This report sets out the Commission's draft recommendations on the electoral arrangements for the London borough of Newham.

Members of the Commission are:

Professor Malcolm Grant (Chairman)
Professor Michael Clarke (Deputy Chairman)
Peter Brookeshire
Pamela Gordon
Robin Gray
Robert Hughes CBE

Barbara Stephens (Chief Executive)
WHY YOUR LOCAL AUTHORITY IS UNDER REVIEW

The Local Government Commission for England is an independent body set up by Parliament. Our task is to review and make recommendations to the Government on whether there should be changes to the structure of local government, the boundaries of individual local authority areas, and to their electoral arrangements, such as the number of councillors representing residents in each area.

As a result of changes in the electorate, we are statutorily required to review periodically the electoral arrangements of every principal local authority in England.

In broad terms, the objective of this periodic electoral review of Newham is to ensure that the number of electors represented by each councillor on the Borough Council is as nearly as possible the same, taking into account local circumstances. We can recommend changes to ward boundaries, the number of councillors and ward names, and propose the creation or abolition of wards. We cannot recommend changes to the external administrative boundary of the borough as part of this review.

This report sets out our draft recommendations on the electoral arrangements for Newham. Our conclusions are summarised at the front of the report, and illustrated on the large map inside the back cover. Details of our draft recommendations, and how to comment on them, are set out in Chapters 4 and 5.

We have not yet decided on our final recommendations and wish to use this period to seek further evidence. We will be prepared to modify or change our draft recommendations in the light of views expressed if, in our judgement, the statutory criteria and the achievement of electoral equality would be better served. It is therefore important that all those interested in the review should give us their views and evidence, whether or not they agree with our draft recommendations.
SUMMARY


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

We found that the existing electoral arrangements provide unequal representation of electors in Newham:

- in eight of the 24 wards the number of electors represented by each councillor varies by more than 10 per cent from the average for the borough, and in three wards varies by more than 20 per cent from the average;
- by 2004 electoral equality is forecast to improve further, with the number of electors per councillor in all wards expected to vary by no more than 4 per cent from the average for the borough in 2004.

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

- We will consult on our draft recommendations for 11 weeks from 29 June 1999. We have not yet decided on our final recommendations and wish to use this period to seek further evidence. Because we take this consultation very seriously, we may move away from our draft recommendations in the light of Stage Three responses if, in our judgement, the statutory criteria and the achievement of electoral equality would be better served. It is important, therefore, that all interested parties let us have their views and evidence, whether or not they agree with our draft recommendations.

- After considering local views, we will decide whether to modify our draft recommendations and then make our final recommendations to the Secretary of State for the Environment, Transport and the Regions.

- It will then be for the Secretary of State to accept, modify or reject our final recommendations. He will determine when any changes come into effect.

You should express your views by writing directly to the Commission at the address below by 13 September 1999:

Review Manager
Newham Review
Local Government Commission for England
Dolphin Court
10/11 Great Turnstile
London WC1V 7JU

Fax: 0171 404 6142
E-mail: reviews@lgce.gov.uk
### Figure 1: The Commission’s Draft Recommendations: Summary

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Ward name</th>
<th>Number of councillors</th>
<th>Constituent areas (existing wards)</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1 Beckton</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>Custom House &amp; Silvertown ward (part); South ward (part)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 Boleyn</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>Bemersyde ward (part); Castle ward (part); Central ward (part); Plaistow ward (part)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 Custom House</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>Beckton ward (part); Custom House &amp; Silvertown ward (part); South ward (part)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4 East Green Street</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>Manor Park ward (part); Monega ward (part); St Stephens ward (part)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5 East Ham Central</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>Castle ward (part); Central ward (part); Greatfield ward (part); Wall End ward (part)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6 East Ham North</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>Kensington ward (part); Monega ward (part); St Stephens ward (part)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7 East Ham South</td>
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<td>Greatfield ward (part); South ward (part)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8 Forest Gate North</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>Forest Gate ward; New Town ward (part)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9 Forest Gate South</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>Park ward (part); Stratford ward (part); Upton ward (part); West Ham ward (part)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10 Langdon</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>Wall End ward (part)</td>
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</tr>
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<td>12 Manor Park</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>Manor Park ward (part); Monega ward (part)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13 North Canning Town</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>Canning Town &amp; Grange ward; Hudsons ward (part); Ordnance ward (part)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14 North Plaistow</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>Bemersyde ward (part); Plaistow ward (part); Plashter ward (part)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15 Royal Docks</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>Custom House &amp; Silvertown ward (part); South ward (part)</td>
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<td>3</td>
<td>Beckton ward (part); Custom House &amp; Silvertown ward (part); Hudsons ward (part); Ordnance ward (part)</td>
</tr>
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<td>3</td>
<td>Bemersyde ward (part); Greatfield ward (part); Hudsons ward (part)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18 Stratford</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>Stratford ward (part); New Town ward (part)</td>
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<tr>
<td>19 West Green Street</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>Park ward (part); Plashter ward (part); Upton ward (part)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20 West Ham</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>Park ward (part); Plashter ward (part); Stratford ward (part); West Ham ward (part)</td>
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Note: Map 2 and the large map in the back of the report illustrate the proposed wards outlined above.

