

CHRISTCHURCH CITY COUNCIL COMMUNITY AREAS AND WARDS

A REPORT ON FUTURE OPTIONS TO CHRISTCHURCH CITY COUNCIL 21 June 1999

PART 1 - SUMMARY AND RECOMMENDATIONS

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PREFACE

This report summarises an investigation into the appropriate boundaries for the definition of community areas, the election of Councillors and Community Board members from wards for the Christchurch City Council elections.

The review is undertaken at the request of the City Council as a precursor to the elections to be held in the year 2001. The investigation also considers possible arrangements that could result from a merger of Banks Peninsula to form a new Christchurch City Council and the incorporation of the Lyttelton Basin within the Christchurch metropolitan ward arrangements.

The three local Commissioners began their task in March and presented a preliminary report to the City Council for its consideration in May. Your local Commissioners have independently researched the three main areas of their brief and acknowledge that at the end there is a judgement call as to:

- the balancing between the relevant community of interest issues
- the benefits and permanence of the definition of centres and boundaries of community areas
- the principles underlying representation and judgement as to the option which appears to best meet all aspects of the terms of reference.

The Christchurch City Council resolved on 27 May to provide further opportunity for input from Community Board members and Councillors with a view to receiving the report in June prior to a period of public consultation proposed to occupy July and part of August. The Council proposes at its August meeting to determine its policy on the community areas and wards review and, as requested by the Local Government Commission, forward a submission to it for its consideration.

On 2 June 1999 the Local Government Commission indicated that the proposals for the year 2001 should be prepared within the present statutory framework and should not require any amendments to legislation relating to the definition of wards, the election of Community Board members, or the ratio of appointed Councillor members to Community Board members.

The report '*Community Areas and Wards A Report on Future Options to Christchurch City Council Part 1 and Part 2*' has now been adjusted to match both the statutory requirements and also conform with the community areas of equal size which is widely supported by Councillors and Community Board members.

While we would anticipate that the Councillors, Community Board members, and the public at large will tend to favour the status quo we believe that the preferred option outlined in this report, will not cause any significant dislocation of the community areas and community boards. When these simple changes have been made at the 2001 election they will further reinforce and enhance City Council governance in Christchurch.

21 June 1999

CHRISTCHURCH CITY COUNCIL COMMUNITY AREAS AND WARDS

1. INTRODUCTORY SUMMARY¹

1.1 The Investigation

This investigation is a review to advise the Christchurch City Council on appropriate boundaries for the definition of community areas, the election of community boards and wards for City Council elections in preparation for the elections in 2001. It incidentally considers the arrangements that could result from a merger of Banks Peninsula and the incorporation of the Lyttelton basin within the Christchurch Metropolitan ward arrangements.

Three local commissioners were appointed in March to undertake an independent study of the communities of interest, the community areas, the community boards and to review and make recommendations on future options for the boundaries and ward arrangements. This work is part of the ongoing refinement of local government in Christchurch in view of the past ten years of their operation since the reforms of 1989.

1.2 Sequence of Investigation

The Local Commissioners dealt with the matter in the following sequence:

- (i) A consideration of the great variety and nature of communities of interest so as to assess and review the existing community areas and contemplate future options.
- (ii) An enquiry into the community areas related to the functions of community boards, and their relationships with both the City Council and the residents of Christchurch.
- (iii) In view of the above to assess the existing and future community areas, their centres and boundaries so as to improve and provide greater confidence and stability in their boundaries.
- (iv) To consider issues of representation, and for the varying options of community areas and wards, the appropriate number of Councillors and board members to meet the present and future situation over the next 12 to 15 years.

The Council gave preliminary consideration to the first report of the Commissioners on 27 May when it was agreed to provide opportunity for further input from Community Board members and Councillors. As a result of that further month of consideration the Commissioners have tested a range of options that provide equal allocation of four Councillors to each of the five suburban communities and 2 Councillors for a smaller central ward. This revised report incorporates the matters raised and assessments following this additional input.

¹ For more detail also refer to Part 2 - 'Background and Detail'

1.3 Definitions of Communities of Interest

The *Local Government Act 1974* lays considerable stress on communities of interest both in respect of the functions of local government and also the importance of community of interest in establishing boundaries for local government purposes. This investigation tests those attributes in the Christchurch City situation.

As far as is possible the definition of community areas should reflect the characteristics, physical boundaries, centres of activity, generic suburban communities of interest and provide a sense of belonging for residents. If these boundaries can be defined and related to physical circumstances on the ground, and also provide some permanence in the definition of the community areas, they are more likely to engender feelings of belonging and empowerment.

Having determined to recognise identifiable communities of interest and to identify stable community area boundaries a study has been made of all the physical, natural, urban development, population and planning factors contributing to the fabric of Christchurch which could provide appropriate and reasonably permanent future boundaries. In addition demographic, social, economic and ethnic considerations have been considered. The community areas have been arranged so that these attributes are recognised and where possible grouped to enable common interests to remain in a community area. It is concluded that there should be five suburban community areas and one central city community area.

1.4 Community Boards and Wards

In Christchurch the community boards are based on six community areas which were established in 1989. This initial arrangement has become generally accepted. The principle of having community boards is now supported by the communities and Councillors, and is seen as an important component of local government. The performance of the boards is steadily improving, board members are exercising their functions with greater confidence and the Council has delegated extensive responsibilities to them.

Many options for community areas, wards, Councillor numbers, and Community Boards that met the principles of fair and equitable representation, were considered. The recommended options have the following characteristics and we believe that these ratios can be maintained for the next 12 to 15 years and are appropriate:

- The community area populations should not exceed 60,000.
- The ratio for Councillors should be in the range up to 1 to 15,000 population.
- The ratio of Community Board members to population averaging about 1 to 9,500 in the suburban community areas.

Consultation with Councillors and Board members and other interested parties tend to confirm a desire to remain with the status quo. People find it difficult to envisage change even where these are refinements and improvements on an existing situation. This is even more difficult when it is related to such broad issues as communities of interest and the arrangement of community areas, community boards, wards and election to councils.

We are satisfied, however, that a refinement of the present arrangements is desirable and will bring with it significant benefits. Briefly, the preferred Option VIII, which is illustrated on the attached Figures 1 and 2, is as follows:

There is a pattern of 5 suburban community areas as wards for the election of 4 Councillors from each area. These surround the central city area which is in turn a ward for electing 2 Councillors. This yields 22 Councillors in all. It is recommended that there be 5 suburban community boards with 6 elected and 3 appointed Councillor members each, and a central community board of 6 elected members and 2 appointed Councillor members.

From this study and the analysis including both electoral representation and the evidence of the Council's present functions and activities we believe 22 is the optimum number of Councillors for Christchurch.

1.5 Options Considered

As will be appreciated a wide range of options have been considered and some of these which were developed in more detail are illustrated as Options I, to VIII in Chapter 7 of Part 2 of the report. Initially we were of the view that it was more important to have logical boundaries to community areas and, provided the representational ratios were maintained, to vary the number of Councillors in those wards which had either larger or smaller populations than the mean. This did result in more logical community area boundaries including the smaller central city area. This is illustrated in Option V. However, in adopting the restraint of having two wards in each suburban community area and also an equal number of 2 members from each ward (ie 4 Councillors for each suburban community area) we were compelled to amend the boundary line between the Papanui, Pegasus and Hagley areas accordingly.¹

Another option (Option VI) was to retain six community areas, increase the central area to a population equivalent to those of the suburban areas and thereby arriving at four Councillors in Community Area No 1. This proposal, however, meant that shopping centres such as Sydenham and Merivale together with extensive areas of population in the Avonside, Addington, Merivale and Shirley areas were, of necessity, included in the Central Ward. While achieving the four Councillor ward arrangement for all areas this pattern intruded excessively into the communities of interest and the areas of the adjacent suburban community localities. This option was firmly rejected because of its effect upon the suburban community areas.²

¹ This is illustrated in Option V in Chapter 7 and Figure 40 of Part 2

² This is illustrated in Option VI and Figure 41 in Chapter 7 of Part 2

Another proposition (Option VII) was to consider five community areas around the whole city and leave the Hagley Ward within the Ferrymead Ward at this stage. This resulted in the numbers per community area lifting to 65,000 although the 4 Councillor per pattern was still uniformly applied. For this option to include the Lyttelton Basin with Ferrymead also involves transfer of Avondale to Pegasus which conflicts with the simplicity of using the river as the community area boundary.¹

For these and a host of other reasons set out in the report in more detail many of the other options which were suggested to us have been rejected.

