority for the allocation of constituencies. However,

we decided not to pursue this option because, as a result of our provisional recommendations, the electorates of all three constituencies would be within 1,249 of the county average and the disparity would be 2,384.

6. Our provisional recommendations were:-

	2000 electorate
Filton CC	62,299
Kingswood BC	60,936
Thornbury and Yate CC	<u>63,320</u>
	<u>186,555</u>

Representations

7. Following publication of our provisional recommendations, we received 170 representations, of which sixty-nine expressed support for all or parts of our proposals. Six of the representations supported parts of our proposals whilst objecting to other parts of the proposals and ninety-five objected to all or parts of our proposals. There was overall support for our proposal to retain the constituencies within the unitary authority boundaries and for our allocation of three constituencies to South Gloucestershire. The main issues centred on whether one or both of the Almondsbury or the Pilning and Severn Beach wards should be included in Thornbury and Yate CC, and the various ways in which the electorates might then be balanced were the subject of various counter-proposals. There was also a variety of proposals for different names to those we had proposed. The counter-proposals were that:-

- a) the Pilning and Severn Beach ward, but not the Almondsbury ward, should be included in Thornbury and Yate CC;
- b) the Almondsbury ward, but not the Pilning and Severn Beach ward, should be included in Thornbury and Yate CC; and
- c) both the Almondsbury and the Pilning and Severn Beach wards should be included in Thornbury and Yate CC and that the electorates be balanced by moving the Frampton Cotterell ward (and possibly the Westerleigh ward) from Thornbury and Yate CC to Filton CC.

8. There were also suggestions that the constituencies named Filton CC, Kingswood BC and Thornbury and Yate CC should be renamed South Gloucestershire (Central) CC, South Gloucestershire (South) CC and South Gloucestershire (North) CC, respectively.

Local Inquiry and Assistant Commissioner's Report

9. We were required to hold an inquiry. Following the announcement of the inquiry a further twenty-two representations were received, five of which were in support of our provisional recommendations. The other seventeen representations objected to the names of the Filton and Thornbury and Yate constituencies. The Assistant Commissioner identified the main issues as those mentioned above.

The Almondsbury and Pilning and Severn Beach wards

10. The Assistant Commissioner reported that there had been a number of objections to the inclusion of the Almondsbury ward in the provisionally recommended Filton CC, although he also reported that there had been a significant level of support. He reported that it was argued that the Almondsbury ward was predominantly rural, had nothing in common with the towns of Bradley Stoke, Filton and Patchway and had traditional links with the town of Thornbury. It was also argued that the M5 motorway acted as a boundary between Almondsbury and the remainder of the Filton constituency and that any disparity in numbers would be made up by future growth in Bradley Stoke.

11. He noted that including the Almondsbury ward in Thornbury and Yate CC would increase the disparity between the electorates of the three constituencies to 6,909. It would also result in the Pilning and Severn Beach ward being detached from the remainder of Filton CC, contrary to our policy of not creating constituencies with detached parts. He considered that the disparity between the constituencies was too high and that it was undesirable for Filton CC to have an electorate more than 10,000 below the electoral quota. He rejected the counter-proposed transfer of the Almondsbury ward to Thornbury and Yate CC.

12. He reported that the arguments in favour of the inclusion of the Pilning and Severn Beach ward in Thornbury and Yate CC, were similar to the arguments in favour of the transfer of the Almondsbury ward. He also noted that there was substantial support for the proposal to include the Pilning and Severn Beach ward in Filton CC.

13. He noted that the proposed inclusion of the Pilning and Severn Beach ward in Thornbury and Yate CC would increase the disparity between the electorates of the three constituencies to 6,083 and that the electorate of Filton CC would be more than 10,000 below the electoral quota. He considered that this disparity was also too high and therefore rejected the proposal.

14. He rejected the arguments that the rural wards of Almondsbury and Pilning and Severn Beach had no ties with the predominantly urban Filton CC, noting the significant ties the wards had with Filton in terms of leisure and service provision. He did not see any reason why the constituency should not contain a mixture of urban and rural areas. He also considered that the future growth of the Bradley Stoke area in Filton CC was speculative and could not be taken into account.

The Frampton Cotterell and Westerleigh wards

15. The Assistant Commissioner reported that objectors to the inclusion of the Almondsbury and Pilning and Severn Beach wards in Filton CC had also proposed, in order to balance the electorates of the two constituencies, that the Frampton Cotterell and/or the Westerleigh wards could be included in Filton CC, rather than Thornbury and Yate CC. However, he thought that it would be wrong to consider the proposal without taking into account the views of residents in the Frampton Cotterell and Westerleigh wards. He considered that these two wards had stronger ties with the town of Yate than did the wards of Almondsbury and Pilning and Severn Beach with the town of Thornbury. He therefore rejected this counter-proposal and recommended no change to the composition of the Filton constituency.

The Boyd Valley ward

16. The Assistant Commissioner reported that it was counter-proposed (although it did not feature to any great extent at the inquiry), that either part of, or the whole of, the Boyd Valley ward should be included in Kingswood CC. He rejected the proposal to divide the Boyd Valley ward between constituencies and noted the evidence of the ward's long standing ties with other wards in Thornbury and Yate CC.

17. He, therefore, rejected all the counter-proposals and recommended the acceptance of the boundaries of the three provisionally recommended constituencies.

Constituency names

18. The Assistant Commissioner reported that there had been objections to the names of all three provisionally recommended constituencies. It was suggested that the names of all three constituencies should have South Gloucestershire as a prefix, but he considered that this would make the names too unwieldy and rejected this change. He considered that the names of Kingswood BC and Thornbury and Yate CC should be adopted. He noted that Kingswood was already in existence as a constituency name and that Thornbury and Yate were the two largest towns in the proposed constituency. He further considered that there was no popular or universally accepted substitute for these two names.

19. However, he reported that he found the task of finding a suitable alternative name for Filton CC more difficult. He noted that no one, either in the written representations, or at the inquiry had suggested a universally popular name for the constituency. At the inquiry, he had suggested the alternative name of Filton and Bradley Stoke CC because it included the two most well known towns in the constituency and there was no single geographical feature or characteristic on which a name could be based.

Revised Recommendations

20. We agreed with the Assistant Commissioner and accepted his recommendation not to alter the provisionally recommended Filton, Kingswood and Thornbury and Yate constituencies. We also accepted his recommended name of Filton and Bradley Stoke CC instead of Filton CC. We noted that the name had not been proposed by anyone in the written representations, but that at the inquiry there had been some degree of acceptance in response to the Assistant Commissioner's suggestion. We regarded the name as an acceptable alternative to our original proposal.

21. We accordingly published the following revised recommendations:-

	2000 electorate
Filton and Bradley Stoke CC	62,299
Kingswood BC	60,936
Thornbury and Yate CC	<hr/> 63,320
	<hr/> <hr/> 186,555

Further Representations

22. Following publication of our revised recommendations, we received eighteen representations, of which two supported our recommendations. Most of the representations repeated objections regarding the Almondsbury ward and the name of Filton and Bradley Stoke CC. Those issues had already been considered and the representations did not contain any new significant evidence relating to those matters.

23. The only new issues raised in the objections to the revised recommendations were:-

- a) the individual, or joint, inclusion of the Downend and Staple Hill wards in Filton and Bradley Stoke CC; and
- b) two further counter-proposals affecting all three constituencies.

24. Three representations objected to the individual, or joint, inclusion of the Downend and Staple Hill wards in Filton and Bradley Stoke CC. It was argued that the community ties and focal points for these two wards were with Kingswood town centre and that the River Frome formed a boundary between the Downend ward and the Filton area. We noted that no one had objected to the inclusion of these wards in the proposed Filton and Bradley Stoke CC prior to the inquiry and that there had been significant support for this aspect of the provisional recommendations. We also noted that the Assistant Commissioner had supported the inclusion of these two wards in Filton and Bradley Stoke CC.

25. Two of the representations put forward new counter-proposals. One of these suggested changes to all three constituencies whilst the other, which was from a resident of another county, suggested revised constituencies as a result of pairing South Gloucestershire with the City of Bristol. We noted that the counter-proposal for the three constituencies would result in an unacceptably high disparity and that there had been unanimous support for our decision not to cross unitary authority boundaries in the former County of Avon.

Recommendation

26. We were satisfied that our revised recommendations did not need to be modified. We therefore recommend the following constituencies containing the wards listed in Appendix C:-

	2000 electorate
Filton and Bradley Stoke CC	62,299
Kingswood BC	60,936
Thornbury and Yate CC	63,320
	<hr/>
	186,555
	<hr/>

STAFFORDSHIRE AND STOKE-ON-TRENT

The Number of Electors

1. There are currently twelve constituencies in the Counties of Staffordshire and Stoke-on-Trent:-

	2000 electorate
Burton CC	75,041
Cannock Chase CC	73,804
Lichfield CC	63,584
Newcastle-under-Lyme BC	66,701
South Staffordshire CC	69,529
Stafford CC	68,319
Staffordshire Moorlands CC	67,321
Stoke-on-Trent Central BC	62,213
Stoke-on-Trent North BC	58,399
Stoke-on-Trent South BC	69,907
Stone CC	69,475
Tamworth CC	<u>69,490</u>
	<u><u>813,783</u></u>

The Number of Constituencies

2. Following the Staffordshire (City of Stoke-on-Trent) (Structural and Boundary Changes) Order 1995, the City of Stoke-on-Trent ceased to form part of the County of Staffordshire and became a new unitary authority. The remaining eight districts and boroughs in the county formed the County of Staffordshire.

3. Staffordshire had a 2000 parliamentary electorate of 628,564, which gave a theoretical entitlement to 8.99 constituencies, while Stoke-on-Trent had a 2000 parliamentary electorate of 185,219, which gave a theoretical entitlement to 2.65 constituencies. Whether considered as one or two review areas, twelve constituencies would continue to be allocated. However, if reviewed separately, the average constituency electorate in Staffordshire would be 69,840, while in Stoke-on-Trent it would be 61,740, which would be 8,195 below the electoral quota. The combined area of Staffordshire and Stoke-on-Trent had a 2000 parliamentary electorate of 813,783, which gave a theoretical entitlement to 11.64 constituencies. With twelve constituencies retained, the average constituency electorate in Staffordshire and Stoke-on-Trent would be 67,815, which is 2,120 below the electoral quota. We therefore decided to review Staffordshire and Stoke-on-Trent together. The electorates of the twelve existing constituencies ranged from 75,041 in Burton CC to 58,399 in Stoke-on-Trent North BC, a disparity of 16,642.

Provisional Recommendations

4. As a result of changes to the district ward boundaries, fifteen of the new wards in Staffordshire and Stoke-on-Trent are partly in one constituency and partly in another. There are nine divided wards in Stoke-on-Trent, four in Stafford, one in East Staffordshire and one in South Staffordshire. Our provisional recommendations realigned the constituency

boundaries with the new ward boundaries by placing each wholly within a constituency and affected nine constituencies.

5. We considered whether to adopt the minimum amount of change necessary to realign the constituencies with these divided wards, or whether to go further in order to address the 16,642 disparity in the electorates between Burton CC and Stoke-on-Trent North BC. Minimum change realignment would slightly increase the electorate of Stoke-on-Trent North BC from 58,399 to 59,560, which would be 10,375 below the electoral quota. Also, minimum change realignment would slightly decrease the electorate of Burton CC from 75,041 to 74,700, which would be 4,765 above the electoral quota. These changes would have produced a slightly lower disparity of 15,140. As we considered this disparity to be too high we decided to recommend further changes to reduce it.

6. We proposed that fourteen of the divided wards should be realigned so as to transfer the smallest number of electors. However, minimum change realignment of the divided South Staffordshire District ward of Huntington and Hatherton would place the whole ward in Cannock Chase CC and increase the constituency's electorate to 74,254. It would, however, be the only South Staffordshire District ward in that constituency. To transfer the ward from Cannock Chase CC would decrease the electorate of the constituency to 70,995 and make it coterminous with the district of the same name. We therefore included the whole ward in South Staffordshire CC.

7. In addition to these realignments, we also proposed that the Staffordshire Moorlands District ward of Werrington be transferred from Staffordshire Moorlands CC to Stoke-on-Trent North BC in order to increase the electorate of the latter seat to 62,382. We further proposed the transfer of the East Staffordshire Borough ward of Needwood from Burton CC to Lichfield CC in order to decrease the electorate of the former seat to 70,324.

8. Under our proposals, the electorates of all twelve constituencies were within 5,433 of the county average and the disparity was reduced from 16,642 to 9,956.

9. Our provisional recommendations were:-

	2000 electorate
Burton CC	70,324
Cannock Chase CC	70,995
Lichfield CC	68,301
Newcastle-under-Lyme BC	66,701
South Staffordshire CC	72,338
Stafford CC	69,274
Staffordshire Moorlands CC	64,499
Stoke-on-Trent Central BC	63,330
Stoke-on-Trent North BC	62,382
Stoke-on-Trent South BC	67,629
Stone CC	68,520
Tamworth CC	<u>69,490</u>
	<u>813,783</u>

Representations

10. Following publication of our provisional recommendations, we received 205 representations, of which eighty-six expressed support for all or part of our proposals, thirty expressed support whilst objecting to other parts of our proposals and eighty-two objected to our proposals.

11. The main issues raised in the objections were principally contained in two counter-proposals, which between them affected all the proposed constituencies, save for Cannock Chase CC:-

- a) the first counter-proposal affected seven constituencies and treated Stoke-on-Trent as a separate review area. It proposed that the East Staffordshire Borough ward of Needwood should be included in Burton CC; the Staffordshire Moorlands District wards of Bagnall and Stanley, Brown Edge and Endon, and Werrington should be included in Staffordshire Moorlands CC; the Newcastle-under-Lyme Borough wards of Butt Lane and Talke should be included in Newcastle-under-Lyme BC (and as an alternative to this there was a counter-proposal to place the wards of Butt Lane, Talke and Ravenscliffe in Stoke-on-Trent North BC); and it included the City of Stoke-on-Trent wards of Fenton, and Northwood and Birches Head in Stoke-on-Trent Central BC and Stoke-on-Trent North BC, respectively. Other counter-proposals were identical to all or parts of this first counter-proposal; and
- b) the second counter-proposal affected five constituencies. It proposed that the three Lichfield District wards of Little Aston, Shenstone and Stonnall, and the ward of Whittington, should be included in Lichfield CC and Tamworth CC, respectively; the two South Staffordshire District wards of Huntington and Hatherton, and Wheaton Aston, Bishopswood and Lapley should be included in Stafford CC and South Staffordshire CC, respectively; and the Stafford Borough ward of Seighford should be included in Stone CC. Other counter-proposals were identical to all or parts of this second counter-proposal.

Local Inquiry and Assistant Commissioner's Report

12. We were required to hold an inquiry. Following the announcement of the inquiry a further 107 representations were received, some of which were in response to the counter-proposals to our provisional recommendations.

13. The Assistant Commissioner supported our decision to treat Staffordshire and Stoke-on-Trent as one review area and rejected those counter-proposals that reviewed them separately. He also supported our decision to allocate twelve constituencies to the combined area and recommended the adoption of the provisional recommendations for nine of the twelve constituencies.

Stoke-on-Trent, Kidsgrove and Staffordshire Moorlands

14. The Assistant Commissioner reported that there were an insufficient number of electors within the City of Stoke-on-Trent to produce three constituencies as near the electoral quota as is practicable and it was therefore necessary to incorporate an area outside

the city boundary to achieve a reasonably balanced result. He reported that only wards to the north and the east of the city could practicably be added.