### Figure 2: The Commission’s Draft Recommendations for Newham

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<td>18 Stratford</td>
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<td>2,565</td>
<td>7,740</td>
<td>2,580</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Totals 60 149,069     -     - 152,527     -     -

Averages - - 2,484 - - 2,542 -

Source: Electorate figures are based on material provided by Newham Borough Council.

Notes: 1 The ‘variance from average’ column shows how far, in percentage terms, the number of electors per councillor varies from the average for the borough. The minus symbol (-) denotes a lower than average number of electors. Figures have been rounded to the nearest whole number.

2 The total numbers of electors in 1999 and 2004 are marginally different from those in Figure 4 (by seven and three electors respectively). This has a negligible effect on electoral variances and no impact on the average number of electors per councillor.
1. INTRODUCTION

1 This report contains our draft recommendations on the electoral arrangements for the London borough of Newham.

2 In broad terms, the objective of this periodic electoral review of Newham is to ensure that the number of electors represented by each councillor on the Borough Council is as nearly as possible the same, taking into account local circumstances. We are required to make recommendations to the Secretary of State on the number of councillors who should serve on the Borough Council, and the number, boundaries and names of wards.

3 In undertaking periodic electoral reviews (PERs), we must have regard to:

- the statutory criteria in section 13(5) of the Local Government Act 1992, i.e. the need to:
  - reflect the identities and interests of local communities; and
  - secure effective and convenient local government;
- the Rules to be Observed in Considering Electoral Arrangements in Schedule 11 to the Local Government Act 1972 (see Appendix A).

4 We also have regard to our Guidance and Procedural Advice for Local Authorities and Other Interested Parties (second edition published in March 1998). This sets out our approach to the reviews. We are not required to have regard to parliamentary constituency boundaries in developing our recommendations. Any new ward boundaries will be taken into account by the Parliamentary Boundary Commission in its reviews of parliamentary constituencies.

5 The broad objective of PERs is to achieve, so far as practicable, equality of representation across the borough as a whole. Wherever possible we try to build on schemes which have been prepared locally on the basis of careful and effective consultation. Local interests are normally in a better position to judge what council size and ward configuration are most likely to secure effective and convenient local government in their areas, while allowing proper reflection of the identities and interests of local communities.

6 We are not prescriptive on council size but, as indicated in our Guidance, would expect the overall number of members on a London borough council usually to be between 40 and 80. We start from the general assumption that the existing council size already secures effective and convenient local government in that borough but we are willing to look carefully at arguments why this might not be so. However, we have found it necessary to safeguard against an upward drift in the number of councillors, and we believe that any proposal for an increase in council size will need to be fully justified: in particular, we do not accept that an increase in a borough’s electorate should automatically result in an increase in the number of councillors, nor that changes should be made to the size of a borough council simply to make it more consistent with the size of other boroughs.

7 The review is in four stages (Figure 3).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Stage</th>
<th>Description</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>One</td>
<td>Submission of proposals to the Commission</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Two</td>
<td>The Commission’s analysis and deliberation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Three</td>
<td>Publication of draft recommendations and consultation on them</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Four</td>
<td>Final deliberation and report to the Secretary of State</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The London Boroughs

8 Our programme of periodic electoral reviews of all 386 local authorities in England started in 1996 and is currently expected to be completed by 2004. The 1992 Act requires us to review most local authorities every 10 to 15 years. However, the Act is silent on the timing of the first London borough reviews by the Commission. The Commission has no power to review the electoral arrangements of the City of London.

9 Most London boroughs have not been reviewed since 1977. Having discussed the appropriate timing of London borough reviews with local authority interests, we therefore decided to start as soon as possible after the May 1998 London local government elections so that all reviews could be completed, and the necessary orders implementing our recommendations made by the Secretary of State, in time for the next London elections scheduled for May 2002. Our reviews of the 32 London boroughs started on a phased basis in June 1998 and the last group began in February 1999, with completion planned for June 1999 to February 2000.

10 We have sought to ensure that all concerned are aware of our approach to the reviews. Copies of our Guidance have been sent to all London boroughs, along with other major interests. In March 1998 we briefed chief executives at a meeting of the London branch of the Society of Local Authority Chief Executives, and we also met with the Association of London Government. Since then we have welcomed the opportunity to meet with chief officers and, on an all-party basis, members of the majority of individual authorities. This has enabled us to brief authorities about our policies and procedures, our objective of electoral equality having regard to local circumstances, and the approach taken by the Commission in previous reviews.

11 Before we started our work in London, the Government published for consultation a Green Paper, Modernising Local Government: Local Democracy and Community Leadership (February 1998) which, inter alia, promoted the possibility of London boroughs having annual elections with three-member wards so that one councillor in each ward would stand for election each year. In view of this, we decided that the order in which the London boroughs reviews are undertaken should be determined by the proportion of three-member wards in each borough under the current arrangements. On this basis, Newham is in the fourth phase of reviews.