1.6 Five Spokes and a Hub

The current ward boundaries provide a framework of six radiating community areas. The community areas were defined to provide equality of population but in many locations did not produce boundaries which could be considered as satisfactory boundaries for community areas reflecting communities of interest. In some cases the boundaries actually pass along the principal spine road through the centre of an area, eg Marshlands Road. In other cases, whilst the main road might be a divided carriageway, it still separated areas of community of interest, eg Deans Avenue separating the Deans Avenue precinct from the Hagley/City Centre ward, Brougham Street separating the Sydenham shopping centre from its residential hinterland in the Heathcote community area, and Bealey Avenue separating those residential blocks immediately north of Bealey Avenue which have a close affinity with the city centre.

Our analysis demonstrated that rather than having six spokes radiating from the centre through the suburban areas, that a much better 'fit' of community areas and communities of interest resulted from a consideration of five suburban community areas. We also found that these areas tended to reflect the genuine differences in rural land uses, urban patterns of development, and major traffic corridors that would in the future provide logical boundaries of separation between areas whilst giving access readily to them.

Each of these 5 suburban community areas also enjoys a full range of rural, residential, retail, industrial, community and recreational activities, ie they are balanced communities.

Some parts of the boundaries are, of course, boundaries of collaboration between adjacent areas. Thus the central area included in our preferred option has a boundary requiring consideration of mutual problems on its western, northern and eastern sides. Across these boundaries there will be collaborative projects and programmes in common shared with the adjacent community boards. This applies particularly to such matters as residential redevelopment patterns and the high density residential zones, community development programmes, safety and welfare and shared programmes for traffic management and community upgrading on those boundaries having common interest.

¹ This is illustrated in Option VII in Chapter 7 and Figure 42 of Part 2

Thus Option VIII, with its five spokes radiating out from the central ward hub best reflects community areas which have some differences and identifiable boundaries of separation and collaboration. They also have recognised centres. The five suburban and the central community areas will provide a permanent ongoing framework for sound local government.

1.7 Description of Proposal

For convenience, and by way of suggestion for consultation only at this stage, we have assigned some suitably neutral names to the proposed wards and community electoral units as illustrated in Figure 2. We believe our suggestions help in understanding the proposal. However these suggestions are put forward as part of any consultation and will ultimately be determined by the City Council.

The recommended pattern of community areas and wards is shown in Figures 1 and 2 and are described below.¹

1. The Hagley, or city centre area, is bounded by the railway line along the south and extends to the Riccarton railway in the west, Rugby Street, Canon Street and North Avon Road in the north and Linwood Avenue/Olliviers Road/Ensors Road in the east.
2. The boundary between Pegasus and Papanui (Areas 2 & 3) is the western edge of the Marshlands rural area along the line of the rural limited access length of the proposed northern arterial.
3. The boundary between Papanui and Sockburn (Areas 3 & 4) lies along Fendalton Road/Memorial Avenue, both of which are major arterial roads clear of retail, commercial and industrial activities.
4. The boundary between Sockburn and Heathcote (Areas 4 & 5) is along the southern edge of the Wigram airfield land where the southern arterial will pass out to Springs Road. These major arterial limited access roads are planned to remain as clear traffic throughways into the future.
5. The Heathcote (Area 5) boundary is the railway to the Heathcote river and thence up Rapaki Track. The Halswell area is included in Heathcote (Area 5).
6. Ferrymead extends from the Lyttelton railway in the south to the Avon River in the north and embraces Mt Pleasant and Sumner to Godley Head in the east. The Lyttelton Basin area can be included in Ferrymead (Area 6) for the election of that area's members to the Council.

1.8 Advantages of Proposal

In recommending the 'five spoke and hub' pattern we are conscious that there will always be some adjustment and even resistance to changes such as those recommended here. However they should also be balanced with the long term advantages. The preferred options have the following advantages. They:

¹ See also Figures 43 and 44 at back of Part 2

- represent a refinement of the existing situation rather than a dramatic change;
- recognise and align the community areas with significant and long term natural, physical and development patterns;
- refine the boundaries to match and strengthen the 'communities of interest';
- build on existing community strengths and arrangements and match them to future needs;
- reduce the suburban community areas from six to five with minimum dislocation to the existing community boards and the Council's services;
- provide a community board identity for city centre residents, daily inhabitants and inner city living areas;
- continue to build on the established strengths of community boards as units representing communities of interest and their accountability to both their communities and the City Council;
- retain a moderate population size for the community areas and wards;
- secure good electoral representation for both Council and boards;
- enable integration of the Lyttelton Basin with equitable representation as part of Ferrymead;
- propose Akaroa/Wairewa with a separate Councillor and ward as a special case (increasing the total number of Councillors to 23).

1.9 Possible Political Implications

We have studied the trends in elections from the old 'at large' elections, to the old wards between 1974 and 1986 and also election results for 1989 to 1998. We are satisfied, both for individuals and for the parties, and teams of candidates, that what is now proposed in our preferred option will not detract from the equity of the present representation or the political balance which might be reflected in changes in overall opinion as expressed through the ballot box.

1.10 Banks Peninsula and Lyttelton

We have no opinion on the desirability of this merger. Should the merger eventuate we consider the Local Government Commission's proposals for wards and boards the most appropriate; ie to treat Akaroa/Wairewa as a special case with a 1 member ward and a community board, and to integrate Lyttelton with the Ferrymead community area for Councillor elections but continue with its own community board for the Harbour Basin.

1.11 Conclusions

In summary we recommend that:

1. There be six community areas, five suburban areas of equal population of about 56,500 and a central community area of 26,000 population.
2. There be four Councillors and six Community Board members elected from each of those five suburban community areas on the basis of two wards in each community area (ie 2 Councillors and 3 Board members from each ward as at present).

3. The Hagley community elect two Councillors and six Community Board members from this central ward.
4. The present community board arrangements continue and be allowed to evolve with further delegations and responsibilities in the future.
5. In the event of the Banks Peninsula area being merged with Christchurch City the Ferrymead community area be extended to embrace the Lyttelton Harbour Basin and the Wairewa/Akaroa community be a separate ward with a community board.

The recommendations to the Council, included in Section 15 of Part 1 of this report, cover both the key strategic issues and also four incidental matters which could be pursued by the Council as appropriate in the future.

Part 1 of the report has been prepared as an aid in public consultation and discussion. We have included brief responses to frequently asked questions in Section 2 Part 1.

This review has been undertaken over three months only and it has not been possible to seek wide public input and consultation. While we have had significant input from Councillors and Board members the public at large need to contribute. We recommend that the Council provide an opportunity for further discussion and consultation with other agencies, residents and community groups of Christchurch, so as to refine and secure wide support for the new arrangements before finalising its proposal for recommendation to the Local Government Commission.

2. FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

The following summary provides brief answers to those questions most frequently asked of the local Commissioners.