15. He noted our proposal to add the Staffordshire Moorlands District ward of Werrington to the other two Staffordshire Moorlands District wards of Bagnall and Stanley, and Brown Edge and Endon, which were already in Stoke-on-Trent North BC, and the large number of objections received. He considered the evidence regarding the nature of the valley which confined the City of Stoke-on-Trent, and ran from north to south, and was persuaded by it to restore all three wards to Staffordshire Moorlands CC.

16. He considered whether the five Newcastle-under-Lyme Borough wards of Butt Lane, Kidsgrove, Newchapel, Ravenscliffe and Talke could be separated. He noted that two representatives in evidence to the inquiry had proposed that the wards could be divided, although with differing configurations, and that others suggested they could not. He also noted that the Newchapel ward was more rural in nature than the other four wards. He accordingly recommended that only the Newchapel ward should remain in Staffordshire Moorlands CC. He proposed that the other four wards should transfer to Stoke-on-Trent North BC.

17. He further reported that the removal of these four wards from Staffordshire Moorlands CC would require a compensatory transfer of wards from elsewhere to achieve an acceptable electorate. He recommended that the Staffordshire Moorlands District wards of Alton and Churnet should be transferred from Stone CC to Staffordshire Moorlands CC, in which they had previously been located.

Stone CC

18. He reported that the reduction in electorate, due to the transfer of the wards of Alton and Churnet from Stone CC to Staffordshire Moorlands CC, was acceptable because of the continuing growth in the area since the last general review. He also considered that the removal of the two wards improved the shape of the constituency.

Burton CC

19. In considering the objections to the proposed transfer of the East Staffordshire Borough ward of Needwood from Burton CC to Lichfield CC, he acknowledged the ward's links with Burton-on-Trent, but also its links with Alrewas and Lichfield and especially with the East Staffordshire Borough wards of Bagots and Yoxall, which were already contained in Lichfield CC. He noted the high electorate that would ensue if the Needwood ward were to remain in Burton CC as well as the increase in the electorate of the Borough of East Staffordshire since the last general review. He accordingly endorsed our provisional recommendations for this constituency.

Lichfield CC and Tamworth CC

20. In considering the second counter-proposal to transfer the three Lichfield District wards of Little Aston, Shenstone and Stonnall, and the ward of Whittington, to Lichfield CC and Tamworth CC, respectively, he noted that the transfer of 8,827 electors between the two constituencies would produce an inferior result in terms of electorate for both constituencies. He noted the objections to the transfer of the Whittington ward and the evidence of its local

links with Lichfield and supported our provisional recommendations for Lichfield CC and Tamworth CC.

Cannock Chase CC

21. He noted both the numerical advantages and the other advantages of Cannock Chase CC being coterminous with Cannock Chase District and accordingly endorsed our provisional recommendations for Cannock Chase CC.

South Staffordshire CC

22. He noted that the objectors to our recommendation that the divided South Staffordshire District ward of Huntington and Hatherton should be transferred from Cannock Chase CC to South Staffordshire CC submitted that the ward should be wholly included in Stafford CC. He observed that Hatherton was currently in South Staffordshire CC and that Huntington was in South Staffordshire District and he considered that our provisional recommendations afforded the best solution.

Stafford CC

23. One counter-proposal suggested the transfer of the South Staffordshire District ward of Wheaton Aston, Bishopswood and Lapley from Stafford CC to South Staffordshire CC. He noted the strong, unchallenged evidence given at the inquiry of the close links between this ward and Penkridge and the strong pleas of objectors to retain the status quo. He accordingly rejected the counter-proposal. He also noted the counter-proposal to transfer the Stafford Borough ward of Seighford from Stafford CC to Stone CC. He considered that, at the inquiry, there was clear evidence of the links between this ward and Stafford and he rejected the counter-proposal. He accordingly endorsed our proposals for Stafford CC.

Newcastle-under-Lyme BC

24. Our provisional recommendations proposed no change to the existing Newcastle-under-Lyme BC. The Assistant Commissioner had already rejected the first counter-proposal for the Newcastle-under-Lyme Borough wards of Talke and Butt Lane to be included in Newcastle-under-Lyme BC and endorsed our provisional recommendations for Newcastle-under-Lyme BC.

Revised Recommendations

25. We agreed with all of the Assistant Commissioner's recommendations, but had some concerns about the division of the Newcastle-under-Lyme Borough wards in the Kidsgrove area between constituencies and that no one person or group had suggested the exact revisions that the Assistant Commissioner had recommended. However, in reaching our conclusions, we noted that:-

- a) the Assistant Commissioner's recommendations were not based on any one counter-proposal, but on a combination of several counter-proposed positions;
- b) although evidence was given at the inquiry that the five Newcastle-under-Lyme Borough wards should not be divided, there was also evidence that the Newchapel

ward was more rural in nature than the other four wards. The Assistant Commissioner had concluded from the evidence, and from his own site visit, that the Newchapel ward could be separated from the other four wards;

- c) at the last general review, the previous Assistant Commissioner was called upon to consider four wards in the Kidsgrove area whereas the present Assistant Commissioner was now considering five wards. In addition, the new boundary between the Newchapel ward and the Kidsgrove ward was markedly different from the former boundary (the new Newchapel ward was substantially smaller and now contained little or none of the town of Kidsgrove);
- d) there was evidence that the Newchapel ward had ties with Biddulph in Staffordshire Moorlands CC as well as ties with Kidsgrove;
- e) the Assistant Commissioner's recommendation would better deal with the continuing decline in the electorate in Stoke-on-Trent;
- f) the Assistant Commissioner's recommendation enabled the three Staffordshire Moorlands District wards to the east of Stoke-on-Trent (Bagnall and Stanley, Brown Edge and Endon, and Werrington) to be returned to Staffordshire Moorlands CC along with two Staffordshire Moorlands District wards (Alton and Churnet) currently in Stone CC; and
- g) the Assistant Commissioner's recommendation took account of the strong opposition from the Werrington ward to being placed in a Stoke-on-Trent constituency: it was best placed in the same seat as the Cellarhead ward. It also took into account the continued objection from the Bagnall and Stanley, and Brown Edge and Endon wards.

26. We accordingly published revised recommendations for the three constituencies of Staffordshire Moorlands CC, Stoke-on-Trent North BC and Stone CC and confirmed our provisional recommendations as final for the other nine constituencies. Our revised recommendations were:-

	2000 electorate
Burton CC	70,324
Cannock Chase CC	70,995
Lichfield CC	68,301
Newcastle-under-Lyme BC	66,701
South Staffordshire CC	72,338
Stafford CC	69,274
Staffordshire Moorlands CC	60,810
Stoke-on-Trent Central BC	63,330
Stoke-on-Trent North BC	69,938
Stoke-on-Trent South BC	67,629
Stone CC	64,653
Tamworth CC	<u>69,490</u>
	<u>813,783</u>

Further Representations

27. Following publication of our revised recommendations we received 203 individual letters of representation. A total of 103 letters approved of the revised recommendations and one included a petition containing 102 signatures. Additionally, we received a further forty-five proforma letters of support. A total of ninety-eight letters objected to the revised recommendations. One of these included a petition containing 398 signatures. We also received 3,497 proforma slips of objection from the five Newcastle-under-Lyme Borough wards to the north of Stoke-on-Trent. There were two further representations that supported some parts of the revised recommendations whilst objecting to other parts.

The Staffordshire Moorlands District wards of Alton and Churnet

28. Forty-seven of the representations received supported the return of these two wards from Stone CC to Staffordshire Moorlands CC. Only two representations objected to the inclusion of the wards in Staffordshire Moorlands CC with both submitting that we should return to our provisional recommendations.

29. It was submitted that the proposal to transfer the Alton and Churnet wards was not made prior to the inquiry and was therefore not fully explored there. It was claimed that Alton's ties were with Cheadle and that its inclusion in Staffordshire Moorlands CC would break ties with that town.

The Staffordshire Moorlands District wards of Bagnall and Stanley, Brown Edge and Endon, and Werrington

30. Ninety individual letters of representation, one of which included the petition, supported the inclusion of the three Staffordshire Moorlands District wards in Staffordshire Moorlands CC. Additionally, we received a further forty-five proforma letters of support.

31. Seven representations and a new counter-proposal objected to the inclusion of the three wards in Staffordshire Moorlands CC. These representations called for the return to our provisional recommendations, whereby the three wards would be included in Stoke-on-Trent North BC. Additionally, it was counter-proposed that, if we returned to our provisional recommendations, the Staffordshire Moorlands District ward of Cellarhead should also be included in Stoke-on-Trent North BC so that the ward's ties with the Staffordshire Moorlands District ward of Werrington would be maintained.

The Newcastle-under-Lyme Borough wards of Butt Lane, Kidsgrove, Newchapel, Ravenscliffe and Talke

32. Our revised recommendations for these wards gave rise to the majority of the objections received. Ninety-one of the letters of objection together with the petition and the objection slips opposed the separation of the Newchapel ward from the other four wards.

33. From the representations submitted the main areas of objection were that:-

- a) the town of Kidsgrove was a coherent community and that its five wards cannot be divided without breaking local ties within the town and with the neighbouring

towns of Biddulph and Leek, which form the focal points of Staffordshire Moorlands CC;

- b) there was a lack of prior notice about the proposed division of the five wards and it was suggested that the division recommended by the Assistant Commissioner was not discussed at the inquiry; and
- c) the counter-proposal which proposed a division of the five wards was amended on the first day of the inquiry to include the return of the Staffordshire Moorlands District wards of Alton and Churnet to Staffordshire Moorlands CC. It was claimed that the amendment was not known about prior to the inquiry, was not fully explored and that a second inquiry should be held.

34. We noted that many of those who submitted a representation were in general agreement that the electorate of Stoke-on-Trent North BC would be too low without the addition of more electors and that it had to be increased. As the Assistant Commissioner had recognised, the only solutions were to add wards from the east (Staffordshire Moorlands District) or some of the five wards (referred to as Kidsgrove) from the north (Newcastle-under-Lyme Borough).

35. The only support for our provisional recommendations to retain the Staffordshire Moorlands District wards in Stoke-on-Trent North BC, or to add a further ward, came from the second counter-proposal. The Assistant Commissioner had said that there were passionately held views amongst those in the Staffordshire Moorlands wards that they should be located in a Staffordshire Moorlands constituency. This placing of the wards had wide support and he had found compelling reasons for restoring the wards there. In considering the division of the five Newcastle-under-Lyme Borough wards, we noted that the Assistant Commissioner had reported that he had heard conflicting evidence as to whether the five wards could conveniently be divided. Some witnesses had submitted that local ties would be broken as a result of any division of the wards. However, one counter-proposal had retained two of the five wards in Staffordshire Moorlands CC and included three in Stoke-on-Trent North BC. The first counter-proposal had retained three of the five wards in Staffordshire Moorlands CC and included two in Newcastle-under-Lyme BC.

36. We noted that the Assistant Commissioner had visited the area after the inquiry and had tested the arguments put forward. This established to his satisfaction, as some of the evidence he heard at the inquiry had suggested, that the Newchapel ward could be separated from the Kidsgrove ward, whereas the Ravenscliffe ward should not be separated from it. The Assistant Commissioner had rejected the divisions of the wards proposed by two counter-proposals because he considered they were less satisfactory.

37. We considered that, despite an element of orchestration, the numerous objections to the separation of Newchapel from the other four wards clearly indicated a genuine belief that local ties in the Kidsgrove area would be broken. We noted that, whilst the Assistant Commissioner had heard evidence relating to the wards, he had not had the benefit at the inquiry of the strength of local feelings now being expressed. However, he had been aware, and noted in his report, that strong objections had been made during the fourth general review to the division of the, then, four Kidsgrove wards, when our predecessors had provisionally recommended that they should be divided between Stoke-on-Trent North BC and Newcastle-under-Lyme BC.

38. Some of those who submitted objections claimed that they were unaware that the possible division of the five Newcastle-under-Lyme Borough wards would be discussed at the local inquiry. We noted that two counter-proposals suggesting a division had been submitted within the statutory representation period and that both had been placed on deposit for public inspection for interested persons to examine before the inquiry opened. We therefore considered that adequate notice was given that it would be an issue that the inquiry would consider.

39. We agreed that the division of the wards recommended by the Assistant Commissioner had not been the subject of a formal proposal at the inquiry. However, it had been examined in the course of the evidence and was an adaptation of one counter-proposal, from which it differed only by the placing of one ward. We consider that the division of the five wards proposed by the Assistant Commissioner was an improvement on either of the two divisions of the five wards contained in the counter-proposals considered at the inquiry.

40. We noted that the proposal to return the two Staffordshire Moorlands District wards of Alton and Churnet to Staffordshire Moorlands CC was not made prior to the inquiry. It was introduced during the course of the inquiry as an amendment to an original counter-proposal. The verbatim transcript of the inquiry records that the Assistant Commissioner highlighted to all present that the proposal relating to the Alton and Churnet wards was an addition to the counter-proposal and that he gave those present every opportunity to comment on it. We also noted that the supporter of this counter-proposal was questioned about it. We considered that the amendment to this counter-proposal had not disadvantaged any individual or organisation and that sufficient opportunity had been given to comment upon or question the evidence submitted.

41. We recognised that neither of the options, which were to include the four Newcastle-under-Lyme Borough wards or the three Staffordshire Moorlands District wards (four wards if we accepted the new counter-proposal) in Stoke-on-Trent North BC, commanded universal support and that, as they suggested in their letter of representation, it was an issue of balancing the potential inconvenience which arose.

42. We recognised also that there was a strong and genuine desire amongst those in the Staffordshire Moorlands District wards that they should be located in Staffordshire Moorlands CC. There was also a strong and genuine belief on the part of those in the five Newcastle-under-Lyme Borough wards that the wards should not be divided.

43. We considered very carefully whether a second, discretionary, local inquiry would assist us in our consideration of this issue. We noted that a major part of the two days over which the local inquiry was held was taken up by discussion of which wards should be included in Stoke-on-Trent North BC to increase its unacceptably low electorate. We also noted that the latest representations did not propose any acceptable alternative. We decided that a second local inquiry would only serve to re-affirm the views already expressed by those from within both groups of wards and confirm what was already known to us. A second inquiry was therefore not considered necessary.

Recommendation

44. We were satisfied that our revised recommendations did not need to be modified. We therefore recommend the adoption of the following constituencies containing the wards as listed in Appendix C:-

	2000 electorate
Burton CC	70,324
Cannock Chase CC	70,995
Lichfield CC	68,301
Newcastle-under-Lyme BC	66,701
South Staffordshire CC	72,338
Stafford CC	69,274
Staffordshire Moorlands CC	60,810
Stoke-on-Trent Central BC	63,330
Stoke-on-Trent North BC	69,938
Stoke-on-Trent South BC	67,629
Stone CC	64,653
Tamworth CC	<u>69,490</u>
	<u>813,783</u>

SUFFOLK

The Number of Electors

1. There are currently seven constituencies in the County of Suffolk:-

	2000 electorate
Bury St Edmunds CC	76,095
Central Suffolk and North Ipswich CC	72,925
Ipswich BC	68,041
South Suffolk CC	68,888
Suffolk Coastal CC	76,168
Waveney CC	76,817
West Suffolk CC	69,482
	<hr/>
	<hr/>
	508,416

The Number of Constituencies

2. Suffolk had a 2000 parliamentary electorate of 508,416, which gave a theoretical entitlement to 7.27 constituencies. We decided that the county should continue to be allocated seven constituencies. With seven constituencies the average constituency electorate would be 72,631, which is 2,696 above the electoral quota. The electorates of the seven existing constituencies ranged from 68,041 in Ipswich BC to 76,817 in Waveney CC, a disparity of 8,776.