12 The Government’s subsequent White Paper, Modern Local Government: In Touch with the People, published in July 1998, sets our legislative proposals for local authority electoral arrangements. For all unitary councils, including London boroughs, it proposed elections by thirds. It also refers to local accountability being maximised where the whole electorate in a council’s area is involved in elections each time they take place, thereby pointing to a pattern of three-member wards in London boroughs to reflect a system of elections by thirds.

13 Following publication of the White Paper, we advised all authorities in our 1998/99 PER programme, including the London boroughs, that until any direction is received from the Secretary of State, the Commission would continue to maintain the approach to PERs as set out in the March 1998 Guidance. Nevertheless, we added that local authorities and other interested parties would no doubt wish to have regard to the Secretary of State’s intentions and legislative proposals in formulating electoral schemes as part of PERs of their areas. Our general experience so far is that proposals for three-member ward patterns are emerging from most areas in London.

14 As a quite separate exercise to the PERs, the Commission was directed by the Secretary of State to review the electoral arrangements of the Greater London Authority. Our recommendations were put to the Secretary of State in November 1998.

15 Finally, it should be noted that there are no parishes in London, and in fact there is no legislative provision for the establishment of parishes in London. This differentiates the reviews of London boroughs from the majority of the other electoral reviews we are carrying out elsewhere in the country, where parishes feature highly and provide the building blocks for district or borough wards.

The Review of Newham

16 This is our first review of the electoral arrangements for Newham. The last such review was undertaken by our predecessor, the Local Government Boundary Commission (LGBC), which reported to the Secretary of State in April 1977 (Report No. 192).

17 Stage One began on 5 January 1999, when we wrote to Newham Borough Council inviting proposals for future electoral arrangements. We also notified the local authority associations, the Metropolitan Police, Members of Parliament and the Member of the European Parliament with constituency interests in the borough, and the headquarters of the main political parties. We placed a notice in the local press, issued a press release and other publicity, and invited the Borough Council to publicise the review further. The closing date for receipt of representations, the end of Stage One, was 29 March 1999.

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

19 Stage Three began on 29 June 1999 and will end on 13 September 1999. This stage involves publication of the draft recommendations in this report and public consultation on them. We take this consultation very seriously and it is therefore important that all those interested in the review should let us have their views and evidence, whether or not they agree with our draft recommendations.

20 During Stage Four we will reconsider the draft recommendations in the light of the Stage Three consultation, decide whether to move away from them in any area, and submit final recommendations to the Secretary of State. Interested parties will have a further six weeks to make representations to the Secretary of State. It will then be for him to accept, modify or reject our final recommendations. If the Secretary of State accepts the recommendations, with or without modification, he will make an order. The Secretary of State will determine when any changes come into effect.
2. CURRENT ELECTORAL ARRANGEMENTS

21 The borough of Newham is situated in east London, its boundaries being formed by the rivers Lee, Thames and Roding in the west, south and east, and by common land known as Wanstead Flats, part of Epping Forest, in the north. The borough covers an area of 3,875 hectares and has a population of approximately 212,200. There are six widely recognised communities in Newham: Beckton, Canning Town, East Ham, Forest Gate, Green Street and Stratford. There is major redevelopment under way across much of the borough on former industrial sites, in particular in the south, where about one-third of the borough was covered by the former London Docklands Development Agency. Newham provides an important transport interchange in east London, with Stratford Station, the Jubilee Line Extension and the International City Airport within its boundaries.

22 To compare levels of electoral inequality between wards, we calculated the extent to which the number of electors per councillor in each ward (the councillor:elector ratio) varies from the borough average in percentage terms. In the text which follows, this calculation may also be described using the shorthand term 'electoral variance'.

23 The electorate of the borough (February 1999) is 149,062. The Council currently has 60 councillors who are elected from 24 wards (Map 1 and Figure 4). Twelve of the wards are each represented by three councillors and the other 12 wards elect two councillors each. As in all London boroughs, the whole council is elected together every four years.

24 Since the last electoral review, there has been a decrease in electorate in the borough, with around 16 per cent fewer electors than two decades ago. It is understood from the Council that over the last decade some of the change in electorate can be attributed to improved methods of compiling the electoral register to achieve greater accuracy.

25 At present, each councillor represents an average of 2,484 electors, which the Borough Council forecasts will increase to 2,542 by the year 2004 if the present number of councillors is maintained. However, due to demographic and other changes over the past two decades, the number of electors per councillor in eight of the 24 wards varies by more than 10 per cent from the borough average, and in three wards by more than 20 per cent. The worst imbalance is in South ward where each of the three councillors represents on average 72 per cent more electors than the borough average.
Figure 4: Existing Electoral Arrangements

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<tr>
<td>20 South</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>12,838</td>
<td>72</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>14,586</td>
<td>91</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21 Stratford</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>4,551</td>
<td>-8</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>4,365</td>
<td>-14</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
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*continued overleaf*
3. REPRESENTATIONS RECEIVED

26. At the start of the review, we invited members of the public and other interested parties to write to us giving their views on the future electoral arrangements for Newham Borough Council.