- 1. Why do this review ahead of time - is the Local Government Commission driving this?** *It is good government to anticipate change and assess its benefits. The Local Government Commission did ask the City Council to undertake a complete review for the 2001 elections and also asked that it consider the implications of integrating Lyttelton Basin with Christchurch City. However this review of community areas and wards was initiated at this time by the Christchurch City Council itself.*
- 2. Why did the Council choose to appoint an independent commission?** *The Council was prompted to appoint a local commission because of the extent of the review and the need to have an independent approach free from any political influence.*
- 3. Is this just an exercise to reduce Councillor numbers and save money?** *No. While there have been suggestions that the number of Councillors could be reduced to 18, this investigation has first established community area boundaries and then looked at the number of Councillors needed and arrives at an optimum number of 22 Councillors .*
- 4. Is there a reduction in Community Board members in the preferred option?** *No. The number remains at six elected members for each Community Board plus the appointed Councillors.*
- 5. Is this proposal a radical change or a refinement?** *It is a refinement of the present system established in 1989 and which has been unchanged for 10 years.*
- 6. Who determines the number of Community Boards?** *Communities are constituted by the Local Government Commission, or by the Council with the prior consent of the Commission. Community Board functions and memberships are decided by the Council.*
- 7. Will the preferred proposal confuse voters?** *No. The basic framework of wards and boards remains as at present with some improvement to the boundaries. Councillors and Board members will be elected from the same ward areas as at present.*
- 8. Are we dividing local communities?** *No. Present neighbourhood groups continue to operate as usual under the new boundaries. Some neighbourhood associations will have boundary lines running through them as happens under the present system. This has been avoided as far as possible. Some boundary lines, particularly those on the east and north edges of the central city ward, will be lines of collaboration, ie Community Boards on both sides will need to work together on common issues in these areas.*
- 9. How do we balance communities of interest?** *There are many types of community of interest (schools, sport, shops, cultural, business, Council activities, community safety etc). Community boards and community areas are reflected in six areas (5 suburban community areas and a central city community area) for City Council activities and elections. They also coincide with neighbourhood groupings, community facilities, major shopping catchments and high school catchment areas.*
- 10. How did the Commission balance the competing demands?** *By assessing the range of issues (eg communities of interest, population characteristics, ethnicity, physical features, development patterns, transport routes, numerical equality, compactness and good boundaries for local government) related to each section of the city. This led to a balanced judgement for each part of the city.*

11. **Why has a variation of $\pm 10\%$ been chosen for the maximum and minimum population range?** *This figure provides sufficient flexibility to reflect community area definition and needs while still ensuring equality of representation.*
12. **Why not propose the tweaked version of the present system?** *This version was tested after the first round of submissions. It was found that it would cut across some significant areas of community of interest. Also, because of continuing population changes it will need to be amended in the future. The present wards do not reflect the communities of interest well.*
13. **Why amend the present six community area arrangements?** *The present six 'spokes' do not match the community of interest and historic growth of Christchurch as closely as a five 'spoke' and a central 'hub' arrangement.*
14. **Why have a central ward?** *To meet the need for a strong advocate for present and future residents and other community participants in the central city area. This is a distinct community of interest that is not clearly defined in the present Community Board system. The City Council has not in the past had a positive and ongoing consultation framework with people who live and work in the central city.*
15. **Are there enough people in the central city to justify a separate ward?** *Yes, the proposed central city ward has a population of over 26,000 which is sufficient to warrant election of two Councillors.*
16. **Does this proposal disrupt many residents' groups?** *No. Only 11 out of 83 residents' groups will have a community board boundary line drawn through their areas. These groups can still operate as before and work with either one or two Community Boards in a collaborative way as they choose.*
17. **Why choose these particular names for the wards and communities?** *The names are suggestions only to help identify the areas and make the maps more easily understood. The names suggested avoid the names used for national and regional electoral areas. The existing names of community areas and wards have been used wherever possible but some new names are suggested for consultation.*
18. **How does this affect the boundaries of the Police, WINZ etc?** *The Police may choose to make some administrative changes. Their five stations operate within the Community Board boundaries proposed. Some station staff may have to work in collaboration with two Community Boards depending on how the Police decide on their future boundaries. The central ward suits the Police since a great deal of work occurs in that area. Other agencies including WINZ have not yet changed their boundaries to match Council boundaries so they will be unaffected.*
19. **Why include consideration the Banks Peninsula District?** *Since amalgamation is a possibility, the Banks Peninsula area was taken into account to establish a preferred electoral arrangement with the rest of Christchurch.*
20. **Why link Lyttelton to Ferrymead?** *There is considerable community of interest linking the Lyttelton Harbour Basin and Christchurch, in particular the south-east area and the centre city. If amalgamation goes ahead, Lyttelton will best be served by integration of its community of interest with the Ferrymead community area and election of Councillors for an amended Mt Pleasant Ward.*
21. **Why can't all Councillors be included on Community Boards?** *At present the Local Government Act has a formula of a maximum of 1 Councillor for 2 Board members. The option of allowing all Councillors to be on the community boards is not part of this exercise and would require a change in the legislation.*

3. TERMS OF REFERENCE

At its meeting on 25 March 1999 the Christchurch City Council laid down the following terms of reference for the present review:

THE TERMS OF REFERENCE FOR PREPARATION OF A REVIEW TO ADVISE CHRISTCHURCH CITY COUNCIL ON APPROPRIATE BOUNDARIES FOR ELECTION OF COMMUNITY BOARDS AND WARDS FOR CITY COUNCIL ELECTIONS

The outcome of this review will be a report to the Christchurch City Council that sets out alternative possibilities for boundaries and recommends a preferred option.

The report will take account of the following:

1. *All relevant sections of the Local Government Act.*
2. *The decision of the Local Government Commission in March 1998 in its determination of appeals against the present ward and community boundaries in Christchurch City.*
3. *The draft reorganisation scheme for Banks Peninsula District and Christchurch City issued by the Local Government Commission on 19 February 1999.*
4. *Matters relevant to identifying distinct and separate communities of interest within the existing Christchurch administrative area. Inclusive as appropriate (but not limited to): demography, urban settlement history and form, natural features, catchment areas for services, facilities, clubs, etc; the perceptions of community leaders and community groups such as residents and neighbourhood associations.*

The primary focus of the report should be the existing administrative area of Christchurch. In the event of an amalgamation not proceeding, the report will be used by the City Council as the basis for determining its boundaries for elections in 2001. The report will also be the basis on which the City Council makes a recommendation to the Local Government Commission on appropriate boundaries for a final reorganisation scheme and is likely to be influential in such decisions made by the Local Government Commission. Detailed work is not required on community of interest issues within the existing Banks Peninsula area, but the authors should advise whether a more suitable arrangement than that set down in the draft reorganisation scheme section 4(2) seems appropriate.

The target date for completion of the report to the City Council is 13 May. If it is considered that this provides insufficient time for adequate consultation on the report, some extension may be possible with the agreement of the Local Government Commission with regard to the timing of aspects of the Christchurch City Council's submission on the draft reorganisation scheme.

The programme of work should allow for interested parties to make submissions on alternative possibilities, although it is acknowledged that the timeframe will limit the length of time available for such procedure.

The Local Commissioners appointed were Malcolm Douglass (Chairman), Jan McLauchlan and Alan McRobie. We met for the first time on 23 March 1999 and have since held regular meetings, including three full days for hearings of submissions from Councillors, community boards and other organisations. We have had the services of several senior officers at different meetings and acknowledge the extent of work they have undertaken. A total of 20 meetings have been recorded and a vast amount of written advice and information has been filed covering all aspects of the investigations.

A first report was prepared and made available to Councillors for a meeting on 27 May. At that Council meeting we were asked to seek further input by way of submissions from boards and Councillors. This has been done and this amended report reflects the assessments undertaken in June.

During the processes of the investigation the Council Secretary, Max Robertson, the Community Relations Manager, Stephen Phillips, the City Solicitor, Peter Mitchell, and the City Planners, John Dryden, David Hinman and Vicki Newbury (for maps and statistical information), all gave us much useful information from a great variety of sources. Typical of this information is the selection of 37 figures in Part 1 and Part 2 of this report.

4. SEQUENCE OF INVESTIGATION

Arising from the terms of reference we agreed to deal with the matter in the following sequence:¹

- (i) A consideration of communities of interest so as to assess the existing community areas and contemplate future options.
- (ii) An enquiry into the community areas related to functions of community boards, and their relationships with both the City Council and the residents of Christchurch.
- (iii) In view of the above to assess the existing and possible future community areas, their centres and boundaries so as to improve and provide greater confidence and stability in their boundaries.
- (iv) To consider issues of representation, and for the varying options of community areas and wards, the appropriate number of Councillors and board members to meet the present and future situations over the next 12 to 15 years.

Throughout the investigations we have been impressed with the success of the community board system covering the whole of Christchurch and how, since 1989, this pattern of community boards has greatly enhanced the communication, contact and support of the Council for community consultation and additional citizen empowerment.

The initial 1989 arrangement of having 24 Councillors elected from 12 wards with the wards paired to recognise 6 community areas has proven to be a successful arrangement and a relatively well understood political and electoral system.