Provisional Recommendations

3. As a result of changes to district ward boundaries, thirteen of the new wards are partly in one constituency and partly in another. Our provisional recommendations realigned the constituency boundaries with the new ward boundaries so that the minimum number of electors were transferred, except in the case of the St Edmundsbury Borough ward of Horringer and Whelnetham, where 945 electors were transferred from Bury St Edmunds CC to West Suffolk CC, instead of 774 electors being transferred in the opposite direction. Whilst the ward bordered the town of Bury St Edmunds, the greater area of the ward is currently in the existing West Suffolk constituency. We also noted that to place the ward in West Suffolk CC would allow the electorates of the neighbouring Bury St Edmunds and West Suffolk constituencies to be closer to each other and to both the county average and the electoral quota.

4. Under our proposals Bury St Edmunds CC, Suffolk Coastal CC and Waveney CC would have electorates significantly above the electoral quota. However, we considered that with a county average of 72,631, these electorates were not disproportionately large and that any additional changes to bring constituency electorates closer would result in the transfer of an excessive number of electors and would create considerable and unnecessary disruption in the county.

5. The effect of our proposed changes in Suffolk would be to reduce the disparity between the constituencies from 8,776, to 7,589.

6. Our provisional recommendations were:-

	2000 electorate
Bury St Edmunds CC	74,921
Central Suffolk and North Ipswich CC	69,264
Ipswich BC	71,717
South Suffolk CC	69,119
Suffolk Coastal CC	76,085
Waveney CC	76,708
West Suffolk CC	<u>70,602</u>
	<u>508,416</u>

Representations

7. Following publication of our provisional recommendations, we received sixty-nine representations, including three counter-proposals, of which twenty expressed support for all or part of our proposals, five expressed support for part of our proposals whilst objecting to other parts and forty-two objected to all or part of our proposals. Two representations made general observations. The main issues raised in the objections were contained in the counter-proposals:-

- a) the first counter-proposal transferred the St Edmundsbury Borough ward of Horringer and Whelnetham from West Suffolk CC to Bury St Edmunds CC;
- b) the second counter-proposal transferred the Waveney District wards of The Saints from Waveney CC to Suffolk Coastal CC and Wrentham from Suffolk Coastal CC to Waveney CC; and
- c) the third counter-proposal transferred the St Edmundsbury Borough wards of Cavendish and Clare from South Suffolk CC to West Suffolk CC; the Waveney District wards of Bungay and The Saints from Waveney CC to Central Suffolk and North Ipswich CC; and the Waveney District ward of Wrentham from Suffolk Coastal CC to Waveney CC as in the second counter-proposal.

Local Inquiry and Assistant Commissioner's Report

8. Although we were not statutorily required to hold a local inquiry, we decided to exercise our discretion to hold one. Following the announcement of the inquiry one further representation objecting to our proposals was received, which did not introduce any new evidence.

The St Edmundsbury Borough ward of Horringer and Whelnetham

9. The Assistant Commissioner reported that there was both support for, and objection to, our proposal that the divided Horringer and Whelnetham ward should be wholly included in West Suffolk CC. The first counter-proposal placed the ward in Bury St Edmunds CC. He considered that the ward had extremely strong ties with the town of Bury St Edmunds, that its public transport links were centred on the town and that it did not have any significant ties with the principal settlements in the West Suffolk constituency. Whilst only just over half the

area of the ward was currently in the West Suffolk constituency, much of that area comprised Ickworth Park, which was very sparsely populated. He also reported that our provisional recommendations transferred more electors than the counter-proposal and that it would not result in the electorate of Bury St Edmunds CC, at 76,640, being as high as our proposed Waveney constituency (76,708), which would still be the largest constituency in Suffolk. He considered that our provisional recommendations, and the support for them, failed to have sufficient regard for the ties between the Horringer and Whelnetham ward and the town of Bury St Edmunds. He accordingly recommended that the ward should be included in Bury St Edmunds CC, as in the first counter-proposal.

The Waveney District wards of Bungay, The Saints and Wrentham

10. The second counter-proposal, and part of the third, suggested that the Waveney District wards of Bungay, The Saints and Wrentham should be in different constituencies to those proposed by us. The Assistant Commissioner reported that there was some objection to the counter-proposals and no additional support for them.

11. He also reported that the third counter-proposal to place the Bungay and The Saints wards in Central Suffolk and North Ipswich CC was unsatisfactory as it would result in the constituency having a poorer shape than at present and the constituency would also cover parts of four separate district councils. He considered that the historic links between Bungay and Beccles should be maintained.

12. In respect of the Wrentham ward, where it was counter-proposed that the ward should be included in Waveney CC, he reported that there was a considerable community of interest between Wrentham and Southwold in Suffolk Coastal CC and that there were good lines of communication between Wrentham and the Suffolk Coastal constituency. He reported that there was no support from within the ward for it to be included in Waveney CC. He accordingly rejected the second and third counter-proposals for the three Waveney District wards.

The St Edmundsbury Borough wards of Cavendish and Clare

13. The Assistant Commissioner reported that there was no support for, and some objection to that part of the third counter-proposal which placed the St Edmundsbury Borough wards of Cavendish and Clare in West Suffolk CC, so as to make South Suffolk CC coterminous with the borough. He considered that the interests of the two wards appeared to lie with South Suffolk CC and, despite the convenience of coterminosity, he found no good reason for removing them from South Suffolk CC, where the ensuing disruption to local ties caused by the counter-proposal could not be justified. He accordingly rejected this aspect of the third counter-proposal.

14. The Assistant Commissioner recommended that our provisional recommendations should be altered to include the St Edmundsbury Borough ward of Horringer and Whelnetham in Bury St Edmunds CC instead of in West Suffolk CC. He also recommended that our provisional recommendations should be adopted for all other constituencies.

Revised Recommendations

15. Although we considered that the electorate of Bury St Edmunds CC would be high and that the disparity between the electorates of the largest and smallest constituencies in the county would increase slightly, from 7,589 in our provisional recommendations to 7,825, we were persuaded to adopt the change recommended by the Assistant Commissioner due to the strength of the evidence and the local support for it.

16. We accordingly published the following revised recommendations:-

2000 electorate	
Bury St Edmunds CC	76,640
Central Suffolk and North Ipswich CC	69,264
Ipswich BC	71,717
South Suffolk CC	69,119
Suffolk Coastal CC	76,085
Waveney CC	76,708
West Suffolk CC	68,883
	<hr/>
	508,416

Further Representations

17. Following publication of our revised recommendations, we received four representations, all of which supported our revised proposals.

Recommendation

18. We were satisfied that our revised recommendations did not need to be modified, and we recommend the adoption of the following constituencies containing the wards as listed in Appendix C:-

2000 electorate	
Bury St Edmunds CC	76,640
Central Suffolk and North Ipswich CC	69,264
Ipswich BC	71,717
South Suffolk CC	69,119
Suffolk Coastal CC	76,085
Waveney CC	76,708
West Suffolk CC	68,883
	<hr/>
	508,416

SURREY

The Number of Electors

1. There are currently eleven constituencies in the County of Surrey:-

	2000 electorate
East Surrey CC	74,786
Epsom and Ewell BC	74,751
Esher and Walton BC	74,052
Guildford CC	76,621
Mole Valley CC	69,093
Reigate BC	65,547
Runnymede and Weybridge CC	73,357
South West Surrey CC	73,473
Spelthorne BC	69,291
Surrey Heath CC	75,454
Woking CC	71,260
	<hr/>
	<hr/>
	797,685

The Number of Constituencies

2. Surrey had a parliamentary electorate of 797,685 which gave a theoretical entitlement to 11.41 constituencies. We decided to continue to allocate eleven constituencies. With eleven constituencies, the average constituency electorate in the county would be 72,517, which is 2,582 more than the electoral quota. The electorates of the eleven existing constituencies ranged from 76,621 in Guildford CC to 65,547 in Reigate BC, a disparity of 11,074.

Provisional Recommendations

3. As a result of changes to the ward boundaries, six of the new wards in the county are partly in one constituency and partly in another. We considered whether we should adopt the minimum amount of change necessary to realign the constituency boundaries with the new divided wards, or whether we should additionally address the electoral disparity between Guildford CC and Reigate BC. We provisionally decided to recommend changes which both realigned the constituency boundaries with the new ward boundaries and reduced the electoral disparity.

4. Four north-eastern Mole Valley District wards are divided between Epsom and Ewell BC and Mole Valley CC. However, we noted that the new ward boundaries did not affect electors in any of the four wards and that only minor alterations to the constituencies were required to realign their boundaries with the new ward boundaries. Accordingly, we proposed that the Ashtead Common, Ashtead Park and Ashtead Village wards should be placed wholly within Epsom and Ewell BC and that the Leatherhead South ward should be placed wholly in Mole Valley CC.

5. The two Waverley Borough wards of Alfold, Cranleigh Rural and Ellens Green, and Bramley, Busbridge and Hascombe are divided between Guildford CC and South West Surrey CC. We proposed realigning the constituency boundaries by including the Alfold, Cranleigh Rural and Ellens Green ward in Guildford CC and the Bramley, Busbridge and Hascombe ward in South West Surrey CC. These changes would reduce the electorate of Guildford CC. Additionally, we proposed that the Preston ward of Reigate and Banstead Borough should be transferred from Epsom and Ewell BC to Reigate BC. This change would increase the electorate of Reigate BC and would further reduce the disparity in the county.

6. Our proposals involved minor changes to five constituencies and no change to the other six. We also recommended that the names of the existing constituencies should be retained. The electorates of all eleven constituencies would be within 5,085 of the county average and the disparity would be reduced from 11,074 to 8,022. Six boroughs or districts would not be divided between constituencies and Spelthorne BC would remain coterminous with Spelthorne Borough.

7. Our provisional recommendations were:-

	2000 electorate
East Surrey CC	74,786
Epsom and Ewell BC	72,866
Esher and Walton BC	74,052
Guildford CC	74,987
Mole Valley CC	69,093
Reigate BC	67,432
Runnymede and Weybridge CC	73,357
South West Surrey CC	75,107
Spelthorne BC	69,291
Surrey Heath CC	75,454
Woking CC	<u>71,260</u>
	<u><u>797,685</u></u>

Representations

8. Following publication of our provisional recommendations we received a total of nineteen representations. Only five representations objected to our provisional recommendations and no one suggested that there should be other than an allocation of eleven constituencies. The issues raised were:-

- a) the transfer of the divided Waverley Borough ward of Bramley, Busbridge and Hascombe to South West Surrey CC; and
- b) the names of the Guildford, Reigate and Surrey Heath constituencies.

Local Inquiry and Assistant Commissioner's Report

9. We were required to hold an inquiry at which, the Assistant Commissioner reported, the issues listed above were discussed. Following the announcement of the inquiry, a further three representations were received, all of which reiterated previous objections. A further two representations of objection were received after the inquiry had closed.

The Bramley, Busbridge and Hascombe ward

10. The Assistant Commissioner reported that there were seven objectors who made representations against our proposal for this ward. The main reasons for the objections related to issues of local ties, which were considered to be with Guildford and not with Godalming or Farnham. Objectors pointed to the historic and social ties with Guildford, including the frequency of public transport and shopping facilities, and argued that the infrequency of public transport elsewhere would make it difficult to see an MP based in either Godalming or Farnham.

11. During the inquiry, the Assistant Commissioner drew attention to the fact that our basic unit to construct constituencies was the ward. He noted that Bramley was only part of the Bramley, Busbridge and Hascombe ward and that no objections had been received from Busbridge or Hascombe. He did not doubt the strength of popular feeling but reported that, when taking note of local ties, he could see no reason why, if Bramley were in South West Surrey CC, it would stop the electorate from using facilities in Guildford. He also noted that, during the previous general review, objectors had conceded that there were some local ties with Godalming, although they had stressed that ties were mainly with Guildford. He accepted that it might be more difficult to get to an MP's surgery in South West Surrey CC, but was of the opinion that visits to an MP's surgery were hardly an every day occurrence. He further reported that objectors had given little weight to the need to equalise constituency electorates. He concluded that the arguments in favour of our proposal carried greater weight and therefore supported the provisional recommendations.

The name of Guildford CC

12. The Assistant Commissioner reported that one representation was received to change the name of Guildford CC to Guildford and Cranleigh CC in order to reflect the unusual shape of the constituency. He noted that there was no local support for the change of name and he recommended that the existing name be retained.

The name of Reigate BC

13. The Assistant Commissioner reported that two representations were received to change the name of Reigate BC to Reigate and Banstead BC. He noted that Reigate was central to the constituency, whereas Banstead was situated in the northern corner, and furthermore, that Redhill and other areas might have a claim to be included in the constituency name. He also noted that the constituency contained 70% of the area of the Borough of Reigate and Banstead, and that electors in the remaining 30% of the borough, not in Reigate BC, might well be confused as to the identity of their constituency if Reigate BC was renamed. He recommended that the existing name should be retained.

The name of Surrey Heath CC

14. The Assistant Commissioner reported that two representations were received suggesting that Surrey Heath CC should be called North West Surrey CC or West Surrey CC. The main reason for these proposals was that the constituency was not coterminous with the Borough of Surrey Heath. He noted also that there was a strong objection to the alternative names. He considered that the alternatives were even more indeterminate than the current name and, as the constituency already contained a large part of Surrey Heath Borough, he could see no good reason to change the name of the constituency. He recommended that the existing name be retained.

Recommendation

15. We decided to accept the Assistant Commissioner's recommendations in full. We therefore recommend the adoption of the following constituencies containing the wards as listed in Appendix C:-

	2000 electorate
East Surrey CC	74,786
Epsom and Ewell BC	72,866
Esher and Walton BC	74,052
Guildford CC	74,987
Mole Valley CC	69,093
Reigate BC	67,432
Runnymede and Weybridge CC	73,357
South West Surrey CC	75,107
Spelthorne BC	69,291
Surrey Heath CC	75,454
Woking CC	71,260
	<hr/>
	<hr/>
	797,685

SWINDON

The Number of Electors

1. There is currently one constituency, South Swindon CC, and part of one other, North Swindon CC, in the County of Swindon. The figures below for these two constituencies relate only to those electors who are within the County of Swindon:-

	2000 electorate
North Swindon CC (part)	66,038
South Swindon CC	<u>71,862</u>
	<u><u>137,900</u></u>

The Number of Constituencies

2. Following the Wiltshire (Borough of Thamesdown) (Structural Change) Order 1995, the Borough of Thamesdown ceased to form part of the County of Wiltshire. The area of the former Borough of Thamesdown became a new unitary authority (now named Swindon). The remaining four districts in the county formed the County of Wiltshire. We noted that to separate Swindon and Wiltshire for the purpose of allocating constituencies would entail the North Wiltshire District ward of Cricklade, which is currently in North Swindon CC, being transferred to a Wiltshire constituency.

3. Swindon had a 2000 parliamentary electorate of 137,900, which gave a theoretical entitlement to 1.97 constituencies. We therefore decided to treat Swindon separately from Wiltshire and to allocate it two constituencies. With two constituencies, the county average would be 68,950, which is only 985 below the electoral quota. The disparity between the electorates of the two existing constituencies is 2,102.

Provisional Recommendations

4. We proposed that the North Wiltshire District ward of Cricklade, which is currently in North Swindon CC, should become part of a revised North Wiltshire constituency. As a result of changes to the ward boundaries, two of the new wards (Blunsdon, and Covingham and Nythe) are partly in one constituency and partly in another. Our provisional recommendations realigned the constituency boundary with the new ward boundaries and slightly increased the disparity from 2,102 to 3,688.