27. During this initial stage of the review, officers from the Commission visited the area and met with officers and members from the Borough Council. We are most grateful to all concerned for their cooperation and assistance. We received six representations during Stage One. Newham Independents Association and a resident, Mr Okagbue, both submitted comprehensive borough-wide proposals. The Council submitted an indicative scheme only, without any detailed boundaries or electorate figures. All representations received may be inspected at the offices of the Borough Council and the Commission by appointment.

Newham Independents Association

28. During its deliberations, the Council stated that it had consulted locally on two options for reorganising the borough: Option One – 20 wards served by 60 councillors; and Option Two – 15 wards served by 45 councillors, with the possibility of a further 15 councillors to be elected by a system of proportional representation at a later date, although it recognised that this was not possible under the current legislation. The Council also held a public meeting and “although no definite decision was sought, there did not appear to be strong opposition to either of the options”.

29. In considering proposals for future electoral arrangements, the Council identified some general principles which included: that electoral equality is achieved for each ward to within 3 per cent of the borough average; a pattern of three-member wards; buildings on the local communities already identified by local people; taking account of the physical barriers of the docks, A13 and railways; and using appropriate ward names.

30. The Council decided on a scheme providing 20 wards and 60 councillors (Option One). Its reasoning was that this would involve no change to the size of the Council, while introducing three-member wards throughout the borough. However, it did not submit any detailed electorate figures or detailed boundaries, only indicative lines on a small map (as used in its own consultation), adding that no detailed work had been done on Option One. The Council stated that it was “aware that the ward boundaries as shown in Option One do not satisfy the principle of electoral equality. Work has been done by officers on refining a 20 ward scheme, with boundaries that do satisfy the principles agreed by the council ... However, it has not been possible to expose these refinements to sufficient consultation within the deadline set by LGCE”.

Newham Independents Association

31. Newham Independents Association ("the Independents") submitted a borough-wide scheme based on a council size of 60, serving 20 three-member wards. They stated that their proposals would "re-unify traditional and newly-formed communities, previously set apart by existing boundaries".

32. The Independents' proposals were based on the current 1999 and forecast 2004 figures, and they provided detailed mapping to illustrate their ward boundaries. Although they questioned the Council's suggested decline in electors in some wards under the forecast 2004 figures, they did not submit alternative figures. The Independents acknowledged, however, that under their proposals, the relatively large electoral imbalance that exists at present in the south of the borough would re-emerge in five year's time as a result of ongoing residential development.

Ms Okagbue, resident

33. Ms Okagbue, a resident of East Ham, also submitted a borough-wide scheme based on a council of 60 members, serving 20 three-member wards. She believed that "this will provide a fair level of electoral responsibility for councillors, enable the constituents to identify with their
4. ANALYSIS AND DRAFT RECOMMENDATIONS

28 As indicated previously, our prime objective in considering the most appropriate electoral arrangements for Newham is to achieve electoral equality, having regard to the statutory criteria set out in the Local Government Act 1992 and Schedule II to the Local Government Act 1972, which refers to the ratio of electors to councillors being "as nearly as may be, the same in every ward of the district or borough".

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

30 It is therefore impractical to design an electoral scheme which provides for exactly the same number of electors per councillor in every ward of an authority. There must be a degree of flexibility. However, our approach, in the context of the statutory criteria, is that such flexibility must be kept to a minimum.

31 Our Guidance states that, while we accept that the achievement of absolute equality by a council as a whole is likely to be unattainable, we consider that, if electoral imbalances are to be kept to a minimum, such an objective should be the starting point in any review. We therefore strongly recommend that, in formulating electoral schemes, local authorities and other interested parties should start from the standpoint of absolute electoral equality and only then make adjustments to reflect relevant factors, such as community identity. Record must also be had to five-year forecasts of change in electorates. We will require particular justification for schemes which result in, or retain, an imbalance of over 10 per cent in any ward. In reviews of predominantly urban areas such as the London boroughs, our experience suggests that we would expect to achieve a high degree of electoral equality in all wards.

Electorate Forecasts

32 The Borough Council submitted electorate forecasts for the year 2004, projecting an increase in the electorate of 2 per cent from 149,062 to 152,523 over the five-year period from 1999 to 2004. It expects most of the growth to be in the south of the borough, most notably in the existing wards of Custom House & Silvertown and South which comprise the docks area. In contrast, some areas are forecast to experience a decline in electorate, notably in the existing wards of Bembridge, Giffnock, Hunsdon and Park. The Council has estimated rates and locations of housing development with regard to the unitary development plan for the borough, and the expected rate of building over the five-year period and assumed occupancy rates. Advice from the Borough Council on the likely effect on electorates of changes to ward boundaries has been obtained.

33 In its submission, Newham Independents' Association questioned the methodology applied by the Council in forecasting electorate for 2004, but did not provide any alternative figures.