¹ Also refer Part 2 - Section 6.1

It is probable that this symmetrical and robust framework has in large measure enabled the Christchurch City Council to be a leader within New Zealand with the establishment of community boards and the identification of their functions and delegated responsibilities. During our consultation process Councillors and Board members sought that this general framework be retained and we concur with that view.

Within the terms of reference, and in view of the recent history and effectiveness of the development of community boards, we are conscious of the fact that our recommendations will be refining and building onto what has become an accepted, well established, and successful platform. This means that any changes we might recommend must meet both the test of a demonstrably better arrangement than that existing, as well as being an option that meets all the other constraints and representational issues which we have set out in this report. Such changes will be subject to close scrutiny by the informed community, Community Board members, as well as by City Councillors, and will require substantial justification.

We are mindful that the establishment of boundaries for community areas and wards is, primarily, for administrative and electoral purposes. However boundaries will make much more sense, and will reinforce the purposes of community and local government, if they coincide with widely accepted perceptions of the real centres, clear boundaries and other identifiable characteristics of the metropolitan area.

No overnight or dramatic change will result from these decisions alone. However over time they can engender the growth of those good things and civic attitudes, which go to make up all the best features of this fair city and enhance the empowerment of its communities.

5. COMMUNITIES OF INTEREST¹

The *Local Government Act 1974* lays considerable stress on communities of interest both in respect of the functions of local government and also the importance of community of interest in establishing boundaries for local government purposes.

We appreciate that communities of interest can have a wide range of meaning from the nation, through the region, to the metropolitan area, to the suburb and also to the neighbourhood related to its local school, shops and playing fields.

Community refers simultaneously to:

- a shared set of experiences and understandings based on one or more factors eg social networks, economic activities, political arrangements, sporting clubs, cultural practices or religious beliefs;
- a shared residential location or district such as a local town, suburb or settlement area;
- a shared series of spaces, sites and services where interaction occurs such as parks, halls, schools, post offices, churches, playing fields;
- a shared familiarity with physical features and landscapes such as mountains, valleys, rivers or coastlines.

¹ Also refer Part 2 - Sections 2.1, 2.2, 2.3, Figures 7-12

Community of interest, in the local government sense, obviously has a strong geographic relationship. It is necessary to define boundaries so as to attempt to provide equitable representation for the communities. This can also improve the quality of planning, the implementation of the Council's policies and its administration. In short, good definition of boundaries can contribute a locational and meaningful dimension of benefit to all community interests in the city.

As far as is possible the definition of geographic community areas for local government should reflect the characteristics, physical boundaries, centres of activity and interest and provide a sense of 'belonging' for residents. If these boundaries can be defined and related to physical circumstances on the ground and also provide some permanence in the definition of the community areas, they are more likely to engender feelings of belonging and empowerment.

This investigation did not set out to redefine, in technical or academic terms, communities and communities of interest. It has taken advantage of known information of a practical nature. It has also built from the information held by the Christchurch City Council, which has been used already in the preparation of the District Plan and a host of other public policies and documents.

To pursue these matters the Commissioners have considered the provisions of the proposed District Plan, considered the centres and boundaries of the existing six community areas, heard a range of submissions and considered statistical and demographic information.

In this way we have arrived confidently at the view that the boundaries can be improved so as to better reflect five identifiable suburban community areas. The recommendations of this report will have real benefit and effect to the existing residents and the Council policies for future citizens. This follows from the better fit between the 'community of interest' and the 'community areas' proposed (Figure 3 - plus overlay) and the major zoning patterns and community facilities (Figure 4 - plus overlay).

The recommendations are designed to provide stability and accommodate future growth anticipated over the next 12-15 years or even longer.

6. COMMUNITY BOARDS AND COMMUNITIES¹

In Christchurch the community boards are based on community areas and the existing pattern of wards originally established in 1989 is shown as Figure 5 of this report. This initial arrangement has become widely accepted. The principle of having community boards is now supported and seen as an important component of local government.

The Council's Community Advocates have provided a great deal of information about the operations of community boards and their linkages both with the Council and their communities. We received information on catchments of schools, retail areas and other matters relating to communities. This information together with the statistical information provided has been most helpful in developing an understanding of community areas, their demographic characteristics and the perceptions of those involved in serving local government within the community area and community board structures.

¹ Also refer Part 2 - Sections 2.4, 2.5, 2.6, 2.7, 2.8, Figures 5, 6, 11, 12

For convenience at the time the boards were established they were named from the two electoral wards making up their area. The wards, in turn, were determined for electoral purposes to each contain about 25,000 people. Thus the six community area boards have become established basically as a means of communication, contact and response between the Council and groups of about 50,000 citizens in each of the community areas.

The community boards have extensive delegations in respect of their responsibilities and also in their advice to the Council on such matters as annual plans and issues referred to them by the Council. In addition they represent a focus and conduit of opinion from the community to the Council. The relationship between community boards and the Council is represented in Figure 6.

The performance of the boards is steadily improving and board members are exercising their functions with greater confidence. The community boards are developing skills of liaison with the community. This includes directing individuals in the community to the appropriate officer units or groups within Council for information and reliable advice.

Community boards, with their less formal access processes, their funding for small local projects and their local membership directly linked with voluntary local organisations can contribute significantly toward community empowerment.

To fulfil these functions well, community boards need to have a good understanding of the resources available to their community from both the City Council and elsewhere. This includes access to expertise, facilities, finance and volunteer services which can all be drawn to match the community needs as required from time to time.

The recent additional delegation to community boards, dealing with:

'Development of programmes and plans for achieving community development, social well-being and community safety outcomes at the local level, within the framework developed by the City Council.'

is a further recognition of their important role.

In the submissions we received we became aware of a wide level of support for community boards from residents' groups and also a desire by Councillors that the boards should operate successfully and provide a closer contact between Councillors and the community in their normal City Council activities.

The community boards' activities have widened the horizon and interface between the Council and residents. Residents as a result, achieve a potential to enable a higher level of community participation and community empowerment.

During the hearing of submissions from the existing community boards, voluntary organisations, individuals and City Councillors, we were made aware of the current perceptions and consensus existing on community of interest areas, the size of boards, the size of community areas and also electoral and equity issues. These are dealt with in more detail in Part 2 of this report.¹

¹ Also refer Part 2 - Sections 2.4, 2.5

There was a general consensus that a community board of nine persons, ie 6 Community Board members plus a maximum of 3 Councillors was an acceptable number, and the boards should not be increased in size. However the ability for all ward Councillors to have the right to be on community boards was expressed by many.

A wider range of views was expressed as to the appropriate number of Councillors, varying from 24 down to 12. However all were agreed that the number of Councillors should be related to the number of community areas for effective representation.

There was also general agreement that, with improved definition of the 'job description' for board members and Councillors, the work load could be made tolerable for all. Furthermore, those Councillors who were not Standing Committee chairpersons should still be able to enjoy continuation of their other work and other vocational interests to the benefit of Council linkage in the community. We do not consider the workload of such Councillors should be so onerous as to cause Council work for all Councillors to have to be full time. Provided the community areas and wards are kept generally at their present scale we believe this flexibility can be retained.¹

7. DEFINING SUITABLE COMMUNITY AREAS AND BOUNDARIES²

Having determined that we sought stable community boundaries it was necessary to assess the physical and planning factors that contribute to the fabric of Christchurch and which could be perceived by the majority of citizens as being sensible boundaries.

There is a popular myth that Christchurch, being a flat city, looks uniform and does not lend itself to a clear definition of different geographic areas. We do not accept this myth.

To define the boundaries we placed reliance on the District Plan provisions and recognition has been given to topography, historic development patterns, utility services development, the longstanding boundaries established through the route of the railway line and its abutting industrial development, transport corridors, those major arterial roads which pass between communities, (eg those which are either limited access or are free from frontage retail or commercial development), together with natural features such as the Avon and Heathcote Rivers and estuaries, the general form of the valleys and ridges that comprise the Port Hills, and the location community facilities such as schools and recreation areas.