5. Our provisional recommendations were:-

	2000 electorate
North Swindon CC	67,106
South Swindon CC	<u>70,794</u>
	<u><u>137,900</u></u>

Representations

6. Following publication of our provisional recommendations, we received ten representations, of which nine approved of our provisional recommendations and one suggested an alternative distribution of wards between constituencies.

Recommendation

7. No local inquiry was required to be held. We were satisfied that no compelling argument against our provisional recommendations had been put forward and, in the circumstances, we decided not to use our discretion to hold an inquiry. In view of this, and given the support received for our proposals, we recommend the adoption of the following constituencies containing the wards as listed in Appendix C:-

	2000 electorate
North Swindon CC	67,106
South Swindon CC	<u>70,794</u>
	<u><u>137,900</u></u>

WARRINGTON

The Number of Electors

1. There are currently two constituencies in the County of Warrington:-

	2000 electorate
Warrington North BC	72,816
Warrington South BC	74,166
	<hr/> <hr/> <hr/>
	146,982

The Number of Constituencies

2. Following the Cheshire (Boroughs of Halton and Warrington) (Structural Changes) Order 1996, the Borough of Warrington ceased to form part of the County of Cheshire and became a new unitary authority.

3. Warrington had a 2000 parliamentary electorate of 146,982, which gave a theoretical entitlement to 2.10 seats. With two constituencies allocated, the average constituency electorate would be 73,491, which is 3,556 above the electoral quota. We provisionally decided that the county should continue to be reviewed separately and that it should continue to be allocated two seats. The disparity between the electorates of the two existing constituencies is 1,350, which our provisional recommendations increased to 3,246.

Provisional Recommendations

4. As a result of changes to ward boundaries in Warrington, three of the new wards are partly in Warrington North BC and partly in Warrington South BC. Our provisional recommendations realigned the constituency boundaries with the new ward boundaries. We considered whether to recommend a change to improve the electoral figures, but concluded that any change would involve disruption to a large number of electors for a relatively small improvement in the electorates. We therefore decided to recommend minimum change to the existing constituencies. We proposed to include the whole of the divided wards of Bewsey and Whitecross, and Whittle Hall in Warrington South BC and the whole of the Fairfield and Howley ward in Warrington North BC.

5. Our provisional recommendations were:-

	2000 electorate
Warrington North BC	71,868
Warrington South BC	75,114
	<hr/> <hr/> <hr/>
	146,982

Representations

6. Following publication of our provisional recommendations, we received thirty-five representations, of which twenty-nine fully supported our proposals, whilst six objected to them.

7. The main issues raised in the objections were contained in two counter-proposals:-

- a) the first counter-proposal submitted that the Bewsey and Whitecross ward should be included in Warrington North BC; and
- b) the second counter-proposal submitted that the Bewsey and Whitecross, and Fairfield and Howley wards should remain divided between constituencies.

Local Inquiry and Assistant Commissioner's Report

8. We decided to exercise our discretion and hold an inquiry. Following the announcement of the inquiry a further seven representations were received, all of which supported our proposals. The Assistant Commissioner reported that no further issues arose at the inquiry.

The Bewsey and Whitecross ward

9. The Assistant Commissioner reported that it was proposed in the first counter-proposal that the divided Bewsey and Whitecross ward should be included in Warrington North BC. He noted that the counter-proposal resulted in a very large disparity of 11,238 between the two constituencies. He also reported that it was argued that this disparity would reduce over time, due to the forecast growth in Warrington South BC, in contrast to our provisional recommendations where it was claimed the disparity would increase over time.

10. He found the evidence against the counter-proposal persuasive and that there was no compelling evidence to include the Bewsey and Whitecross ward in Warrington North BC. He was not persuaded by the argument that the traditional links between Bewsey and the north of Warrington would be broken by including the ward in Warrington South BC. He considered the very high disparity produced by the first counter-proposal unjustifiable and accordingly rejected it.

Divided wards

11. The Assistant Commissioner reported that it was submitted in the second counter-proposal that the two divided Warrington Borough wards of Bewsey and Whitecross, and Fairfield and Howley should remain divided between constituencies. He noted that our proposals were objected to on the grounds that they resulted in a greater disparity, were unnecessary and did not fit in with community identity or geographical boundaries. He also noted that the disparity under the counter-proposal would be 2,572, whilst under our proposals it was 3,246. He considered that the difference between the two figures was a minor issue.

12. He noted that the counter-proposal contradicted one of our stated guidelines, which is to realign constituency boundaries with local government ward boundaries so that no ward is divided between constituencies. He reported that he heard no evidence in support of the counter-proposal and could find no grounds to recommend that it should be adopted. He, therefore, rejected the second counter-proposal.

Recommendation

13. We agreed with the Assistant Commissioner's recommendations that the counter-proposals should be rejected and that the provisional recommendations should not be altered.

14. We accordingly recommended the adoption of the following constituencies containing the wards listed in Appendix C:-

	2000 electorate
Warrington North BC	71,868
Warrington South BC	<u>75,114</u>
	<u>146,982</u>

WARWICKSHIRE

The Number of Electors

1. There are currently five constituencies in the County of Warwickshire:-

	2000 electorate
North Warwickshire CC	73,889
Nuneaton CC	72,902
Rugby and Kenilworth CC	80,329
Stratford-on-Avon CC	83,843
Warwick and Leamington CC	<u>79,674</u>
	<u>390,637</u>

The Number of Constituencies

2. Warwickshire had a 2000 parliamentary electorate of 390,637, which gave a theoretical entitlement to 5.59 constituencies. If five constituencies were retained, the average constituency electorate would be 78,127, which is 8,192 above than the electoral quota, whereas with six constituencies the county average would be 65,106, which is 4,829 below than the electoral quota. We decided, therefore, to recommend that the county be allocated an extra, sixth, constituency. The electorates of the five existing constituencies ranged from 72,902 in Nuneaton CC to 83,843 in Stratford-on-Avon CC, a disparity of 10,941.

Provisional Recommendations

3. As a result of changes to the ward boundaries, four of the new wards in the county are partly in one constituency and partly in another. Our provisional recommendations realigned the constituency boundaries with the new ward boundaries.

4. The allocation of an additional constituency to Warwickshire meant that there would have to be major changes to some of the existing constituencies. However, we tried to keep these changes to a minimum. The geographical shape of the county and the distribution of the electorate made it difficult to create constituencies which did not divide all of the districts between constituencies and break local ties.

5. We noted that by combining North Warwickshire Borough and Nuneaton and Bedworth Borough, it would be possible to create two constituencies in the north of the county with electorates close to the electoral quota. We therefore proposed that the whole of the divided Nuneaton and Bedworth Borough wards of Bede and Slough should be included in North Warwickshire CC, thereby including the whole of the town of Bedworth in one constituency. In order to reduce the electorate of North Warwickshire CC to nearer the county average, we also proposed that the two North Warwickshire Borough wards of Arley and Whitacre, and Hartshill should be transferred to Nuneaton CC.

6. We included the whole of the divided Rugby Borough ward of Earl Craven and Wolston, as well as the Fosse and Wolvey wards, in a renamed Rugby CC. To further reduce the electorate of Nuneaton CC, we also proposed the transfer of the Nuneaton and Bedworth Borough ward of Bulkington to Rugby CC.

7. We considered alternative divisions of North Warwickshire Borough and Nuneaton and Bedworth Borough between constituencies, but noted that alternatives would result in the division of one or both of the towns of Atherstone or Bedworth. We considered that there would be significant disadvantages in dividing these towns between constituencies.

8. We reduced the electorate of our proposed Rugby CC by transferring the Rugby Borough wards of Dunchurch and Knightlow, Leam Valley and Ryton-on-Dunsmore, and the four Warwick District wards currently in Rugby and Kenilworth CC to a new constituency named Mid Warwickshire CC. As the proposed Rugby CC would no longer contain the town of Kenilworth, we proposed that the constituency should be renamed Rugby CC.

9. In order to reduce the large electorate of the current Warwick and Leamington CC, we proposed that the four Warwick District wards of Cubbington, Lapworth, Leek Wootton and Radford Semele should be transferred to the new Mid Warwickshire CC. We therefore proposed that the remaining twelve wards of Warwick District should form a revised Warwick and Leamington CC. As this constituency would now be largely urban in nature, we proposed that its designation should change from a county constituency to a borough constituency.

10. We proposed that the Stratford on Avon District ward of Tanworth should be transferred from the current Warwick and Leamington CC to Stratford-on-Avon CC. We further proposed the transfer of the eight north-eastern Stratford on Avon District wards, which included the wards of Harbury and Wellesbourne, from Stratford-on-Avon CC to the new Mid Warwickshire CC. We therefore proposed that the remaining twenty-two wards of Stratford on Avon District should form Stratford-on-Avon CC. Under our proposals, the electorates of all six constituencies would be within 2,766 of the county average and the disparity would be reduced from 10,941 to 5,164.

11. Our provisional recommendations were:-

	2000 electorate
Mid Warwickshire CC	62,708
North Warwickshire CC	67,872
Nuneaton CC	66,460
Rugby CC	65,407
Stratford-on-Avon CC	64,954
Warwick and Leamington BC	<hr/> 63,236 <hr/> <hr/> 390,637

Representations

12. Following publication of our provisional recommendations we received 141 representations, of which twenty-four supported all or parts of our proposals, three supported parts of our proposals whilst objecting to other parts and 111 objected to all or part of our proposals. Three representations noted our proposals.

13. The main issues raised in the objections were contained in eleven counter-proposals. The principal issue concerned the treatment of the towns of Warwick and Royal Leamington Spa. Other counter-proposals overlapped in the claims they made for the transfer between constituencies of individual wards or groups of wards. The five main issues raised were:-

- a) whether the towns of Warwick and Royal Leamington Spa should be in the same or in different constituencies;
- b) whether Mid Warwickshire CC should include the two Stratford on Avon District wards of Harbury and Wellesbourne, the three Rugby Borough wards of Dunchurch and Knightlow, Leam Valley and Ryton-on-Dunsmore, or the four Warwick District wards of Cublington, Lapworth, Leek Wooton and Radford Semele;
- c) whether the North Warwickshire Borough wards of Arley and Whitacre, and Hartshill should be included in Nuneaton CC;
- d) whether the Nuneaton and Bedworth Borough ward of Bulkington should be included in Rugby CC; and
- e) the names of the new constituencies.

Local Inquiry and Assistant Commissioner's Report

14. We were required to hold an inquiry. Following the announcement of the inquiry a further eleven representations were received, two of which expressed support for our proposals, one supported part of our proposals, whilst objecting to other parts and eight objected to all or parts of our proposals. The Assistant Commissioner reported that the main issues raised at the inquiry were those listed above.

15. Six of the counter-proposals did not require further serious consideration: they attracted no public support and some of them did not even have the benefit of the support of their proposer at the inquiry.

Warwick and Royal Leamington Spa

16. The Assistant Commissioner considered that, although the towns of Warwick and Royal Leamington Spa had distinct historic identities, they also had very strong cultural, social and business links, and were like "Siamese twins". He noted that they had been in the same constituency since at least 1885. He considered that the issue of the two towns was central at the inquiry because whatever decision was made regarding them would affect how the neighbouring constituencies would be constituted. He also noted that there was a significant amount of evidence in support of the provisionally recommended constituency.

17. He accepted that Warwick and Royal Leamington Spa should remain together and should not be divided between constituencies. He rejected the counter-proposals that linked the town of Kenilworth with either Warwick or Royal Leamington Spa, because he considered that Kenilworth "would benefit from being the senior partner, rather than the junior partner, in any constituency".

Mid Warwickshire CC and Stratford-on-Avon CC

18. The objections to the proposed Mid Warwickshire CC fell into two categories. There were general objections that related to the area, nature and shape of the proposed Mid Warwickshire CC, which he said were without merit, and there were objections to specific groups of wards. He did not consider that the proposed constituency would be unusual and said that it was similar to the current rural constituency based on the town of Stratford-on-Avon.

19. He then considered and also rejected the objections to the inclusion of the various wards in the constituency. The Rugby Borough wards of Dunchurch and Knightlow, Leam Valley and Ryton-on-Dunsmore, which were included in Mid Warwickshire CC, should remain in the proposed constituency because he considered that the A45 road provided a convenient division between the three wards and the town of Rugby and that the ties of these wards with Rugby were not so strong as to require their inclusion in a Rugby constituency.

20. There were objections to the inclusion of the Stratford on Avon District wards of Harbury and Wellesbourne in the proposed constituency. However, he considered that, as it was necessary to reduce the electorate of Stratford-on-Avon CC and as neither ward had predominant links with any town in particular, and were both rural in nature, they would fit in well with similar wards in Mid Warwickshire CC.

21. He also reported that there were objections to the inclusion of the Warwick District wards of Cubbington, Lapworth, Leek Wootton and Radford Semele in Mid Warwickshire CC, rather than in Warwick and Leamington BC. However, he considered that these four wards were substantially rural in nature and, as such, should form integral parts of a new rural Mid Warwickshire CC.

North Warwickshire CC, Nuneaton CC and Rugby CC

22. The Assistant Commissioner noted that the electorate of North Warwickshire Borough was too small to form a constituency on its own and that wards from Nuneaton and Bedworth Borough had to be added to it to make a constituency with an electorate closer to the county average and the electoral quota. He considered that the five wards that comprised the town of Bedworth were indivisible and should form part of North Warwickshire CC.

23. It was submitted that the North Warwickshire Borough should not be divided between constituencies and that the wards of Arley and Whitacre, and Hartshill had closer ties with the rest of North Warwickshire than with Nuneaton. However, whilst he agreed that local ties existed, to include both in North Warwickshire CC would result in too high an electorate. He therefore rejected the counter-proposal to include all of North Warwickshire Borough in North Warwickshire CC.

24. It was also submitted that the Nuneaton and Bedworth ward of Bulkington should remain in Nuneaton CC and not be included in Rugby CC. He noted that Bulkington had strong ties with both the towns of Bedworth and Nuneaton, and accepted that, whilst it had some ties with Rugby, they were not strong and travelling by public transport was difficult. However, he considered that to include the Bulkington ward in either North Warwickshire CC or Nuneaton CC would result in constituencies with electorates that were too far above

the county average, and that Bulkington was capable of being a significant part of a Rugby CC.

25. He therefore rejected the counter-proposals affecting the North Warwickshire and Nuneaton constituencies. He considered that the provisional recommendations achieved a good numerical balance and that it was inevitable that some local ties would be broken with the creation of the sixth constituency.

Constituency names

26. The Assistant Commissioner reported that there were a number of objections to the name of the proposed Mid Warwickshire CC. He reported that the predominant town in the seat was undoubtedly Kenilworth, but it was in an area that was otherwise substantially rural. He considered that merely to name the constituency Kenilworth CC would be an inaccurate description, that Southam was in a pivotal position in the proposed constituency, and that the alternative name of Kenilworth and Southam CC, which had support at the inquiry, clearly identified the constituency and would give both towns the status they needed.

Revised Recommendations

27. We agreed with the Assistant Commissioner that the only change to our provisional recommendations should be for the change of name of Mid Warwickshire CC to Kenilworth and Southam CC.

28. We accordingly published the revised recommendation for Kenilworth and Southam CC and confirmed our provisional recommendations as final for the five other constituencies. Our revised recommendations were:-

	2000 electorate
Kenilworth and Southam CC	62,708
North Warwickshire CC	67,872
Nuneaton CC	66,460
Rugby CC	65,407
Stratford-on-Avon CC	64,954
Warwick and Leamington BC	<hr/> 63,236 <hr/>
	<hr/> <hr/> 390,637

Further Representations

29. Following publication of our revised recommendations, we received three representations. Two representations approved of the revision and one objected to them. The objection reiterated concern about the inclusion of the Stratford on Avon District ward of Wellesbourne in Kenilworth and Southam CC and also complained of the exclusion of Wellesbourne from the name of the proposed constituency. We noted that the issues had been fully considered by the Assistant Commissioner and decided that there was no new significant evidence to justify modifying our recommendations.