34 We accept that forecasting electorates is an inexact science and, having given consideration to the Council's forecast electorates, and in the absence of other evidence, we content that they represent the best estimates that can reasonably be made at this time. We welcome further evidence on electorate forecasts during Stage Three.

Council Size

35 We indicated in our Guidance that we would normally expect the number of councillors serving a London borough to be in the range of 40 to 80. As already explained, the Commission's starting point is to assume that the current council size facilitates convenient and effective local government.
Newham Borough Council currently has 60 members. The Council proposed no change to the current council size. It recognised "that there is a very high level of uncertainty about future electoral and decision making arrangements in local government and considers that in these circumstances it would be wise to reduce to a minimum the changes caused by this periodic electoral review".

The Council had also considered an alternative 45-member option, as it "saw how a smaller council could fit in with its own strategies for improved management arrangements which are consistent with the trend towards more streamlined representation". However, it stated that "the 45 member option was acknowledged to be a significant change which should only be introduced if there were wide agreement and demonstrable public support". The Council did not believe "that a strong enough consensus in favour of the reduced council size had emerged".

There was consensus for a council size of 60 among Stage One respondents. The Council supported a 60-member council, and Newham Independent Association and Ms Okagbue both submitted borough-wide proposals based on a council size of 60 Councillor Warwick, member for Plaistow ward, expressed concern that a council size of less than 60 could lead to a shortfall in the number of councillors available for representation on external committees. A resident from Canning Town opposed a possible reduction in council size to 45 with 15 councillors elected by a system of proportional representation (a system which is not permissible in local government under the current legislation).

Having considered the size and distribution of the electorate, the geography and other characteristics of the area, together with the representations received, we have concluded that the statutory criteria and the achievement of electoral equality would best be met by retaining a council of 60 members.

**Ward Names**

During Stage One, we became aware of alternative suggestions for ward names under new electoral arrangements. In a number of areas, suggestions have been made for incorporating a geographical position in the ward name, such as East or West. However, while one suggestion is to prefix the ward name with East or West, another suggestion is to include it at the end of the name. Following due consideration, we have decided to generally use prefix names, for example, Newham Street, except where a ward name already includes a geographic reference, such as East Ham, when we propose adding the reference at the end, for example, East Ham North. Our proposals for ward names are described under the relevant subsections. We welcome views and supporting evidence on the appropriateness of ward names during Stage Three.

**Electoral Arrangements**

In formulating our draft recommendations we have carefully considered the representations received during Stage One of the review. We are also familiar with the work undertaken by officers on a detailed 20-ward scheme, but which the Council concluded should not form part of its Stage One submission as it had not been possible to consult sufficiently on the detailed boundaries. From the information available, a number of considerations have emerged which have informed us when preparing our draft recommendations.

There is consensus for retaining a council of 60 members and, of those respondents making detailed proposals, there is agreement on moving to a pattern of entirely three-member wards in the borough. (At present, half the wards are three-member wards, while the other half are two-member wards.)

In formulating recommendations we are required to have regard to both the current electorate and to changes in the number and distribution of electors likely to take place over the next five years. Having accepted that the Council's electorate forecasts provide the best estimate available at this time, we have sought to recommend a scheme under which electorate equality will improve over time. The Council recognised that the indicative boundaries it has consulted on for a 20-ward option would not achieve an equitable solution, but acknowledged that a scheme devised by council officers included boundaries that "do satisfy the principles agreed by the council". The schemes prepared by officers are Ms Okagbue's model would achieve a high level of equality now and in 2004. Both schemes involve changes to all of the existing wards, primarily due to the implementation of three-member wards across a borough where 12 of the existing 24 wards are two-member wards.

Newham Independents' Association's proposals would achieve very good electoral equality based on 1999 electorate figures. However, taking into account generally prefix names, forecast changes over the next five-year period, particularly the substantial growth forecast in the south of the borough, significant electoral imbalance would result under the Independents' scheme by 2004 (the worst imbalance would be in their proposed Dockland ward, 61 per cent). Therefore, any changes to their proposed ward boundaries to improve electoral equality in the south of the borough would have a knock-on effect on their proposed ward pattern elsewhere in the borough. We have to consider the best electoral arrangements for the borough as a whole and, consequently, we conclude that in recommending a ward in the south of the borough which would better meet the objective of electoral equality over time, it becomes more difficult to adopt the boundaries proposed by the Independents elsewhere in the borough.

The schemes from the officers and Ms Okagbue would both achieve similarly high levels of electoral equality in 2004, with no ward forecast to vary by more than 6 per cent from the average under the officers' scheme, and 2 per cent under Ms Okagbue's scheme. Furthermore, there was a considerable amount of similarity between the majority of wards under the two schemes. In fact, the only areas of significant difference were in the West Ham and Stratford areas. In addition, all three borough-wide schemes, including that from the Independents, utilised some or all of the boundaries provided by the A15, Barking Road, Green Street, Green Street Northern Outfall Sewer, the London Underground District Line (which is over ground in this area) and other railway lines, where they would facilitate a good electoral scheme.