In addition to considering the boundaries of the community areas we were also concerned to identify the principal centres for facilities, services and shopping centres which are the nuclei, focus of attention, and major suburban signposts in the normal life of Christchurch residents. For these reasons we have recognised the major retail centres for each community area. The centre city fulfils both metropolitan and community area functions. While the surrounding centres including Shirley, Papanui, Riccarton, Sydenham and Linwood, are the focus of retail, community and business activity in their sectors of the city.³

¹ Also refer Part 2 - Sections 4.1, 4.2, 4.3

² Also refer Part 2 - Sections 3.1-3.6, Figures 13-22

³ Also refer Part 2 - Section 3.5.1, Figure 18

The boundaries that are now recommended have emerged in part from this process. There are, of course, other factors such as having a balanced population between the different community areas and wards, recognising the principles of equity in representation and providing a framework for community boards as an identifiable part of local government.

Establishing equal wards for election purposes is complex, we then had to pair them so that the community board areas reflect communities of interest.

The boundaries drawn are for administrative convenience and may in some places be a compromise and appear arbitrary. Once a boundary is agreed it serves two functions. The first is to identify the area and provide convenient definition and the separation of responsibilities. The second is to recognise those boundaries where two community boards will wish to work together on collaborative programmes for facilities and community development programmes. This applies particularly to the city centre area which has, of course, boundaries of collaboration on its west, north and eastern frontages.¹

The attached Figure 3, with its overlay, illustrates those boundaries which, after consideration of all these matters, have been selected as being valid boundaries for the foreseeable future that should be reinforced and recognised in the establishment of community areas.

In focusing our attention on options for 5 or 6 community areas we have been able to select boundaries that, in large measure, can be regarded as permanent corridors or features of the Christchurch scene. These boundaries will, in turn, enable residents and visitors to identify where they are in the city and to which community area they belong and, importantly, where and who they are voting for.

Through a consideration of all these matters we are satisfied that we have met the terms of reference requiring a clear identification of community areas and their boundaries in all the options we have considered. In our preferred options we confirm that the boundary definitions proposed, along with community of interest and representational issues, are more recognisable and will be more long-standing than those existing for the present areas and wards.

8. PRINCIPLES OF REPRESENTATION²

At an early stage of our deliberations we set out to identify key representational principles and consider their applicability to our brief. Our review led us to list seven principles which we used to measure the suitability of the many options we proposed and tested during the course of our deliberations. These were:

- **Numerical Equality** — all geographic electoral units should contain approximately the same number of people;
- **Communities of Interest** — geographic electoral units should encompass communities that are identifiable and are acknowledged as such;

¹ Also refer Part 2 - Section 3.2

² Also refer Part 2 - Sections 5.1-5.3

- **Topographic Features** — hills, rivers, roads, and open spaces create physical barriers that help delineate geographic areas and help create a sense of community;
- **Compactness** — large, sprawling electoral areas, often encompassing diverse interests, are difficult to represent. Electoral areas should, therefore, be of such a size and shape that they can be represented effectively by those elected;
- **Fairness to political Groupings or Parties** — British Prime Minister, Benjamin Disraeli, once described political parties as 'organised opinion.' Today, parties and political groupings are a central element of most electoral structures. Modern democratic theory dictates that there should be a fair division of representation among the competing political groupings or parties;
- **Ethnic Fairness** — significant racial and ethnic minorities should have a genuine opportunity to represent their interests and concerns in the assembly or Council. Where such groups are geographically concentrated they should not be divided between different electoral areas unless this proves to be otherwise impossible;
- **Competitiveness** — any system of representation should be responsive to changes in voter opinion.

Inevitably, the principles we have identified may in some situations conflict with each other; thus the boundaries drawn between electoral areas represent choices and trade-offs between competing principles.

We also examined the three different electoral structures used in Christchurch City over the past 40 years.¹

We concluded that the two electoral structures in place since 1974 have been robust and have generally delivered a fair result. By contrast, the 'at-large' electoral system used prior to 1974 encouraged distortions both in terms of the overall fairness of the result and in the geographic distribution of those elected.

We then sought to apply the representation principles we had identified to Christchurch. We were very aware that communities of interest have always been a significant factor and that a ward structure had provided a fair and generally acceptable electoral system. We concluded, therefore, that a ward structure was preferable to an 'at-large' electoral system. However, we doubt that two-councillor wards provide a wide enough choice for each sector and there is a good argument to double the ward sizes to four-councillor wards, ie the whole of each community area, in the future. This should be initiated after the 2001 elections.

Our studies of past Christchurch ward structures have revealed that the total population of wards has been consistently close to the mean ratio of representative to population. We concluded that this was a constraining factor in delineating wards that fairly reflected identified communities of interest. We therefore resolved to apply a variation from the calculated mean of ± 10 per cent and to use this added flexibility to achieve a better fit of wards to communities, community of interest and community areas.

¹ Also refer Part 2 - Sections 5.2-5.3, 5.6.2, Figures 23-27

We conclude that the present arrangement of a centrally located ward (Hagley) surrounded by the other wards meant that they met the principle of compactness adequately.

We recommend that should the Christchurch City-Banks Peninsula District merger eventuate, then the Akaroa-Wairewa area of the latter District should be treated as a special case and any attempt to attach it to a Christchurch urban ward would be arbitrary and contrived, and not conform with the sound principles of representation we had adopted.

While we are opposed to the re-introduction of an 'at-large' electoral system at the other extreme we are also opposed to the establishment of small single-member wards except in the most exceptional of circumstances.

Christchurch is home to a number of numerically significant minority ethnic groups. We hold to the view that, where possible, we should avoid splitting such groups between adjacent electoral units where it is feasible to include them in a single electoral unit.

Our research has shown that varying levels of competitiveness exist across the present wards but that, overall, election results have broadly reflected public opinion. Thus we did not regard the provision of increased opportunity for competitiveness as an issue of major importance during the development of our various options.

After having gained an understanding of the issues involved, and their complexity, we resolved to adopt the following strategy in developing our proposals for ward and community representation for Christchurch:¹

- *That since the concept of community is deeply embedded in the Christchurch psyche, the starting point for any ward review should be the identification of discrete communities of interest. Factors to be taken into account are:*
 - *existing, self-identified sub-communities and communities;*
 - *significant topographic features such as rivers (and bridges giving access across river barriers) and major parks;*
 - *major and secondary shopping catchments and associated arterial roads;*
 - *historical community divisions; and*
 - *the broad social and economic characteristics of localities;*
- *In determining communities of interest, full account should be taken of the residential location of Maori and other ethnic groups so they are generally grouped within community area wards for electoral purposes;*
- *As there are likely to be many community areas identified, they will provide the basic building blocks for the creation of wards and community board areas;*

¹ Also refer Part 2 - Sections 5.4-5.5, 5.6-5.8

- *Once possible wards have been identified, population numbers will be examined to refine proposed boundaries to bring the total ordinarily resident population of each ward to within ± 10 per cent of the mean total population and, wherever possible, within ± 10 per cent of the adult (18+) population for each member elected. By applying both total population and adult population the requirement for reasonable equality of representation should be met;*
- *Since communities provide the basic building block for wards and community board areas, wards need not have the same number of elected representatives. Provided the maximum variations set out in the previous paragraph are adhered to, there is no reason why different sized wards cannot have different numbers of representatives;*
- *The number of Councillors to be recommended should be based on the number of communities and wards proposed and that the range of members for wards is best between 2 and 5 members;*
- *As a general rule, the principle of compactness should be recognised. Ideally, all points on the perimeter of any ward or community area should generally be the same distance from the centre of the defined area. We accept, however, that in the real world, this is not always possible;*
- *Should there be any variation from one or more of these principles detailed reasons should be set down in the Commission's report to the Council.*

9. TESTING ELECTORAL OPTIONS¹

Once the key representational principles had been isolated we were able to begin developing and testing options aimed at delineating wards and community boards from the community areas we had identified.

Throughout, our approach was a measured one. Once we had identified possible community areas we examined possible separators which we believed would hold good for some years. Tentative boundaries for a wide range of options were then sketched in, and consideration was given to population mix in each of the areas defined. Refinements of each option followed as tentative boundaries were adjusted to meet the population criteria we had set. Only after the tentative boundaries had firmed up were we able to consider what was the appropriate number of Councillors for each ward/community area.

We developed a wide range of different options ranging from the current 12 ward, 24 Councillor structure and its minor modification, to scenarios which involved between three and six wards/community areas electing a varying number of representatives. It soon became apparent to us that while the current arrangement of wards and community boards could remain viable for the next one or two elections, it did not properly reflect the community areas we had identified. This led us to examine possible scenarios incorporating three to six wards/community areas.