Recommendation

30. We therefore recommend the adoption of the following constituencies containing the wards as listed in Appendix C:-

	2000 electorate
Kenilworth and Southam CC	62,708
North Warwickshire CC	67,872
Nuneaton CC	66,460
Rugby CC	65,407
Stratford-on-Avon CC	64,954
Warwick and Leamington BC	<u>63,236</u>
	<u>390,637</u>

WEST SUSSEX

The Number of Electors

1. There are currently eight constituencies in the County of West Sussex:-

	2000 electorate
Arundel and South Downs CC	70,419
Bognor Regis and Littlehampton CC	67,850
Chichester CC	76,378
Crawley BC	71,789
East Worthing and Shoreham CC	71,789
Horsham CC	78,480
Mid Sussex CC	71,002
Worthing West BC	<u>72,556</u>
	<u>580,263</u>

The Number of Constituencies

2. West Sussex had a 2000 parliamentary electorate of 580,263, which gave a theoretical entitlement to 8.30 constituencies. With eight constituencies retained, the average electorate of 72,533 is 2,598 above the electoral quota. We therefore provisionally decided to retain eight constituencies in West Sussex. The electorates of the eight existing constituencies ranged from 67,850 in Bognor Regis and Littlehampton CC to 78,480 in Horsham CC, a disparity of 10,630, which our provisional recommendations reduced to 4,171.

Provisional Recommendations

3. As a result of changes to the district ward boundaries, sixteen of the new wards in West Sussex were partly in one constituency and partly in another. Our provisional recommendations realigned the constituency boundaries with the new ward boundaries. We recommended changes to seven of the eight constituencies to reduce the disparity.

4. We proposed that the divided Chichester District ward of Plaistow be included in Chichester CC. We also reduced the electorate of Chichester CC by including the whole of the divided Chichester District ward of Bury in Arundel and South Downs CC. We proposed that the Chichester District ward of Petworth, which was currently divided between Chichester CC and Horsham CC, should be included in Arundel and South Downs CC, and we transferred the Chichester District ward of Wisborough Green from Horsham CC to Arundel and South Downs CC.

5. The divided Arun District wards of Felpham East and Yapton were included in Bognor Regis and Littlehampton CC, thereby increasing the electorate of that constituency. We noted that to include either ward in Arundel and South Downs CC would divide Bognor Regis and Littlehampton CC into two detached parts. We also included the divided Worthing Borough wards of Central and Salvington in Worthing West BC. We noted that this change would affect just twenty-nine electors and would be the only change made to the existing East Worthing and Shoreham CC and Worthing West BC.

6. We proposed that the divided Horsham District ward of Cowfold, Shermanbury and West Grinstead, and the divided Mid Sussex District wards of Bolney and Hassocks should be included in Arundel and South Downs CC. We also proposed that the divided Horsham District ward of Billingshurst and Shipley and the divided Mid Sussex District ward of Ardingly and Balcombe be included in Horsham CC. These changes reduced the electorate of the existing Horsham CC and meant that the constituency would contain parts of only two districts, instead of three as at present.

7. The four divided Mid Sussex District wards of Burgess Hill Dunstall, Burgess Hill Meeds, Burgess Hill Victoria and Cuckfield were included in Mid Sussex CC. We proposed no change to Crawley BC.

8. Our provisional recommendations were:-

	2000 electorate
Arundel and South Downs CC	73,210
Bognor Regis and Littlehampton CC	71,328
Chichester CC	75,499
Crawley BC	71,789
East Worthing and Shoreham CC	71,760
Horsham CC	72,277
Mid Sussex CC	71,815
Worthing West BC	<u>72,585</u>
	<u>580,263</u>

Representations

9. Following publication of our provisional recommendations we received twenty-three representations, of which eight expressed support for all or part of our proposals, two expressed support for part of our proposals whilst objecting to other parts and thirteen objected to them. There was a proposal to change the name of Arundel and South Downs CC. The main issues were contained in the two principal counter-proposals:-

- a) the first placed the Chichester District wards of Petworth and Plaistow in Chichester CC and Horsham CC, respectively; and
- b) the other included the Mid Sussex District ward of Bolney in Mid Sussex CC.

Local Inquiry and Assistant Commissioner's Report

10. We were required to hold an inquiry. Following the announcement of the inquiry a further seven representations were received. Two approved of the provisional recommendations and five objected to them. The Assistant Commissioner agreed with our decision to allocate eight constituencies. He noted that there were no objections to our provisionally recommended Crawley BC, East Worthing and Shoreham CC and Worthing West BC and accordingly endorsed them.

Arundel and South Downs CC, Chichester CC and Horsham CC

11. The Assistant Commissioner reported that the inclusion of the Chichester District ward of Petworth in Arundel and South Downs CC was objected to because it broke ties between Petworth and the rest of Chichester District. It was suggested that the Chichester District ward of Plaistow should be included in Horsham CC to allow for the Petworth ward to be included in Chichester CC. He noted that the existing Chichester CC had too high an electorate and needed to be reduced. He rejected the counter-proposal because it would result in poor shapes for both Arundel and South Downs CC and Chichester CC, would unnecessarily include parts of three Districts in Horsham CC and would divide Chichester District between three constituencies.

Horsham CC and Mid Sussex CC

12. The three Mid Sussex District wards of Ardingly and Balcombe, Copthorne and Worth, and Crawley Down and Turners Hill were discussed in the course of the evidence and dissatisfaction was expressed that Ardingly in particular was included in Horsham CC. The Assistant Commissioner considered they had stronger ties to Crawley, Haywards Heath and the rest of Mid Sussex than they did to Horsham. However, he noted that their inclusion in Mid Sussex CC was not possible without considerable disruption and that the electorate of our proposed Horsham CC was very close to both the county average and the electoral quota. He therefore endorsed the inclusion of these wards in Horsham CC.

Arundel and South Downs CC and Mid Sussex CC

13. He noted that the majority of the electorate of the Mid Sussex District ward of Bolney was in Arundel and South Downs CC. However, he agreed with the evidence that Bolney had very close ties with Cuckfield, which was in our proposed Mid Sussex CC, and concluded that the Bolney ward should be included in Mid Sussex CC. He also considered that, if the Bolney ward were to be transferred to Mid Sussex CC, the Mid Sussex District wards of Hassocks, and Hurstpierpoint and Downs would not be isolated from the remainder of Arundel and South Downs CC and could therefore remain in it.

Arundel and South Downs CC and Bognor Regis and Littlehampton CC

14. The Assistant Commissioner noted that to include the Arun District ward of Yapton in Arundel and South Downs CC, which was proposed by a single objector, would divide Bognor Regis and Littlehampton CC into two detached parts. He also noted that this was against our stated policy. He accordingly endorsed the inclusion of the Yapton ward in Bognor Regis and Littlehampton CC.

Name of Arundel and South Downs CC

15. He reported that the proposal to change the name of Arundel and South Downs CC received no support and recommended that the existing name should be retained.

Revised Recommendations

16. We considered that the unusual shape of the Bolney ward meant that its inclusion in Mid Sussex CC resulted in an unsatisfactory shape for that constituency, and also, to some

extent, resulted in the wards of Hassocks, and Hurstpierpoint and Downs being partially separated from the rest of Arundel and South Downs CC. However, we found the evidence for the inclusion of the Bolney ward in Mid Sussex CC to be strong enough to overcome our concerns about the shape of the constituency.

17. We therefore agreed with the Assistant Commissioner's recommendation that the provisional recommendations for two of the eight constituencies should be revised, so as to include the Mid Sussex District ward of Bolney in Mid Sussex CC. We accordingly published the following revised recommendations:-

2000 electorate	
Arundel and South Downs CC	71,203
Bognor Regis and Littlehampton CC	71,328
Chichester CC	75,499
Crawley BC	71,789
East Worthing and Shoreham CC	71,760
Horsham CC	72,277
Mid Sussex CC	73,822
Worthing West BC	72,585
	<hr/>
	<u>580,263</u>

Further Representations

18. Following publication of our revised recommendations we received eight representations, of which four supported our proposals. Of the four representations objecting to our revised recommendations, three objected to the inclusion of the Mid Sussex District ward of Bolney in Mid Sussex CC, whilst the other objected to the name of Arundel and South Downs CC. These representations repeated objections which had already been considered by the Assistant Commissioner and contained no new significant evidence. We saw no reason to modify our recommendations.

Recommendation

19. We were satisfied that our revised recommendations did not need to be modified. We therefore recommend the adoption of the following constituencies containing the wards as listed in Appendix C:-

2000 electorate	
Arundel and South Downs CC	71,203
Bognor Regis and Littlehampton CC	71,328
Chichester CC	75,499
Crawley BC	71,789
East Worthing and Shoreham CC	71,760
Horsham CC	72,277
Mid Sussex CC	73,822
Worthing West BC	72,585
	<hr/>
	<u>580,263</u>

WILTSHIRE

The Number of Electors

1. There are currently four whole constituencies in the County of Wiltshire and part of one other, North Swindon CC. The figures set out below for these five constituencies relate only to those electors who are within the County of Wiltshire:-

	2000 electorate
Devizes CC	83,252
North Swindon CC (part)	3,722
North Wiltshire CC	79,263
Salisbury CC	80,848
Westbury CC	<u>75,066</u>
	<u><u>322,151</u></u>

The Number of Constituencies

2. Following the Wiltshire (Borough of Thamesdown) (Structural Change) Order 1995, the Borough of Thamesdown ceased to form part of the County of Wiltshire. The area of the former Borough of Thamesdown became a new unitary authority (now named Swindon). The remaining four districts in the county formed the County of Wiltshire. We noted that to separate Wiltshire and Swindon for the purpose of allocating constituencies would entail the North Wiltshire District ward of Cricklade, which is currently in North Swindon CC, being transferred to a Wiltshire constituency.

3. Wiltshire had a 2000 parliamentary electorate of 322,151, which gave a theoretical entitlement to 4.61 constituencies. Having decided that Wiltshire should be treated separately from Swindon, we decided that the county should be allocated five constituencies. With five constituencies, the average constituency electorate in the county would be 64,430, which is 5,505 below the electoral quota. The electorates of the four existing constituencies ranged from 75,066 in Westbury CC to 83,252 in Devizes CC.

Provisional Recommendations

4. As a result of changes to the district ward boundaries, three of the new wards are partly in one constituency and partly in another. Our provisional recommendations realigned the constituency boundaries with the new ward boundaries. In forming our proposals, we tried to keep changes to a minimum and endeavoured to follow district and existing constituency boundaries as much as possible. However, the need to reduce the sizes of the electorates of the existing constituencies, and the creation of an additional seat meant there were bound to be extensive changes to the existing pattern of seats.

5. We proposed that the North Wiltshire District ward of Cricklade, together with twenty-three other North Wiltshire District wards should be included in a revised North Wiltshire CC that excluded the town of Chippenham. The town of Calne would be included in North Wiltshire CC where it had been located prior to the last general review.

6. We proposed that the town of Chippenham, together with the northern part of West Wiltshire District (which included the town of Melksham), should form a new constituency named Chippenham CC. The remaining West Wiltshire District wards, together with wards from the western part of Salisbury District, should form a revised Westbury constituency. The remaining wards of Salisbury District, apart from the Bulford and Durrington wards, should form a revised Salisbury constituency. The whole of Kennet District and the Bulford and Durrington wards should form a revised Devizes constituency.

7. The overall effect of these changes would be to reduce the disparity between the constituencies with the highest and lowest electorates from 8,186 in the four existing constituencies, to 4,433 in the five proposed constituencies.

8. In forming our proposals, we considered retaining the town of Chippenham in a North Wiltshire constituency and the town of Calne in a Devizes constituency. However, we decided against this as we considered that the repercussions for the remainder of the county would involve an unacceptable amount of disruption.

9. Our provisional recommendations were:-

	2000 electorate
Chippenham CC	65,755
Devizes CC	64,707
North Wiltshire CC	61,322
Salisbury CC	65,016
Westbury CC	<u>65,351</u>
	<u>322,151</u>

Representations

10. Following publication of our provisional recommendations, we received fifty-six representations, the majority of which objected to our proposals, although no one objected to the creation of an extra seat. The objections included eighty-seven signed proformas and petitions containing a total of 765 names. The representations included one counter-proposal which differed radically from our proposals and there were a number of overlapping representations which proposed the transfer of individual wards or groups of wards between constituencies. The main issues raised in the objections were principally contained in five counter-proposals:-

- a) the principal counter-proposal, presented jointly at the inquiry, retained the wards encompassing the Chippenham area (including the wards of Box and Colerne) in the North Wiltshire constituency, transferred the wards encompassing Calne from North Wiltshire CC to a new constituency to be named Marlborough CC, transferred the wards in the west of Kennet District to a new Melksham and Devizes constituency and transferred the Salisbury District ward of Till Valley and Wylye from Salisbury CC to the new Marlborough constituency;
- b) the second counter-proposal transferred the West Wiltshire District ward of Paxcroft from Chippenham CC to Westbury CC, the Salisbury District ward of Till Valley and Wylye from Salisbury CC to Devizes CC, and the four Salisbury

District wards of Chalke Valley, Donhead, Fonthill and Nadder, and Tisbury and Fovant from Westbury CC to Salisbury CC;

- c) the third counter-proposal transferred the Salisbury District ward of Chalke Valley from Westbury CC to Salisbury CC;
- d) the fourth counter-proposal renamed Westbury CC as West Wiltshire CC, transferred the Salisbury District wards of Bulford and Durrington from Devizes CC to Salisbury CC, and transferred the West Wiltshire District ward of Paxcroft from Chippenham CC to West Wiltshire CC; and
- e) the fifth counter-proposal transferred the West Wiltshire District ward of Paxcroft from Chippenham CC to Westbury CC, the Salisbury District ward of Till Valley and Wylye from Salisbury CC to Devizes CC, the Salisbury District wards of Chalke Valley and Fonthill and Nadder from Westbury CC to Salisbury CC, the Kennet District wards of Bishops Cannings, Bromham and Rowde, and West Selkley from Devizes CC to North Wiltshire CC, and the North Wiltshire ward of Box from North Wiltshire CC to Chippenham CC.

Local Inquiry and Assistant Commissioner's Report

11. We were required to hold an inquiry. Following the announcement of the inquiry, a further sixteen representations were received. The Assistant Commissioner reported that there was unanimous support for our proposals that an additional, fifth, constituency should be allocated to the county, and that the North Wiltshire District ward of Cricklade should be included in a Wiltshire, rather than a Swindon constituency. In addition to the issues listed above he reported that objections were raised to the following proposals:-

- a) that the West Wiltshire District wards comprising Bradford on Avon should be located in the Chippenham constituency rather than with Trowbridge;
- b) that the West Wiltshire District area of Melksham should be located in a different constituency to Devizes and that the North Wiltshire District area of Calne should be located in a different constituency to Marlborough; and
- c) the name of the Chippenham constituency.

The Chalke Valley, Donhead, Fonthill and Nadder, and Tisbury and Fovant wards

12. The Assistant Commissioner reported that there was substantial objection to our proposal to transfer the Salisbury District wards of Chalke Valley, Donhead, Fonthill and Nadder, and Tisbury and Fovant from Salisbury CC to Westbury CC. He noted that, if Wiltshire was to be allocated an extra constituency, the electorate of Salisbury CC had to be reduced substantially.