We concluded that the schemes prepared by officers and Ms Okagbue would provide an excellent basis for future warding arrangements based on a pattern of 20 three-member wards. We have therefore sought to build on these two schemes in order to put forward electoral arrangements which would achieve yet further improvements in electoral equality, and utilise clear and identifiable boundaries, while having regard to the statutory criteria. The officers' and Ms Okagbue's schemes, together with our own modifications, are described under the following sections and are illustrated on the large map at the back of the report. Ms Okagbue's proposals were supported by 2004 electorate figures only. Therefore, where the two schemes differed substantially, and we had decided to base our recommendations on Ms Okagbue's proposals for an area, we have calculated the 1999 electorate for the proposed wards.

The following areas, based on existing wards, are considered in turn:

- Forest Gate, Manor Park and Little Ilford wards;
- New Town and Stratford wards;
- West Ham, Park, Uppton and Plaistow wards;
- Monega, St Stephens and Kensigton wards;
- Castle, Central and Well End wards;
- Greasfield, Bemersdey and Plaistow wards;
- Canning Town & Grange, Huddsons and Ordnance wards;
- Beckton, Custom House & Silvertown and South wards.

Details of our draft recommendations are set out in Figures 1 and 2, and illustrated on Map 2 and the large map inserted at the back of the report.

**Forest Gate, Manor Park and Little Ilford wards**

These three-member wards are situated in the north of the borough. The average number of electors represented by each ward was below the average in Forest Gate ward (13 per cent in 2004), 2 per cent above in Manor Park ward (equal to the average in 2004) and 8 per cent below in Little Ilford ward (11 per cent in 2004).

While it is possible to identify a level of consensus for change in the two-borough-wide schemes from officers and Ms Okagbue, elements of the two schemes differed considerably. Both schemes included ward boundaries in this area based upon the boundaries of existing wards, modifying them as appropriate to facilitate an improved warding pattern.

The officers' scheme included a modified Forest Gate ward formed from parts of the existing Forest Gate, Manor Park, Park and Upton wards. The western boundary of the ward would lie to the west.
of properties on Oldsea Road, with the western end of the existing Forest Gate ward forming part of the new North Stratford ward. The south-western boundary of the existing Forest Gate ward would include a small area of the existing Park ward, including Sprowston Road. The eastern and southern ward boundaries would be Forest Drive, the Liverpool Street to Shenfield railway line, the Gospel Oak to Barking railway line and Romford Road, thereby including Manor Park Cemetery. The boundaries of Ms Okagbue’s proposed Forest Gate & Maryland ward would broadly follow the boundaries of the existing Forest Gate ward, but with the western boundary extended to follow Leytonstone Road, thus including part of the existing New Town ward.

63. The officers’ modified Manor Park ward would comprise much of the existing Manor Park ward, including the eastern part of Monega ward and a smaller part of Kensington ward. The proposed eastern boundary would broadly follow Aldersbrook Road and Second Avenue. Forest Drive, the Gospel Oak to Barking and Liverpool Street to Shenfield railway lines would form the north and north-western boundaries of the ward (thereby excluding Manor Park Cemetery). The southern boundary would follow Ratcliffe Road and Henderson Road, passing to the north of properties on Sherrard Road and the Roman Road, along which it would run to meet the southern boundary of the existing Monega ward. The south-eastern boundary would be formed from High Street North, Ruxton Road and Stanley Road to the railway line (thereby including a small part of Kensington ward).

64. The western boundary of Ms Okagbue’s proposed Manor Park North ward would follow the western boundary of the existing Manor Park ward (Ridley Road and Balfour Road), continuing along Romford Road, Nigel Road and Sherrard Road to Shrewsbury Road. The southern boundary would be broadly similar to that proposed by the officers, except that it would exclude Lincoln Road, so the eastern boundary would broadly follow the existing boundary of Kensington ward and Second Avenue and was therefore not dissimilar to the officers’ proposals.

65. Both schemes included a modified three-member Little Ilford ward based predominantly on the ward extended to the north and west, on almost identical boundaries. The ward’s eastern boundary forms the borough boundary and its southern boundary is the Gospel Oak to Barking railway line, which remained unchanged under both schemes. Both schemes proposed extending the ward northwards to include the City of London Cemetery (currently in Manor Park ward), with Aldersbrook Road forming the ward’s north-western boundary.

66. The only difference between the two schemes was that Ms Okagbue’s western boundary followed the centre of Second Avenue, turning west to follow a line to the north of properties on Church Road, whereas the officers’ scheme included both sides of Second Avenue in the modified Little Ilford ward and did not include the additional properties on Church Road, between Second Avenue and the railway line.

67. The number of electors per councillor would be 6 per cent above the borough average in the officers’ Forest Gate ward (2 per cent in 2004) and 1 per cent above in Ms Okagbue’s Forest Gate & Maryland ward in 2004; equal to the average in the officers’ Manor Park ward (1 per cent below in 2004) and 1 per cent below the average in Ms Okagbue’s Manor Park North ward in 2004; 2 per cent above in the officers’ Little Ilford ward (1 per cent below in 2004) and 2 per cent below in Ms Okagbue’s Little Ilford ward in 2004.