¹ Also refer Part 2 - Sections 6.1-6.5, Figures 28-35, Figures 36-40

We examined the possibility of treating the present six community board areas as wards electing three Councillors. We acknowledge that this refinement of the present electoral structure would work from a representation viewpoint. However we are satisfied that the present pairing of wards are not the most appropriate boundaries for community area groupings reflecting community of interest.

We rejected options involving three wards because we concluded that, with populations of approximately 100,000, that the number of Councillors that would require to be elected from each ward would result in the emergence of impersonal characteristics akin to 'at-large' elections. The geographic span also mitigates against good community governance as it would encompass too many people, and to make a community of interest, and too wide an area to enable shared and informed board decision-making.

Following testing, however, we concluded that four ward/community area options also suffered from having areas that were too large and were little more than minor modifications of our three ward option. We rejected these as well.¹

Five and six community area options proved to better match identified communities of interest and be the most satisfactory. We were able to develop a range of options for each scenario which, in the initial stages, appeared viable.

The five suburban spokes and community areas appear to reflect the community of interest well and be robust. They are each sufficiently large to include a representative cross-section of the Christchurch community and its residential shopping, recreational, employment activities but at the same time small enough to preserve the concept of local representation without descending into parochialism.²

10. COMMUNITY AREA OPTIONS

During the investigation of community areas seven major characteristics have been identified:

1. The view of the present community boards that the population contained within each community area, (which at present ranges from 47,000 to 56,000) should not be increased significantly. We believe that the following ratios can be maintained and are appropriate:
 - ratio of Community Board members to population, in the range between 1 to 6,000 and 1 to 10,000;
 - ratio for Councillors to population in the range between 1 to 13,000 – 1 to 15,000;
 - community board area populations up to a maximum of about 60,000 at this time.

Beyond these ratios the boards' population and territories would appear to be too large for effective community board arrangements and representation. This is in respect of both the present and potential functions for the boards and also the nature and growth of the urban area over the next 12 to 15 years.

¹ Also refer Part 2 - Sections 6.3, Figure 37

² Also refer Part 2 - Sections 6.6-6.8, Figures 41-44

2. Options which included the centre city and part of the surrounding suburban high density living area as a central community area are to be preferred. The city centre fulfils many functions both metropolitan, business, special groups as well as an increasing inner resident community. As the inner city redevelops there is a need to enable the resident population an opportunity to be part of the consultation between the Council, business interests and other special focus groups. For this to be effective, and ongoing, a central city community area and ward for Council elections should now be established. This has been missing in the past resulting in different ad-hoc arrangements being made from time to time.¹
3. The application of the principles we have adopted in defining communities of interest and establishing recognisable and more permanent boundaries are of paramount concern leading to a definition of community areas first. For this reason we have adopted a wider variation of plus or minus 10 per cent in the population ratios for Councillor elections in wards and at the community area level.
4. Regarding community area sizes it is considered more important that the community areas have logical boundaries reflecting natural, physical and community of area interests than that they have a common number of board members or elected Councillors. We initially proposed suburban wards of between 3 and 5 elected Councillors. However our recommendations for 2001 returned to four Councillors from five suburban community areas and two Councillors from the city centre.
5. Because of the present legislative prescriptions, that require wards to be conterminous with community areas, and a desire for 2 Councillor wards it is necessary to continue with the two wards for each community areas. This means that the present practice of 2 Councillors per ward and 3 Community Board members per ward should continue in the meantime.
6. The Lyttelton Basin area, with a present population of 4,996 (1996 Census) should be associated with the Ferrymead community area. We have found that this population figure does not warrant a separate ward for Councillor election. It can be taken into account in arriving at a balance on community area/board population considerations and also for ward elections for Councillors and board members.²
7. Should the merger with Banks Peninsula District take place then the Lyttelton community board would have the opportunity for direct access to the Christchurch City Council, at least during the first three years and the situation should then be reviewed. We note that the Local Government Commission has, in its review, recommended a small community board be established. This is an implementation matter with which we agree as a transition arrangement.

¹ Also refer Part 2 - Sections 7.1-7.4

² Also refer Part 2 - Section 3.5.2, Figure 22

Our preferred option, illustrated in Figures 1, 2 and 3, is a structure reflecting five suburban corridors and a central city ward incorporating 11 wards, each electing two Councillors. We believe that this option satisfies the representational principles we have identified and all proposed ward/community areas lie well within our tolerance range of ± 10 per cent of total ordinarily resident and adult population.

The boundaries we propose generally follow:

- well defined topographic and/or major transport features;
- each community area has a well-established shopping centre focal point;
- ward/community areas generally meet the goal of being compact;
- the central city is recognised as a discrete entity; and
- the distribution of the city's minority ethnic groups has been taken into account.

We believe that the community areas and combinations of wards should continue as at present and be conterminous. In the future we favour small sub-community areas for the election of Community Board members. We are also of the view that the Council wards could, in the future, encompass the whole of each of the six identified community areas. Thus the City Council members would in effect be elected by the whole ward (with a ratio of about 1:14,000 people). Each community area would, for this arrangement, become a ward for the election of four Councillors. However at this time and for the 2001 election we recommend the 11 wards as illustrated in Figure 2 and the continuance of the ward pattern electing 2 Councillors and 3 Board members.

We recognise that any recommendation for change will generate some opposition. We believe, however, that the options we recommend will bring widely acknowledged benefits to the community and permanent advantages to local government in Christchurch. We see the preferred option as a refinement of the existing situation not a dramatic change.

On the basis of these assumptions the preferred option Figure 1 and Figure 2 is recommended for consideration by the Council. We believe that once adopted by the Council and determined by the Local Government Commission the proposals could be put in place for the 2001 election.

11. POSSIBLE 'POLITICAL IMPLICATIONS'

Our research has shown that parties and political groupings play an important role in the city's triennial elections. Nevertheless we are conscious of the fact that if there are many vacancies to be filled in multi-member electoral units, some of the characteristics of 'at-large' elections are likely to emerge; the larger an electoral area the more likely it will be that electors will resort to party labels as their guide when casting their votes. For this reason we believe that the maximum number of vacancies to be filled in any given electoral area should be no more than five. We also believe that 3 and 4 member wards are preferable to 2 member wards.

Although we are not obliged to ensure that the political balance is not disturbed as a consequence of our proposals, it is important that we seek to establish wards that — as far as it is humanly possible to do so — result in the overall opinion of voters as expressed through the ballot box being generally reflected in the overall composition of the City Council so that where political change is mandated by voters, policy changes will result.

Since 1986, local authority elections in Christchurch have been conducted by postal ballot. This practice has made it impossible to calculate accurately the impact of our preferred option (or any other option) on the fortunes of the political groupings and/or parties which have contested the four elections that have been held under the present ward and community board arrangement. Any judgement as to the political impact of any proposals for change must, therefore, be solely subjective even to the keenest observers of the evolution of Christchurch Local Government representation.

The issue is further complicated by the proliferation of political groupings and parties contesting these elections, and the fragmentation of many of the major players. For example, Labour has broadened its base in the 1995 and 1998 elections to incorporate a number of like-minded groups under the banner of 2021. Similarly, the long-standing Citizens Association split in 1989 and that election being fought under two competing banners (United Citizens and Christchurch Action) before merging again in 1992 as Citizens Action (now Citizens). In 1992, also, a new party, the Alliance, emerged and has established itself as a significant force in the southern part of the city.

A number of wards have also seen the emergence of organised teams of independent candidates to compete for office by seeking to establish a local or ward identity. These are, in effect, akin to 'mini-parties,' and in a number of instances they have established themselves as a significant force in their wards.

Taken together, the factors outlined above make it very difficult to provide a valid first assessment of the political impact of the wards we propose. While our preferred option reduces the number of wards from 12 to 11 and from 24 to 22 Councillors, we do not believe this would hinder the electoral prospects of individuals or organised parties/political groupings contesting elections. Nothing that we have proposed will prevent voters from continuing to elect their representatives on a ward basis.