13. He accepted that wards to the west looked to Salisbury to meet many of their needs, but he considered that the links between the Chalke Valley ward and Salisbury were more pronounced than were those of the Nadder Valley wards with Salisbury. He further considered that the Chalke Valley ward was remote from the remainder of the proposed Westbury constituency and was separated from the Nadder Valley by dramatic chalk

downland. He further reported that the Chalke Valley ward fell into a different County Council electoral division from the other three wards and remarked upon the strong sense of community within Chalke Valley. He considered that the inclusion of the Chalke Valley ward in Salisbury CC would not have a significant adverse effect on the electoral disparity and therefore recommended a change to our proposals which would place the Chalke Valley ward in Salisbury CC instead of in Westbury CC, but he was not prepared to recommend the transfer of all four wards because of the large electoral disparity it would produce.

The Till Valley and Wylie ward

14. We had proposed that the Salisbury District ward of Till Valley and Wylie should remain in Salisbury CC. However, several counter-proposals submitted that the ward should be included in Devizes CC. The Assistant Commissioner considered that the ward had clear links with Salisbury and that its inclusion in Devizes CC would not be an advantage. He did not consider that there was a substantial case for the transfer of the ward and accordingly rejected it.

The Bulford and Durrington wards

15. The Assistant Commissioner reported that there was substantial objection expressed in the fourth counter-proposal to our proposal to transfer the Salisbury District wards of Bulford and Durrington from Salisbury CC to Devizes CC. He recognised that there were strong links between the wards and Salisbury, but noted that they also had close links with wards in Kennet District. He considered that if the wards were included in Salisbury CC its electorate would be high and an unacceptable disparity between constituency electorates in the county would be produced. He therefore agreed with our provisional recommendations that these wards should be included in Devizes CC.

The Paxcroft ward

16. We had proposed that the West Wiltshire District ward of Paxcroft should be included in Chippenham CC rather than with the town of Trowbridge in a revised Westbury CC. The Assistant Commissioner considered that, while the ward had strong links with Trowbridge, the Hilperton Gap was a significant physical barrier between Hilperton and Trowbridge and that other parts of the ward were plainly distinct from Trowbridge. He did not consider that there was a strong case to transfer the ward to Westbury CC as set out in several counter-proposals and accordingly rejected it.

The Box and Colerne wards

17. The principal counter-proposal transferred the North Wiltshire District wards of Box and Colerne to a new Melksham and Devizes constituency, rather than retaining them in North Wiltshire CC, as in our provisional recommendations. One counter-proposal transferred the Box ward to Chippenham CC. The Assistant Commissioner noted that the counter-proposals had not attracted support and rejected them.

The Bishops Cannings, Bromham and Rowde, and West Selkley wards

18. We had proposed that the Kennet District wards of Bishops Cannings, Bromham and Rowde, and West Selkley should remain in Devizes CC. The fifth counter-proposal placed all

three wards in North Wiltshire CC. The Assistant Commissioner considered that the inclusion of the three wards in North Wiltshire CC could not be justified in terms of the restoration of links. He further noted that the counter-proposal had not attracted support, and he rejected it. He also rejected the aspect of the principal counter-proposal which placed the Bromham and Rowde ward in a constituency with Melksham on the basis that it produced unsatisfactory boundaries.

The Bradford on Avon wards

19. It was submitted that the West Wiltshire District wards which comprised Bradford on Avon should be included in a constituency with Trowbridge, instead of Chippenham, on the basis of links between the towns. The Assistant Commissioner reported that he found little public support for the submission and that he considered that such a change would have an adverse effect on the electoral disparity. He therefore rejected the suggestion.

Melksham and Calne

20. The Assistant Commissioner reported that part of the principal counter-proposal involved the town of Melksham being located in a constituency with Devizes and Calne being located in a constituency with Marlborough.

21. He considered that the evidence submitted to him did not suggest that the counter-proposals demonstrated widespread recognition of substantial affinity, or links, between the towns of Melksham and Devizes. He also considered that the counter-proposals produced an unsatisfactory boundary on the eastern side of Devizes. It was his view that the counter-proposals, which placed the town of Calne in a constituency with Marlborough, were significantly inferior to our proposals in terms of respecting links and the convenience and effectiveness of the resulting constituencies. He therefore rejected this aspect of the principal counter-proposal.

Chippenham CC

22. We had proposed that the town of Chippenham, and the wards to its south, should form a constituency. However, the principal counter-proposal submitted that a constituency should be formed from Chippenham and the wards to its north and west. The Assistant Commissioner reported that, whilst there was support for our proposal, there was no evidence of public support for the counter-proposal. He accordingly rejected this part of the principal counter-proposal.

Constituency names

23. The Assistant Commissioner reported that the alternative names of South West Wiltshire and West Wiltshire were submitted for the Westbury constituency. He considered that, as the proposed Westbury constituency would extend further into Salisbury District, the name Westbury was no longer appropriate. He considered that South West Wiltshire was a more accurate description and that it would avoid confusion with West Wiltshire District Council. He accordingly proposed that the Westbury constituency be named South West Wiltshire CC.

24. He reported that a proposal for the Chippenham constituency to be renamed West Wiltshire was submitted. However, he rejected this alternative, considering that the name of Chippenham was entirely appropriate.

Revised Recommendations

25. We decided to accept the Assistant Commissioner's recommendations in full and to recommend the inclusion of the Chalke Valley ward in Salisbury CC instead of in Westbury CC. We recognised that the name Westbury had for many years been a constituency name, but accepted that the name of the constituency was no longer appropriate for the reasons given by the Assistant Commissioner. We accordingly published the following revised recommendations:-

2000 electorate	
Chippenham CC	65,755
Devizes CC	64,707
North Wiltshire CC	61,322
Salisbury CC	66,502
South West Wiltshire CC	63,865
	<hr/>
	322,151

Further Representations

26. Following publication of our revised recommendations we received seven representations. Of these, one approved of the revised recommendations in their entirety, one approved of part of the revised recommendations whilst objecting to our proposal to change the name of Westbury CC to South West Wiltshire CC and four objected to certain wards of Salisbury District being excluded from Salisbury CC. One representation approved of our proposal for the change in name of the Westbury CC.

Recommendation

27. In view of the small number of objections, of which none provided any persuasive new information, and as the arguments presented in the objections had been discussed at length at the inquiry, we were satisfied that our revised recommendations did not need to be modified. We considered that, whilst a number of Salisbury District wards surrounding Salisbury did have ties with it, an imbalance in the electorates would result if all the demands for certain wards to be in Salisbury CC were met. We therefore recommend the adoption of the following constituencies containing the wards as listed in Appendix C:-

2000 electorate	
Chippenham CC	65,755
Devizes CC	64,707
North Wiltshire CC	61,322
Salisbury CC	66,502
South West Wiltshire CC	63,865
	<hr/>
	322,151

WORCESTERSHIRE

The Number of Electors

1. There are currently six whole constituencies and part of one other constituency in the County of Worcestershire. The figures set out below relate only to those electors who are within the County of Worcestershire:-

	2000 electorate
Bromsgrove CC	68,443
Leominster CC (part)	7,717
Mid Worcestershire	70,710
Redditch BC	62,615
West Worcestershire CC	66,334
Worcester BC	71,601
Wyre Forest CC	<u>73,412</u>
	<u><u>420,832</u></u>

The Number of Constituencies

2. Following the Hereford and Worcester (Structural, Boundary and Electoral Changes) Order 1996, Worcestershire ceased to form part of the former County of Hereford and Worcester and became the County of Worcestershire. The creation of the unitary authority of Herefordshire resulted in the transfer of part of the District of Malvern Hills to the new unitary authority. There were no other changes to district boundaries in Worcestershire as a result of this Order.

3. The combined area of the former County of Hereford and Worcester had eight constituencies with a 2000 parliamentary electorate of 553,882, which gave a theoretical entitlement to 7.92 constituencies. Herefordshire had a 2000 parliamentary electorate of 133,050, which gave a theoretical entitlement to 1.90 constituencies. Worcestershire had a 2000 parliamentary electorate of 420,832, which gave a theoretical entitlement to 6.02 constituencies. Eight constituencies would therefore be retained whether the new counties were reviewed separately or as one review area.

4. Hereford and Worcester had a county average of 69,235, which is only 700 below the electoral quota. Herefordshire had a county average of 66,525, which is 3,410 below the electoral quota. Worcestershire had a county average of 70,139, which is only 204 above the electoral quota. As the county averages of both counties were close to the electoral quota, we decided to consider the two new counties separately. The electorates of the six existing constituencies wholly within Worcestershire ranged from 62,615 in Redditch BC to 73,412 in Wyre Forest CC, a disparity of 10,797.

Provisional Recommendations

5. As a result of changes to the ward boundaries, five of the new wards in the county are divided between constituencies. Our provisional recommendations realigned the constituency boundaries with the new ward boundaries. We noted that there were six whole or divided

wards in Worcestershire that are part of Leominster CC. Our proposals would place these wards in a Worcestershire constituency.

6. We proposed that the Malvern Hills District wards of Lindridge and Tenbury and the divided Malvern Hills District wards of Teme Valley and Woodbury should be included in West Worcestershire CC. We also proposed that the Wyre Forest District ward of Rock and the divided Wyre Forest District ward of Bewdley and Arley should be included in Wyre Forest CC.

7. We proposed that the divided Wychavon District ward of Fladbury should be included in Mid Worcestershire CC. We also increased the size of the existing Redditch BC by including in it the divided Wychavon District ward of Inkberrow and proposed that Redditch should be designated a county constituency. We noted that wards to the north of Redditch Borough were not suitable wards to be included in Redditch BC, due to their shapes and geographical positions within Bromsgrove District, and that it was not practicable to include any other Wychavon District ward in our proposed Redditch constituency without dividing Mid Worcestershire CC into two detached parts.

8. We noted that the 2000 electorate of Wyre Forest District (75,563) was higher than both the county average and the electoral quota, but we considered that it would be beneficial to include the whole of the district in one constituency. We proposed no change to either Bromsgrove CC or Worcester BC, both of which formed constituencies that were coterminous with their respective district boundaries. Our provisional recommendations slightly increased the disparity from 10,797 to 11,062.

9. Our provisional recommendations were:-

	2000 electorate
Bromsgrove CC	68,443
Mid Worcestershire CC	69,351
Redditch CC	64,501
West Worcestershire CC	71,373
Worcester BC	71,601
Wyre Forest CC	<u>75,563</u>
	<u>420,832</u>

Representations

10. Following publication of our provisional recommendations, we received 110 representations, of which sixteen expressed support for all or part of our proposals, four expressed support for part of our proposals whilst objecting to other parts and eighty-nine objected to our proposals. The objections included petitions and proformas containing 974 names. One letter of representation made no comment on our proposals. The objections fell into two counter-proposals:-

- a) the first was that the Wychavon District ward of Inkberrow should be included in Mid Worcestershire CC and the Wyre Forest District ward of Rock should be included in West Worcestershire CC; and

- b) the second was that the four Bromsgrove District wards of Alvechurch, Drakes Cross and Walkers Heath, Hollywood and Majors Green, and Wythall South should be included in Redditch CC; the Wychavon District ward of Inkberrow should be included in Mid Worcestershire CC; the three Wyre Forest District wards of Blakedown and Chaddesley, Cookley, and Wolverley should be included in Bromsgrove CC; and the Wychavon District ward of Dodderhill should be included in Bromsgrove CC.

Local Inquiry and Assistant Commissioner's Report

11. We were required to hold an inquiry. Following the announcement of the inquiry a further fifty-five representations were received, of which forty-seven approved of our provisional recommendations and eight objected to them.

12. The Assistant Commissioner reported that the main issues raised at the inquiry were the two counter-proposals and the name of the proposed Redditch constituency. He reported that the provisional recommendations attracted substantial support in whole or in part. There was general approval for the allocation of six seats and for the proposed Bromsgrove CC and Worcester BC.

The Inkberrow Ward

13. The Assistant Commissioner reported that the majority of the objections concentrated on our proposal to include the divided Wychavon District ward of Inkberrow, which included the villages of Hanbury, Abberton and The Lench, in Redditch CC. He noted that both of the counter-proposals suggested that this ward should be included in Mid Worcestershire CC.

14. He reported that those objecting to our proposals argued that the Inkberrow ward was predominantly rural in nature which contrasted with urban Redditch and that the two areas had separate bodies providing education, health, policing and social services. Concern was also expressed that the urban interests of Redditch would overshadow the rural interests of electors in the Inkberrow ward. It was further submitted that these differences could present difficulties to an MP. The supporters of the first counter-proposal argued that Redditch should be treated as a special case and that the inclusion of the Inkberrow ward in Redditch CC was inconvenient, potentially confusing, unpopular and produced a poor shape. It was also argued that we should exercise our discretion under Rule 6 and/or Rule 7 and recommend a Redditch constituency which was coterminous with its borough boundary.

15. He noted that the electorate of Redditch Borough was 60,142, some 14% below the electoral quota. He considered that this element of both counter-proposals would not therefore achieve the requirement of Rule 5 of having an electorate as near the electoral quota as practicable. He also noted that the existing Redditch BC contained both urban and rural parts within its boundary and that there were no grounds under Rules 6 and 7 for not including the whole of the new Inkberrow ward in our provisionally recommended Redditch CC. He reported that, from his visit to the ward, it covered an extensive rural area to the south and west of Redditch, but was readily accessible to the town of Redditch. He further noted that the inclusion of the Inkberrow ward in Redditch CC was supported by some at the inquiry and that the majority of the divided ward's electorate was currently in the Redditch constituency. He concluded that the inclusion of the whole of the Inkberrow ward was unlikely to result in any material inconveniences with respect to parliamentary representation.

The Rock ward

16. The first counter-proposal also suggested that the Wyre Forest District ward of Rock should be included in West Worcestershire CC. It was argued that the ward had ties with the north of the Malvern Hills District and that it was therefore appropriate to include it in West Worcestershire CC. The Assistant Commissioner reported that little, if any, tangible evidence was produced to substantiate this claim.

17. He considered that there was no material support for this part of the counter-proposal and that there was substantial opposition to its adoption. He concluded that the case for a Wyre Forest constituency which was coterminous with the District of Wyre Forest was strong and that the counter-proposal lacked merit. He therefore rejected it.

Bromsgrove CC, West Worcestershire CC and Wyre Forest CC

18. The Assistant Commissioner reported that the second counter-proposal suggested changes to these three constituencies as an alternative to our recommendation to include the Inkberrow ward in Redditch CC. He also reported that it attracted substantial opposition and very little support. He noted that those opposing the counter-proposal argued that it was highly disruptive of electoral and community links and would deny Bromsgrove CC and Wyre Forest CC the opportunity to achieve coterminosity with their respective district boundaries. He considered that the disruption could not be justified and rejected the counter-proposal.

Constituency names

19. The alternative name of East Worcestershire CC was suggested in place of Redditch CC. It was submitted that this name would make the electorate feel part of Worcestershire whether they lived in an urban or rural area. However, he considered that Redditch still remained the focal centre for the constituency and that change of the designation to county constituency (CC) was all that was required to reflect the increase in rural content to the seat. Accordingly, he rejected the proposal.