68. We have carefully considered the two schemes for this area. Whilst both schemes would achieve excellent electoral equality in the three wards, we note that the boundaries included in Ms Okagbue’s scheme would build on the existing ward pattern and, we judge, would use more identifiable boundaries. Furthermore, in our view, her ward configuration would facilitate a more coherent warding pattern for the north of the borough. We are therefore adopting Ms Okagbue’s proposals as our draft recommendations in this area.

69. There were slight variations in ward names under both schemes. We propose retaining Little Ilford as a ward, and Forest Gate as a ward, together with the officers’ proposals, judging that they accurately reflect the local community. We also propose retaining Forest Gate ward as Forest Gate North, which would be consistent with the naming of wards elsewhere in the borough. Under our proposals, we calculated that the number of electors per councillor would be 6 per cent above the borough average in Forest Gate North ward (1 per cent above in 2004), 2 per cent below in Manor Park ward (1 per cent below in 2004) and 1 per cent above in Little Ilford ward (2 per cent below in 2004).

New Town and Stratford wards

70. New Town and Stratford wards are located in the north-west of the borough, both wards have boundaries defined by the borough boundary. Each ward elects two councillors and the number of electors represented by each councillor is 9 per cent below the borough average in New Town ward (5 per cent in 2004) and 8 per cent below in Stratford ward (14 per cent in 2004).

71. Significant reconfiguration of these wards is necessary to facilitate a three-member ward pattern across the borough, as favoured by respondents. The proposed ward configurations received were significantly different. The officers’ scheme included a new three-member North Stratford ward including the whole of the existing New Town ward together with parts of the existing Forest Gate and Stratford wards. The southern boundary of North Stratford ward would follow the Richmond to North Woolwich railway line and the High Street (All1), its north-eastern boundary would follow the Liverpool Street to Shenfield railway line and the east of properties on Welling Road.

72. The remainder of the existing Stratford ward would form the basis of a new three-member South Stratford ward under the officers’ scheme, together with parts of the existing Park and West Ham wards. The ward’s northern boundary, with the proposed North Stratford ward, would follow the railway line, then turning southwards to run to the centre of Sperson Road, westwards to broadly follow Romford Road, Vicarage Lane, Tennyson Road and Manor Road to the borough boundary. A triangular shaped area of land in the south of the existing Stratford ward (comprising Crow Road) would be included in a modified West Ham ward (described later). Under these proposals the councillors for North Stratford ward would represent 2 per cent more electors than the borough average (3 per cent in 2004) and for South Stratford ward 8 per cent more (2 per cent in 2004).

73. Ms Okagbue’s scheme for this area predominantly used existing ward boundaries. The existing two-member wards of New Town and Stratford, which are both relatively over-represented, would be united to form a three-member Stratford New Town ward. The ward’s northern and western boundaries would be the borough boundary, and eastern boundary would follow Leytonstone Road, Water Lane, Romford Road and Vernon Road, joining the existing eastern and southern boundaries of Stratford ward. The three councillors for this ward would represent 1 per cent more electors than the borough average in 2004.

74. In considering alternative warding arrangements for this area, we must consider the warding arrangements for the whole borough. Ms Okagbue’s proposal to merge the two existing wards of New Town and Stratford to form a new three-member Stratford New Town ward would have the benefit of uniting an area that we consider already functions as a community, utilizing many existing boundaries, achieving excellent electoral equality and facilitating a good warding pattern across the north of the borough. We are therefore adopting Ms Okagbue’s proposals for this area as our draft recommendations. However, following consideration of the whole area that would be covered by the new ward, we propose naming it Stratford. The electoral variance for Stratford ward would be 1 per cent both initially and in 2004.

West Ham, Park, Upton and Plashet wards

75. The four wards of West Ham, Park, Upton and Plashet are located in the north of the borough. The wards are each served by three councillors, except for West Ham which elects two councillors. The number of electors represented by each councillor is 9 per cent above the borough average in West Ham ward (6 per cent in 2004), 12 per cent below in Park ward (17 per cent in 2004), 8 per cent below in Upton ward (18 per cent in 2004) and 2 per cent below in Plashet ward (7 per cent in 2004).

76. In order to improve electoral equality and provide a pattern of all three-member wards, both schemes prepared by the officers and Ms Okagbue involved considerable change, including a three-member West Ham ward, although on significantly different boundaries. The officers’ West Ham ward would include parts of Park, Plashet and West Ham wards and its boundaries would follow the London Underground District line in the south and Romford Road in the north. The ward’s western boundary is that described earlier as the eastern boundary of South Stratford ward (broadly Vicarage Lane, Tennyson Road and
Manor Road) and its eastern boundary would broadly follow Upton Lane, Portway, Liddington Road and Harcourt Road.

76 Ms Okagbue proposed an alternative three-member West Ham ward which would incorporate the whole of the existing West Ham ward, retaining the southern and western boundaries of the existing ward. The ward's northern boundary would also broadly follow the existing boundary, but extended eastwards across West Ham Park to Upton Lane. In the east, the boundary would follow Upton Lane, Portway, East Road and Udena Grove.