We believe, also, that if a majority of voters seek to change the political complexion of the Council through the ballot box, neither the preferred option of 6 community areas acting as electoral wards nor the present recommendation of 11 wards would prevent the political balance of the Council's membership from fairly reflecting electoral opinion and any changes in opinion over time. The present legislation prevents us from having sub-communities for Community Board member elections. Therefore the option we are compelled to recommend at this time comprises community areas, each with two wards totalling 11 wards (10 suburban and one city centre ward). This leaves the position of the candidate party groupings, for practical purposes, generally identical to the present situation of 12 wards for the 2001 elections.

12. ELECTORAL IMPLICATIONS OF A CHRISTCHURCH CITY-BANKS PENINSULA DISTRICT MERGER

A merger between the present Christchurch City and the Banks Peninsula District as proposed by the Local Government Commission would result in an increase in population of 7,581 of which 4,996 live within the Lyttelton Harbour basin (Figure 22).

The present Banks Peninsula District Council comprises nine Councillors, three of whom represent the Akaroa Ward, one the Wairewa Ward, and the remainder the Lyttelton-Mt Herbert Ward. The ratio of Councillors to population for each ward is 1:576 in Akaroa, 1:858 in Wairewa, and 1:999 in Lyttelton-Mt Herbert.

Banks Peninsula may be divided into two distinct geographic areas, each centred on one of its main harbours. Each geographic area has its own characteristics: to the south of the main ridge the Akaroa-Wairewa area is overwhelmingly rural in character, while the Lyttelton basin area is developing as a dormitory suburb for Christchurch with easy communication links through the Lyttelton road and rail tunnels and the Evans Pass and Dyers Pass roads. The presence of two distinct communities is acknowledged today with the Akaroa area still being served by a separate telephone local calling area. We support the Local Government Commission in identifying these two separate areas of community of interest.

Because the geographic area of Banks Peninsula District is approximately two-and-a-half times larger than Christchurch City, but its total population is equivalent to only approximately one-half of our proposed Councillor to population ratio, it is impossible to provide representation based on the criteria we have identified as important for the Christchurch main urban area. To achieve even a single-member ward with the same Councillor to population ratio as we propose for the present Christchurch city, a ward would need to include the whole of Banks Peninsula and a further 6,500 people from the Christchurch side of the Port Hills. Such a solution would run the risk of the Banks Peninsula area being treated as a mere appendage to the present Christchurch City.

Our preferred option makes it possible to incorporate Banks Peninsula fully into a new and enlarged Christchurch City in a way that should help it become an integral part of the new structure. We consider the community of interest of the Lyttelton/Diamond Harbour area lies strongly with Christchurch, ahead of its identity with the Akaroa/Wairewa communities. Despite its tiny population, we accept that the Akaroa-Wairewa area must be treated as a special case on grounds of topography, sparse population, distance from the metropolitan area of the city, and its dominant rural economic character. We therefore support the view of the Local Government Commission that Akaroa-Wairewa be treated as a special case, should elect one Councillor, and that it should have its own Community Board.

We are of the view that because of the traditional links between the port of Lyttelton and central Christchurch (particularly the industrial and transport corridor), and also the smaller communities situated within the Lyttelton Harbour Basin, this area should be included in the proposed Ferrymead community area, for Councillor election purposes, should the proposed merger be confirmed by the Local Government Commission and the electors of both territorial local authorities. Our preferred option proposes that the Mt Pleasant Ward elect two Councillors, whether or not the proposed merger eventuates. These two Councillors would therefore represent both the Christchurch and Lyttelton areas in that ward.

We acknowledge that our preferred solution results in a community area and ward shape such that the principle of compactness is not met. This is assisted, however, if Port Levy remains with Wairewa and Akaroa. Nevertheless, we believe that compactness is recognised to a greater extent by separating the Akaroa-Wairewa and Lyttelton Harbour basins for electoral purposes than if the entire area were to be represented by a single Councillor. Also the Akaroa Community Board arrangements overcome some of the issues related to this 'special case'.

The overall effect of our proposal is that, should the proposed merger be confirmed, the total membership of the new Christchurch City Council would be 23, and that three of those members would be elected by the residents and represent the interests of Banks Peninsula (ie 2 in the Mt Pleasant Ward and 1 in the 'special case' Akaroa/Wairewa Ward). We believe that although the numerical equality principle will be breached in the case of the proposed Akaroa-Wairewa Ward, the total of three Councillors being elected to represent the present Banks Peninsula District in the proposed new city reflects a genuine integration of the districts and is an appropriate solution.

13. PREFERRED OPTION - SIX COMMUNITY AREAS

The option outlined appears to be a satisfactory framework for public consultation. We favour Option VIII for the following reasons:

- 1. It is a logical extension of the existing needs for the City Centre without causing major dislocation to the surrounding community areas and community board relationships.*
- 2. With the five surrounding community areas and the extent and nature of the central area the ratio of elected members to population remain somewhat similar to that existing, while reducing the number of Councillors to 22.*
- 3. All the proposed wards fall well within the ± 10 per cent tolerance range for both total and adult populations.*
- 4. The other representation criteria of distribution of minority ethnic populations, the recognition of the city centre area, the containment of a good ratio of Councillors to population are met. Electors will still have a realistic opportunity to know and make choices of Council representation on an individual basis and without reliance on party or political grouping labels.*
- 5. The arrangement of community areas focussed on the six major shopping areas of the City Centre, Shirley, Papanui, Riccarton, Sydenham and Linwood gives a ready identity to residents in each of the community areas, for both election and administrative purposes.*
- 6. The community area boundaries are easily recognisable, largely coinciding with permanent natural, transport and physical boundaries, and would remain constant into the future.*
- 7. The preferred pattern of community areas and their associated wards will involve only modest adjustments to the present community board boundaries. The present arrangements, board membership size, delegations from the Council, service centre facilities and libraries would be unaffected and would remain intact.*

8. *The Lyttelton Basin area can be accommodated easily and included with the extensive Linwood/Ferrymead/Sumner corridor for ward election purposes, in the Mt Pleasant ward, and in due course the Ferrymead Community Board.*
9. *The situation of the Akaroa/Wairewa area is unique and it is not possible to integrate its Council election basis with metropolitan Christchurch criteria. The future of that ward lies outside the scope of this investigation.*

Your Commissioners' preference is for **Option VIII** shown in Figures 1 and 2 and we therefore recommend to the City Council that there be five suburban community areas (electing 4 Councillors from 2 wards) with a city centre community area (electing 2 Councillors from 1 ward).¹

We repeat our view here that it is timely for the city centre and inner high density living areas to receive a residential and population recognition as a separate community board. This area serves a multiple role of metropolitan focus and a place for increasing numbers of inner city residents as well as being inhabited by many Christchurch citizens and visitors every day. This proposal for a community board will secure a balance between the residents of the central area, the Council in its metropolitan initiatives, the commercial interests and the cosmopolitan cultural activities which are all vital to the centre of the city.

In the event of the Council deciding to proceed without a city centre area and community board, then Option III or Option VII leaves the city centre linked with Linwood and Ferrymead. This option does not preclude the city centre opportunity, at a later date. We considered this option as a second preference but rejected it and seek that the Council establish a city centre community board area now.

By a process of selection and elimination we have distilled the essence of the issues and solutions and reached the conclusion, stated briefly:

We unanimously recommend Option VIII as it:

- *is a refinement of the existing situation not a dramatic major change*
- *recognises and aligns the community areas with significant boundaries;*
- *improves the boundaries to match and strengthen the 'communities of interest';*
- *in reducing the suburban community areas from six to five it does so with minimum dislocation;*
- *provides community board identity for city centre residents and adjacent higher density living areas;*
- *continues to build on the strength and accountability of six community boards;*
- *retains a moderate population size for the community areas and wards;*
- *secures good electoral representation for both Council and boards;*
- *enables integration of Lyttelton Basin with equitable representation;*
- *leaves Akaroa/Wairewa with a separate Councillor as a special case;*
- *retains a pattern of 11 wards with 2 Councillors and 3 Board members from each (the city centre ward to have 6 Board members).*

¹ Also refer Part 2 - Sections 6.6, 7.3, Figures 43, 44

While other options secure many of these advantages this is the only one that puts them all in one basket. A balance sheet of the relative merits of the viable options is included in Part 2 at the end of Section 7.3.