Recommendation

20. We agreed with the Assistant Commissioner's recommendations that the provisional recommendations should not be altered. We accordingly recommend the adoption of the following constituencies containing the wards listed in Appendix C:-

	2000 electorate
Bromsgrove CC	68,443
Mid Worcestershire CC	69,351
Redditch CC	64,501
West Worcestershire CC	71,373
Worcester BC	71,601
Wyre Forest CC	75,563
	<hr/>
	420,832

YORK

The Number of Electors

1. There is currently one whole constituency and parts of three others in the County of York. The electoral figures set out below for the three parts of constituencies relate only to those electors who are within the County of York:-

	2000 electorate
City of York BC	81,244
Ryedale CC (part)	17,670
Selby CC (part)	18,310
Vale of York CC (part)	<u>25,549</u>
	<u>142,773</u>

The Number of Constituencies

2. Following the North Yorkshire (District of York) (Structural and Boundary Changes) Order 1995, the former City of York was enlarged, acquired unitary authority status and ceased to form part of the County of North Yorkshire. The area of what is now the County of York had a 2000 parliamentary electorate of 142,773, which gave a theoretical entitlement to 2.04 constituencies. With two constituencies allocated, the average constituency electorate in York would be 71,387, which is only 1,452 above the electoral quota. North Yorkshire had a 2000 parliamentary electorate of 438,743, which gave a theoretical entitlement to 6.27 constituencies. After careful consideration, we provisionally decided to review North Yorkshire and York separately and to allocate two constituencies to York.

Provisional Recommendations

3. Having decided that York should be reviewed separately and be allocated two whole constituencies, we considered whether we should divide it into two halves, or keep as much as possible of the urban core of York in one constituency and include the rural area in another.

4. We considered dividing York along the course of the River Ouse, but noted that there were not enough electors on the western side of York to form a constituency. We looked at alternative divisions of York, but decided that this would cause too much disruption to the electors in the existing City of York BC. We therefore decided to recommend an urban core constituency largely consisting of the current constituency, with the rural area forming a constituency around it.

5. We noted that the size of the existing City of York BC had to be reduced and that after taking into account ward boundary changes, where the constituency boundary had been aligned with new ward boundaries, the electorate had reduced from 81,244 to 79,936. However, we considered that would still be too large and would result in a disparity of 17,079 between the electorates of the two constituencies. We therefore proposed that the Hull Road ward along with the twelve surrounding wards currently part of Ryedale CC, Selby CC and Vale of York CC should be included in the rural York constituency. We noted that this would

involve a large amount of disruption to electors within York, but considered that this was inevitable if we were to recognise the boundary of the unitary authority.

6. We provisionally decided to rename the urban constituency York Central BC and to name the rural constituency York Outer CC. We considered alternative names for both constituencies, but the absence of any significant settlement or geographical feature in the area outside the urban area of York itself made it difficult to propose a more readily identifiable name for the rural constituency. Our proposals reduced the disparity between the electorates of the two York constituencies to 4,105.

7. Our provisional recommendations were:-

	2000 electorate
York Central BC	73,439
York Outer CC	<u>69,334</u>
	<u><u>142,773</u></u>

Representations

8. Following publication of our provisional recommendations, we received sixty-three representations, including three counter-proposals, of which seven supported all or parts of our proposals and fifty-six opposed all or parts of them. Differing names were suggested for the seats.

9. The main issues raised in the objections were contained in the counter-proposals:-

- a) the first counter-proposal was that North Yorkshire and York should be treated as a single review area, and not as two separate review areas as we proposed, and that a configuration combining some of the southern wards of the City of York with the wards of Selby CC should be retained;
- b) the second counter-proposal was that York should be divided through its urban area into two constituencies, with the formation of York North and York South constituencies; and
- c) the third counter-proposal was that the Dringhouses and Woodthorpe ward should be included in York Outer CC and the Hull Road ward should be included in York Central BC.

Local Inquiry and Assistant Commissioner's Report

10. We were required to hold an inquiry. We decided that we would hold a single inquiry at which our provisional recommendations for North Yorkshire and York could be considered, thereby allowing for any cross-border issues to be dealt with at the same time. Following the announcement of the inquiry, a further sixty-five representations were received, of which thirty-five supported all or parts of our proposals, and thirty objected to all or parts of them. The Assistant Commissioner reported that the main issues raised at the inquiry were the same as those listed above.

Treating North Yorkshire and York as separate review areas

11. The Assistant Commissioner reported that the counter-proposal to include City of York wards in Selby CC, thereby effectively treating North Yorkshire and York as one review area, was based on the argument that these wards had closer ties with Selby CC, than did wards from Harrogate Borough, as we had provisionally recommended. However, he considered that wards from the City of York should be part of a City of York constituency, and that Rule 7, which concerned the respecting of local ties, did not give us the discretion to disregard Rule 4, which concerned the crossing of county boundaries. He rejected the first counter-proposal to retain a constituency across the county boundary between York and North Yorkshire.

The division of York between constituencies

12. The Assistant Commissioner reported that the arguments for and against the alternative division of York proposed at the inquiry were finely balanced. He considered that, although there was a good argument for dividing the City of York along the River Ouse, thereby including part of the city centre in both constituencies, the level of disruption caused would be too great. He also noted that the historic centre of York had always been represented as one constituency. He could see no sufficient justification for the inconvenience and the breaking of the local ties of the large number of electors who would form York Central BC and therefore rejected the second counter-proposal.

13. He reported that the arguments presented at the inquiry to include the Hull Road ward in York Central BC, and in its place, to transfer the Dringhouses and Woodthorpe ward to York Outer CC, had considerable merit and were well supported. He supported this counter-proposal because he was in no doubt that this was appropriate, especially as, by exchanging the two wards, the disparity would be reduced to only 453.

14. He noted that there had been a number of differing names suggested for the two proposed constituencies in York. He also noted that no consensus had arisen at the inquiry as to the preferred names. He therefore decided that he could not recommend any alternative names that were likely to gain greater approval than our provisionally recommended names.

Revised Recommendations

15. We agreed with the Assistant Commissioner's conclusion that the provisional recommendations should be revised, so as to include the Hull Road ward in York Central BC and the Dringhouses and Woodthorpe ward in York Outer CC, and noted the considerable level of support for the counter-proposal. We also noted that no consensus had been reached concerning alternative names for the two proposed constituencies and accepted his recommendation that our proposed names should be adopted. We accordingly published the following revised recommendations:-

	2000 electorate
York Central BC	71,160
York Outer CC	<hr/> 71,613 <hr/>
	142,773

Further Representations

16. Following publication of our revised recommendations, we received forty-four representations, of which forty-three supported our proposals. The representation objecting to our revised recommendations reiterated the call for a division of York along the course of the River Ouse, which had already been fully discussed at the inquiry and rejected by the Assistant Commissioner in his report.

Recommendation

17. We noted the support for our revised recommendations and were satisfied that they did not need to be modified. We therefore recommend the adoption of the following constituencies containing the wards as listed in Appendix C:-

	2000 electorate
York Central BC	71,160
York Outer CC	71,613
	<hr/> <hr/> <hr/>
	142,773

CHAPTER SIX

The need for change

6.1 The total electorate of England increased from 36,302,556 in 1991 to 36,995,495 in 2000, resulting in an increase in the electoral quota from 69,281 to 69,935. The increase of 692,592 electors is the equivalent of almost ten constituencies (see paragraph 2.4 in Chapter 2 above) but our recommendations will limit the actual increase in the number of constituencies in England to four.

6.2 In the years between the start of the fourth general review (1991) and the start of this general review (2000), the electorates of the existing constituencies have progressively deviated from the electoral quota as shown in the following table and the chart further below.

Deviation from the EQ	1991 Electorate	Existing Seats on 1991 Electorates	2000 Electorate	Existing Seats on 2000 Electorates
Over 30% above	90,066 or more	* 1	90,916 or more	* 1
20% - 30% above	83,138 – 90,065	-	83,922 – 90,915	4
10% - 20% above	76,210 – 83,137	30	76,929 – 83,921	59
Within 10%	69,282 – 76,209	202	69,936 – 76,928	194
Electoral Quota (EQ)	69,281		69,935	
Within 10%	62,353 – 69,280	243	62,942 – 69,934	205
10% - 20% below	55,425 – 62,352	50	55,948 – 62,941	57
20% - 30% below	48,497 – 55,424	3	48,955 – 55,947	9
Over 30% below	48,496 or less	-	48,954 or less	-
Total number of seats		529		529

* Isle of Wight CC with 101,784 electors (1991) and 103,480 electors (2000)

6.3 There have been many changes to local government boundaries since 1991, mainly as a result of Periodic Electoral Reviews conducted by the Local Government Commission for England (subsequently the Boundary Committee for England). The result of these changes alone to local government boundaries is that in this general review, it has been necessary to make changes to constituencies in every metropolitan county, every non-metropolitan county except the Isle of Wight and Shropshire, and every London borough except Haringey and Islington. The changes required as a result of the Periodic Electoral Reviews affected approximately 900,500 electors in some 450 constituencies. A number of changes that have been recommended are of a very minor nature and affect no electors. Only forty-seven constituencies remain unaltered as a result of the general review.

Deviation from the Electoral Quota

6.4 The general review has required us, wherever practicable, to make recommendations which reduce the deviations between the electorates of the constituencies and the electoral quota. The overall effects of our recommendations in reducing the deviations are shown in the following table and chart.

6.5 The table below shows that 88.9 per cent of the constituencies which we recommend have 2000 electorates that are within ten per cent of the electoral quota (compared to 75.4 per cent of the existing constituencies in 2000). It also shows that, apart from the Isle of Wight, all our recommended constituencies have electorates that are within twenty per cent of the electoral quota.

Deviation from the 2000 EQ	2000 Electorate	Existing Seats	Recommended Seats
Over 30% above	90,916 or more	* 1	* 1
20% - 30% above	83,922 – 90,915	4	-
10% - 20% above	76,929 – 83,921	59	19
Within 10%	69,936 – 76,928	194	225
Electoral Quota (EQ)	69,935		
Within 10%	62,941 – 69,934	205	249
10% - 20% below	55,948 – 62,940	57	39
20% - 30% below	48,954 – 55,947	9	-
Over 30% below	48,953 or less	-	-
Total number of seats		529	533

* Isle of Wight with 103,480 electors (2000)

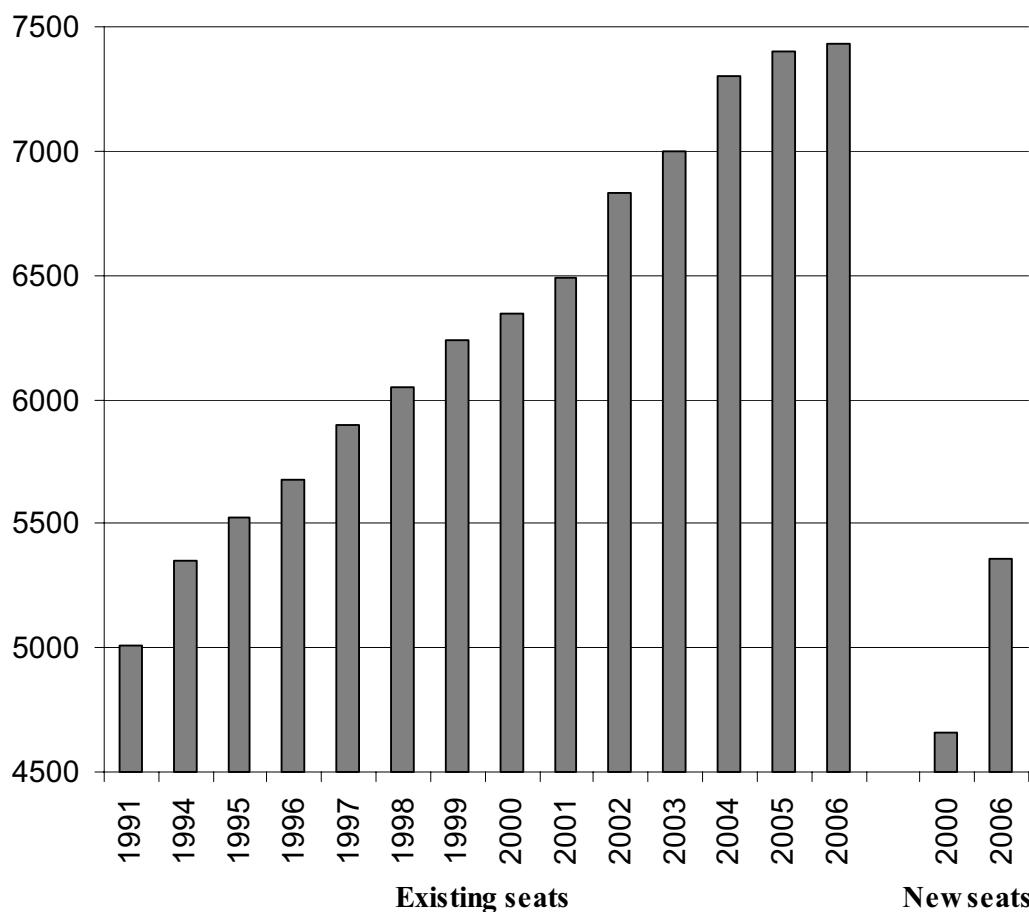
6.6 The chart which follows paragraph 6.9 below shows how the standard deviation of the constituency electorates has changed over the years. The standard deviation is a measure of the spread of a large set of figures (i.e. the constituency electorates in England) both above and below the average of those figures (i.e. the electoral quota). The lower the standard deviation, the closer is the spread around the average.

6.7 The chart also shows how the electorates of the existing constituencies have deviated from the electoral quota since their creation. The electorates shown are those our predecessors were required to use for the conduct of their review (1991) and the last complete set (1994) that were available to them before they submitted their report. The chart then shows the electorates for the period 1995 to 2006. For our recommended constituencies, the chart shows the electorates for the year we started this review (2000) and the last complete set (2006 = December 2005) available to us before submission of this report.

6.8 The chart illustrates three points. The first is that the standard deviation increases over the years: the longer the period from the start of a general review the greater is the standard deviation. The second is that a general review greatly reduces the standard deviation. The third is that our recommendations reduce the standard deviation to a greater extent than our predecessors managed to achieve in the fourth general review, showing that we have met the aim set out in our policy review of placing greater emphasis on creating constituencies with electorates closer to the electoral quota (see paragraph 2.13 in Chapter 2 above).

6.9 The chart also shows that the standard deviation in our recommendations has taken six years to increase to the same level that our predecessor's recommendations reached in only three years. Before announcing the completion of the fifth general review, we decided to consider how the constituencies we would recommend had been affected by the 2006 electorates (December 2005) and whether the effects would warrant any further change. We concluded that no further change was required to any of our final recommendations for any review area in the fifth general review.

Standard deviation of constituency electorates in England



6.10 The recommended constituency with the largest number of electors remains Isle of Wight CC with 103,480 electors and the constituency with the fewest electors is Wirral West BC with 56,085. The ten constituencies with the highest and lowest electorates are:-

Constituency	2000 Electorate	Deviation from the Electoral Quota
Isle of Wight CC	103,480	+33,545
Croydon North BC	79,819	+9,884
Hornchurch and Upminster BC	79,496	+9,561
Brentford and Isleworth BC	79,344	+9,409
Knowsley BC	79,099	+9,164
Leeds Central BC	78,941	+9,006
Banbury CC	78,817	+8,882
Meriden CC	78,714	+8,779
Oxford East BC	78,679	+8,744
Normanton, Pontefract and Castleford CC	78,641	+8,706
Electoral Quota	69,935	-

Electoral Quota	69,935	-
Hexham CC	59,666	-10,269
Poplar and Limehouse BC	59,400	-10,535
Putney BC	59,331	-10,604
Westminster North BC	59,016	-10,919
Islington South and Finsbury BC	58,839	-11,096
Aldridge-Brownhills BC	58,695	-11,240
Wirral South CC	57,801	-12,134
Berwick-upon-Tweed CC	57,571	-12,364
Hackney South and Shoreditch BC	57,204	-12,731
Wirral West CC	56,085	-13,850

6.11 Of the twenty constituencies listed above, only one (Isle of Wight CC) is more than 10,000 above the electoral quota. However, ten of our recommended constituencies have electorates that are more than 10,000 below the electoral quota. The reasons why we have recommended constituencies that have electorates that are not within 10,000 of the electoral quota are set out in Chapters 3 - 5.

Disparity in the constituency electorates

6.12 The disparity is the difference, or range, between the constituencies with the highest and lowest 2000 electorates in England. The disparity in the existing 529 constituencies is 52,790, ranging from Isle of Wight CC with 103,480 electors to Camberwell and Peckham BC with 50,690 electors. The disparity in the 533 constituencies that we recommend is 47,395, ranging from Isle of Wight CC with 103,480 electors to Wirral West CC with 56,085 electors. This is an improvement in the disparity of 5,395.

6.13 If the exceptional case of Isle of Wight CC is discounted, the disparity in the existing electorates is 34,878, ranging from Daventry CC with 85,568 electors to Camberwell and Peckham BC with 50,690 electors. Our recommendations will reduce the existing disparity by 11,144 to 23,734, ranging from Croydon North BC with 79,819 electors to Wirral West CC with 56,085 electors.

Applying the Rules

6.14 In conducting a general review and submitting a periodical report with our recommendations, our duty is to apply the Rules for Redistribution of Seats as set out in Schedule 2 of the Parliamentary Constituencies Act 1986 (as amended). Each Rule, taken on its own, is quite clear. However, we are required to apply all the Rules and our experience, and that of our predecessors, is that there is often conflict between them. For example, Rule 5 requires us to recommend constituencies that have electorates as near the electoral quota as is practicable, whilst Rule 4 requires that county and London borough boundaries should be respected as far as possible. Clearly, unless a county or London borough contains a number of electors that is close to a whole number multiple of the electoral quota, the result may be constituencies with electorates which are not close to the electoral quota. Even if a county contains an electorate that is close to a multiple of the electoral quota, constituencies may be recommended with electorates that are not near the electoral quota because we have taken account of the inconveniences attendant on alterations to constituencies, and of the local ties which would be broken by such alterations, as required by Rule 7, or of special geographical considerations that exist, as permitted by Rule 6.

6.15 In this review we have looked at the individual merits of the case in each county and London borough and have applied the Rules in a way which, in our view, best fit the circumstances we found in that particular area. In reviewing one area, we have sometimes been requested to follow the same path as we did in another area earlier in the review. We have considered each request, but have not always found such comparisons helpful because two areas are seldom exactly alike. Our predecessors confirmed in the Fourth Periodical Report that the Court of Appeal in the judgement *R v. Boundary Commission for England ex parte Foot* (1983) QB 600 considered that applying the Rules involved “striking a balance between many factors which point in different directions.”

Rule 1

6.16 Rule 1 relates to the number of constituencies in Great Britain. As explained in Chapter 2 of this report, we have sought to apply the Rule by limiting the increase in the number of constituencies allocated. We achieved this aim by pairing or grouping some areas, or by rounding the theoretical entitlements at the arithmetic mean and not at the harmonic mean, as we were asked to do in some areas.

Rule 2

6.17 Rule 2 states that every constituency shall return a single member. We never gave any consideration to the possibility that a constituency should return more than one member. The requirement for each constituency to return one member is also set out in section 1 of the 1986 Act.

Rule 3

6.18 Rule 3 requires one constituency to contain the whole of the City of London and the name of that constituency to refer to the City. We have recommended a constituency named “Cities of London and Westminster” that meets both of these requirements.

Rule 4

6.19 Rule 4 requires the boundaries of county and London boroughs to be respected as far as practicable. As explained in Chapter 2, we have crossed these boundaries to a greater extent than before, using the discretion afforded by Rule 5 to avoid excessive disparities in the electorates.

Rule 5

6.20 Rule 5 requires electoral parity as far as is practicable. Paragraph 6.5 of this Chapter sets out how we have, overall, brought constituency electorates closer to the electoral quota.

Rule 6

6.21 Rule 6 allows us to depart from the strict application of Rules 4 and 5 if special geographical considerations make it desirable to do so. As stated in Chapter 2, we remain of the view that special geographical considerations refer to physical geography such as mountainous or moorland areas, which tend to have sparse populations, estuaries (without crossings), and islands. These physical features can make it difficult to comply with Rule 5.

We do not consider that special geographical considerations as set out in Rule 6 apply to human or social geography.

6.22 We consider that there are very few areas in England where this Rule should be applied. During the last review, our predecessors applied it in Cumbria and recommended constituencies with low electorates: we have retained the constituency allocated by them although the county's theoretical entitlement during this review was just below the arithmetic mean. We have continued to apply the Rule in Northumberland where two constituencies have been recommended with very low electorates. We have also continued to apply the Rule to the Isle of Wight which has the largest electorate of any constituency in England. In this respect, it is worth noting that we received only one submission from the Isle of Wight (from a member of the public) calling for a second constituency to be allocated to the island. We also accepted that geographical considerations applied in Merseyside (the River Mersey) and Cornwall (the Isles of Scilly), but this did not lead us to recommend an extra constituency for that reason.

Rule 7

6.23 Rule 7 relieves us of the duty to give full effect in all circumstances to Rules 1 to 6, and requires us to take account of the inconveniences caused and local ties broken by changes to constituencies. This Rule encourages us to keep change to a minimum as far as is consistent with applying the other Rules and was at the forefront of our considerations, together with Rules 4 and 5, when considering the distribution of constituencies in an area. We relied on the written representations made about our proposals, and the submissions made at the local inquiries, for evidence about local ties that applied. As a result of the changes we have recommended, some 4,149,000 electors will be in a different constituency. This means that over 88% of the electorate in England will not be affected by our recommendations.

Rules 8 and 9

6.24 These Rules define the terms "electoral quota", "electorate" and "enumeration date" (Rule 8) and "Rule" (Rule 9).

Difficulties in applying the Rules

6.25 We consider that Rule 1 envisages a relatively stable number of constituencies. However, as mentioned in previous periodical reports, and by the Home Affairs Committee (see the Fourth Periodical Report), the combined effect of the Rules is to increase the number of constituencies at every general review. As reported in Chapter 2, we have taken steps to limit the increase, and these steps have been unpopular with the affected local electorate, but we do not consider it right for us arbitrarily to set a fixed target number of constituencies and adhere rigidly to that number, particularly as the term "substantially greater" in Rule 1 is not defined in the 1986 Act.

6.26 There has been no difficulty in applying Rule 2, which merely repeats the requirement in section 1 of the 1986 Act for single member constituencies. Neither has there been any difficulty in applying Rule 3, although some regard the special treatment afforded to the City of London to be an anachronism.

6.27 Although applying Rule 4 has caused difficulty in strictly applying Rule 5, principally in the smaller London boroughs and unitary authorities, Rule 5 gives us the necessary discretion to depart from Rule 4 where we found that to be desirable. Also, without the template provided by Rule 4, we would be faced with the unwelcome prospect of reviewing the whole of England as one unit, unless we were to devise some other acceptable approach.

6.28 Rule 5 can be difficult to apply because its requirement for parity of electorates often conflicts with the requirements of Rules 4, 6 and 7, although Rules 6 and 7 do allow us to depart from the strict application of Rule 5. Other difficulties with Rule 5 arise from a lack of understanding from some objectors that we are required by the Rules to use the registered Parliamentary electorate on the enumeration date (17 February 2000). We cannot take account of people who are not registered, even if their numbers could be accurately established. We are not required to base our recommendations on population figures or on the local government electorate. Neither are we required to take account of five year projections, as are the Boundary Committee for England when reviewing district ward boundaries. We can, however, have some regard to growth or decline in the electorate that has actually occurred since the enumeration date (see Chapter 2), although not in determining the number of constituencies to be allocated to a county or London borough.

6.29 As mentioned above, we consider that the special geographical considerations mentioned in Rule 6, defined as “including in particular the size, shape and accessibility of a constituency” refer to physical geography that may make it difficult to apply Rule 5. However, objectors to our proposals sometimes raise matters of historical, human, economic or social geography to support their objections. Whilst these other matters may be relevant, for instance as evidence of local ties, we do not regard them as special geographical considerations as it is difficult to see how, for example, the fact that an area is mentioned in the Domesday Book, as has been stated on more than one occasion, should prevent us from applying Rule 5.

6.30 The first limb of Rule 7, as interpreted by the Master of the Rolls in the Court of Appeal (cited in Chapter 2) relieves us of the duty to give full effect to the other Rules. We have not used this particular discretion in this review, but it should be noted that this interpretation does not state the circumstances in which application of the first limb would be appropriate. The second limb of Rule 7 can be difficult to apply because local ties are a very personal and subjective matter and there is often genuine disagreement in the submissions made about local ties at the local inquiries.

6.31 The definition of “electoral quota” in Rule 8, by using the existing number of constituencies as the divisor for calculating the electoral quota, is one of the reasons for the cumulative increase in the number of constituencies mentioned under Rule 1 above.

The representation period

6.32 Section 5(2) of the 1986 Act sets out a one month period following the publication of our proposals for representations about those proposals to be made to us. We have stated previously that we believe that this period is too short because, for instance, many local authorities, whose objections would require a local inquiry to be held, have meeting cycles longer than one month. In 1987, the Home Affairs Committee and the Government of the day both agreed that the period should be extended to two months, but the legislation has never been amended in this respect. The latest Government guidance, contained in the Cabinet

Office's Code of Practice on Consultation of January 2004, recommends a minimum of twelve weeks consultation for written representations. We would have no difficulty in applying a representation period of this length, although it must be recognised that this would increase the amount of time taken to complete the review in each area by as much as eight weeks, and by as much as sixteen weeks if revised recommendations are also required.

The need for legislative change

6.33 On more than one occasion in the past, including in previous periodical reports, we and our predecessors have not only recommended that the legislation by which we work should be changed but we have also suggested how it should be changed. For example, in 1986, our predecessors gave evidence to the Home Affairs Committee about the difficulties in applying the legislation. In 1995, following an internal study of the conduct and outcomes of the fourth general review, our predecessors were invited by the Home Office to submit their findings. In 1999, again at the invitation of the Home Office, we submitted our views on the changes that we considered should be made to the Rules for Redistribution of Seats and to the Parliamentary Constituencies Act 1986.

6.34 The introduction of new legislation over the years has provided a number of opportunities to amend the current, unsatisfactory rules and procedures (e.g. the Boundary Commissions Act 1992 and the Political Parties, Elections and Referendums Act 2000 to name two). However, the statutory rules and procedures remain unaltered.

6.35 In view of the difficulties in applying the Rules that we have outlined above, the change to the representation period also considered necessary, and other matters of concern, we recommend that the Electoral Commission should consider conducting a full review of the legislation by which general reviews are undertaken, as they are empowered to do by Section 6(1) of the Political Parties, Elections and Referendums Act 2000. Such a review would benefit from input from all four United Kingdom Boundary Commissions as well as from those academics who have studied our work over the years.

Assessors

6.36 Schedule 1 of the Parliamentary Constituencies Act 1986 (as amended) sets down that the officers of each Commission shall include, as assessors, the Registrar General for England and Wales (the head of the Office for National Statistics), and the Director General of Ordnance Survey.

6.37 During the course of the review, the role of assessor was fulfilled by a number of officials from those two organisations. However, only on a very few occasions was either assessor called upon to assist us with our work. One of the reasons for this may be that the basis for both posts was set in a time when it was considered that expertise on electoral statistics and on mapping and its interpretation would be required. Another may be that there were many occasions during the review where our Secretary met with officials from Ordnance Survey to discuss issues relating to the supply of electronic map data and paper map products. In the very few instances where clarification was required in respect of the electoral statistics we were working with, our Secretary approached the relevant Electoral Registration Officer.

6.38 In view of the very limited input that either assessor was able to make to the review, we recommend that serious consideration should be given as to whether the role of the assessors should be retained or abolished.

Secretariat

6.39 Mr Robert Farrance has been our Secretary since August 1996. We are grateful to him for the most efficient and effective way that he has led our Secretariat, which was comprised of staff on secondment from the Office for National Statistics. It was, in part, his experience from the fourth general review, along with that of four of his colleagues who had been retained from that review, that enabled us to make such a strong and positive start to the review process. Also, the recruitment and training of the extra staff required to bring the Secretariat up to strength was undertaken and completed before we announced the start of the review. A full list of the staff who formed our Secretariat is shown at Appendix K and to all of whom we are indebted. They made all the arrangements for our review, dealt with a very large volume of correspondence, liaised with Assistant Commissioners and staffed all the local inquiries and represented us in dealings with electors, local authorities, other organisations and the media.

6.40 It is worth noting that at the fourth general review, where nearly all the staff of the Secretariat lacked any experience in the work of the Commission, the first set of provisional recommendations were published in October 1991 (the review started in February 1991) with the first local inquiry being held in June 1992, some sixteen months after the review had started. This time, with experienced staff in post to give advice and guidance to the new staff who joined them, the first set of provisional recommendations were published in June 2000 (the review started in February 2000) with the first local inquiry being held in December 2000, some nine months after the review started.

6.41 We would also like to record our thanks to those officials, who were appointed as Joint Secretaries, from the various Government Departments that have sponsored our work during the course of the review. In chronological order:-

Mr Malcolm Rawlings (Home Office);
Mr Brian Nash (Department for Transport, Local Government and the Regions);
Mr Mark Barnett (Office of the Deputy Prime Minister);
Mr Malcolm Rawlings (Department for Constitutional Affairs); and
Mr Tony Bellringer (Department for Constitutional Affairs).

Commission membership

6.42 The Chairman of the Commission is the Speaker of the House of Commons. During the course of this review, the Rt. Hon. Mr Michael Martin MP succeeded the Rt. Hon. Miss Betty Boothroyd MP as Chairman. The Deputy Chairman has presided at all meetings of the Commission, but the Speaker has been kept informed of progress throughout.

6.43 There was just one other change to our membership with Mr Justice Sullivan being appointed on 25 November 2004 to serve as Deputy Chairman in succession to Mr Justice Harrison, upon his retirement from the Queen's Bench Division of the High Court.

6.44 At this point, we would like to pay tribute to Michael Harrison for the lead he gave during his tenure as Deputy Chairman between 1996 and 2004. He was not only instrumental in the planning for the fifth general review, but he also led the Commission during the first four and a half years of the review until his retirement. He conducted meetings with skill, efficiency, and good humour and he engendered an open atmosphere that encouraged full discussion of the seemingly intractable problems presented by some of the review areas.

6.45 Mr Michael Lewer, CBE, QC was appointed as a member on 8 October 1997 and Mr Robin Gray was appointed as a member on 18 May 1999. Both were subsequently re-appointed to enable them to see through the completion of the fifth general review.

Recommendation

6.46 This is the fifth periodical report on the whole of England. The constituencies we recommend are set out in Appendix C of Volume 2. We commend them to you.

Jeremy Sullivan, Deputy Chairman

Michael Lewer CBE, QC

Robin Gray

31 October 2006



Published by TSO (The Stationery Office) and available from:

Online

www.tsoshop.co.uk

Mail, Telephone, Fax & E-mail

TSO

PO Box 29, Norwich NR3 1GN

Telephone orders/General enquiries 0870 600 5522

Order through the Parliamentary Hotline *Lo-call* 0845 7 023474

Fax orders 0870 600 5533

Email book.orders@tso.co.uk

Textphone 0870 240 3701

TSO Shops

123 Kingsway, London WC2B 6PQ

020 7242 6393 Fax 020 7242 6394

16 Arthur Street, Belfast BT1 4GD

028 9023 8451 Fax 028 9023 5401

71 Lothian Road, Edinburgh EH3 9AZ

0870 606 5566 Fax 0870 606 5588

TSO@Blackwell and other Accredited Agents

ISBN: 978 0101 703222