14. IMPLEMENTATION

14.1 Consultation¹

This investigation has been undertaken in a short timeframe to initiate an early review of the community area and ward boundaries for the 2001 elections. It also meets the request of the Local Government Commission for such a review to be undertaken so it can be considered as part of the Commission's proposal to merge Banks Peninsula District and the present Christchurch City in a new city.

While we have consulted freely with elected members there has been little time for public input and discussion during this investigation. We believe that there must be ample opportunity for the proposals to be considered by the Christchurch public. Such consultation should occur before any firm decisions are taken by the Council for recommendation to the Local Government Commission.

To undertake the public consultation in an effective manner there is a need to prepare programmes of publications, media presentations and discussions with focus groups. This is appropriate, as the last real opportunity for public involvement (apart from the formal triennial review) occurred 10 years ago, in the 'hectic' period of the 1989 reforms.

Throughout our deliberations we were conscious of the fact that there were many individuals and groups who held an interest in its outcome. We therefore, consulted as widely as our narrow time-frame would permit.

At an early stage we invited all Councillors, Community Boards, and those members (both individuals and groups) of the public who had made submissions to the Council during its last ward boundary review in 1997 to make their views known to us. After our draft report had been presented to the Council we again invited these persons and groups to comment on our proposals. All submissions received were considered very carefully and a good number of the points made have been incorporated into our report.

While we found the submission process most helpful in crystallising our eventual conclusions, we are conscious of the fact that the wider public also have a clear interest in the final proposal to be placed before the Local Government Commission for its approval. We therefore, welcome assurances that this report will be released for public discussion and input over the next few weeks.

¹ Also refer Part 2 - Section 2.7, 5.4, 5.5, 8.1

14.2 Statutory Provisions¹

We had hoped to develop a staged programme of changes spread out over perhaps two 3 year trienniums of the Council. On legal advice, neither the Council nor the Local Government Commission has the powers to deal with more than a single set of changes at a time. There is no means of binding a future Council with such an incremental programme. In the circumstances, therefore, our recommended Option VIII is, we believe, a manageable group of changes to enable the new framework and boundaries to be put in place as a single operation for election day 2001.

Subsequently the Council should give consideration to establishing a way in which the election of Community Board members can be made from three or four community board election units in each ward (e sub-community areas). This will require amendment to the Local Government Act, and should certainly receive the support of Local Government NZ the Local Government Commission reflecting a principle of flexibility before it proceeds.

14.3 Names of Community Areas and Wards²

We have included some proposals for the naming of the revised community areas and wards. Such proposals are suggestions only, to enable community boards, the Council and others to contemplate these and other alternatives. Our approach has been:

- For community areas to take one of the existing names wherever possible. In the case of Wigram we wish to avoid a national electorate name so we have suggested 'Sockburn'.
- For the wards we have selected the present names wherever possible. In other cases new names have been suggested including 'Brighton', 'Northcote', 'Hornby', 'Cashmere', 'Avon' and 'Mt Pleasant' as locality names generally central to the wards we have proposed.

These names will have to be considered by all interested parties and determined by the Council. This should be done in the consultation process before the new framework and boundaries are finally adopted by the Council.

14.4 Regional Council Constituencies³

The Canterbury Regional Council submitted that it would prefer to see 4 community areas that matched both city wards and regional constituency needs. For the Regional Council four constituencies for the election of two Councillors is preferred.

As indicated elsewhere it was not possible to arrive at four city community areas. It will also be appreciated that 11 equal wards can not be allocated to 4 equal constituencies. It is practical, however, to combine community areas so there are two 3 Councillor constituencies and one 2 Councillor constituency. This arrangement translates numerically as shown in the following table:

¹ Also refer Part 2 - Sections 8.2, 8.3, 8.4

² Also refer Part 2 - Sections 8.2, 8.3, 8.4

³ Also refer Part 2 - Sections 8.2, 8.3, 8.4

| Regional Constituencies NE, SW, SE Arrangement 1 (Preferred Option) | | | | | |
|--|-----------|----------|-----------|-------------|-------------|
| | | Area Pop | Joint Pop | Councillors | Variation % |
| 1 | Hagley | 26169 | 78006 | 2 | +1.0 |
| 6 | Ferrymead | 51837 | | 39003 | |
| 2 | Pegasus | 56133 | 114353 | 3 | -1.3 |
| 3 | Papanui | 58220 | | 38118 | |
| 4 | Sockburn | 56685 | 116669 | 3 | +0.7 |
| 5 | Heathcote | 59984 | | 38890 | |
| | | 309028 | | 8 | |
| | | | | 38629 | |

This would seem to be an eminently satisfactory solution as it would align Regional Council elections with community areas in a more satisfactory manner than existed in the recent past. It also has a very uniform ratio of Councillors to population 1:38,000 with a variation of only -1.3% to +1.0%.

We ask the Regional Council to review its Christchurch constituencies on this basis.¹

14.5 **Administrative Matters²**

Once new arrangements have been adopted by the Council it will be necessary to notify the Local Government Commission and all parties of the Council's decision. There will be some associated administrative and technical matters to be addressed, such as confirming definitions of ward boundaries and establishing new electoral rolls and proposing to the Statistics Department the splitting and minor amendments of some meshblocks to match these areas and development changes.

14.6 **Future Matters for Council Consideration**

As noted elsewhere there appears to be a need for Council and board member training, and for manuals and 'job descriptions' to be produced clearly setting out the role of elected members at both levels. These would assist to more clearly define the roles of elected members and executive management respectively, and make more explicit the governance and policy role of elected members.

There are some supplementary recommendations covering Council and Board member separation following elections and also Councillor ex officio membership of Community Boards included in the recommendations we make to the Christchurch City Council.

Prior to the 2001 election, there will be the need to adjust the administrative support provided for community boards, and any associated adjustments in the arrangements for service delivery through service centres, to reflect the new community area patterns.

¹ Also refer Part 2 - Sections 8.4, 8.5

² Also refer Part 2 - Sections 8.4, 8.5

15. RECOMMENDATIONS

Your local commissioners have found this to be an absorbing and extensive investigation leading to a positive group of refinements to assist Christchurch City's local government. The eight recommendations we make follow.

We encourage all interested in this subject to also read Part 2 Background and Details of this report.

Principal Recommendations

1. That the Council use this report in its consultation with the Christchurch community on the definition of the proposed community areas, the community boards and the basis of election in 2001 for City Councillors and Community Board members from a pattern of 11 wards.
2. That the Council adopt the principles of communities of interest, identification of boundaries, and representation set out in this report, as the basis of its consideration of future community area arrangements and future ward representation.
3. That the Council adopt this report as the basis of its review for the Council elections to be held in 2001.
4. That the Council indicates a preference for 22 members elected from 11 wards, including a central city ward. In the event of the merger of Banks Peninsula in a new Christchurch, the Lyttelton basin be incorporated in the Ferrymead Ward and the Akaroa/Wairewa Ward be represented by one Councillor making a total of 23.

(The Council resolved on 27 May 1999 not to support this recommendation and resolved that the whole of the current Banks Peninsula Council area be treated as a single ward for Council electoral purposes, but that two separate community boards be established to serve the Peninsula in the event of an amalgamation.)

Supplementary Recommendations

In addition, it is recommended that the following matters relating to local authority elections be pursued by the Council:

5. That further study be undertaken by the Council of alternative ways of ensuring the election of Community Board members from community board electoral units, ie up to four 'sub-communities' within each ward, and that if necessary changes to the Local Government Act 1974 be sought to achieve this flexibility.
6. That a further approach be made to the Government seeking a change in the legislation to either change the ratio of appointed Councillors to Community Board members from the present ratio of 1 to 2 to 2 to 3; or alternatively to allow all ward Councillors to serve as ex officio members of the Community Board for that ward.

7. That further legislative changes also be sought, so that in the event of a person being elected to both the Council and the Community Board that person shall be required to relinquish one or other of the positions, with the vacated position then being filled by the next highest polling candidate.

8. That the Council prepare a comprehensive 'job description' defining the role and responsibilities of Councillors and Board members, including statutory requirements, good governance, general policy oversight, good management practice, and councillor/board/staff relationships which are deemed best practice and lead to quality local government.

Signed by Local Commissioners

Malcolm Douglass (Chairman)

Jan McLauchlan

Alan McRobie

Date 21 June 1999