77 Both schemes included a new three-member ward covering the area currently known as Upton ward, named West Green Street by officers and Green Street West by Ms Okagbue. The boundaries under both schemes were broadly similar, including the northern boundary following Romford Road, the southern boundary following the London Underground District line and the eastern boundary following the existing ward boundary along Green Street. In the west the boundaries differed slightly; while both followed part of Upton Lane, the officers' boundary continued further north along Upton Road and the existing boundary as far as Romford Road. Ms Okagbue proposed that the boundary be similarly drawn, but to also include Dunbar Road and Shenkin Road in the ward.

78 As detailed earlier, the officers' scheme included that part of the existing Park ward south of Romford Road in a modified West Ham ward, and that part of Park ward north of Romford Road in a new South Stratford ward. Park ward would therefore cease to exist. As part of her borough-wide scheme, Ms Okagbue proposed a three-member Romford Road ward in this area, comprising parts of the existing Park, Stratford, Upton and West Ham wards. The proposed ward boundaries would broadly follow the railway line in the north, Balmoral Road, Romford Road and Upton Lane in the east, with the southern boundary bisecting West Ham Park. The western boundary would broadly follow Hartland Road, Faringdon Road, Vernon Road and Water Lane.

79 The schemes prepared by both the officers and Ms Okagbue proposed that the area covered by the existing Plashet ward should be re-distributed to form parts of three new wards, West Ham and West Green Street (officers' scheme) or Green Street West (Ms Okagbue's scheme), both detailed earlier, and a new North Plashet (officers' or Plashet North (Ms Okagbue), detailed later. Plashet ward would therefore cease to exist.

80 Under the officers' scheme the number of electors per councillor would be 7 per cent above the borough average in West Ham ward (2 per cent above in 2004) and 1 per cent below in West Green Street ward (2 per cent below in 2004). Under Ms Okagbue's proposal the number of electors per councillor would be 1 per cent below in Green Street West ward, Romford Road ward and West Ham ward by 2004.

81 Having considered the alternatives for this area, we conclude that Ms Okagbue's proposed ward configuration for this area would achieve an excellent level of electoral equality while following boundaries similar to those currently in use and would facilitate a coherent borough-wide scheme. We are not persuaded that the West Ham ward under the officers' scheme reflects community identities in this area, and we are therefore adopting Ms Okagbue's proposals as our draft recommendations for this ward. Due to the differences between the two schemes, we could not adopt the officer's proposals for the surrounding wards.

82 However, we are adopting West Ham and West Green Street ward names, as suggested by officers, considering them to better reflect the communities represented. Furthermore, we propose that Ms Okagbue's Romford Road ward should be renamed Forest Gate South as we judge that this name more accurately reflects the community covered and is consistent with the proposed Forest Gate North ward name. Under our draft recommendations the three councillors for West Ham ward would each represent 3 per cent more electors than the borough average, 1 per cent more in West Green Street ward and 1 per cent more in Forest Gate South ward (each 1 per cent more in 2004).

83 Located in the north-eastern part of the borough, these three wards are each served by two councillors. The current number of electors represented by each councillor in these wards is 6 per cent above the borough average in both Monege and Kensington (6 per cent and 5 per cent above respectively in 2004) and equal to the average in St Stephens (2 per cent below in 2004).

84 Under the schemes prepared by both the officers and Ms Okagbue, these three wards would form the basis of two new three-member wards, but with different names: East Green Street and North East Ham (under the officers' scheme) or Green Street East and Manor Park South (under Ms Okagbue's scheme). The same overall level of representation would be retained as at present.

85 The proposed western boundary of East Green Street or Green Street East would be Green Street itself, under both schemes. Under Ms Okagbue's scheme, the southern boundary would follow the London Underground District line, which is also an existing boundary. Under the officers' scheme, the proposed ward would extend further south with the boundary to the north of the Boleyn Ground and south of William Morley Close and Priory Park, and along Grangewood Street at its junction with Aragon Road.

86 The officers' suggested eastern boundary for the ward would broadly follow Katherine Road, turning east along the rear of properties on Bristol Road, then along part of Shenfield Road. Ms Okagbue's proposals similarly used Katherine Road, but turned eastwards at Derby Road (an existing boundary) instead of at Bristol Road. The schemes also differed in the north-east, described earlier at the western boundary of Manor Park and Manor Park North wards, where the officers' boundary would broadly run along Ratcliffe Road and Henderson Road and to the north of properties in Sherard Road, Ms Okagbue's boundary would run to the east of properties on Birchdale Road and Halley Road.

87 The schemes prepared by officers and Ms Okagbue both suggested that the southern boundary of a new North East Ham or East Ham North ward should follow the London Underground District line, linking the borough boundary in the east and the western boundary along Katherine Road. The proposed northern boundary with Manor Park ward or Manor Park North ward would broadly follow Stafford Road, Lincoln Road, High Street North and the Gospel Oak to Barking railway line under the officers' borough-wide scheme, but also utilising Stanley Road and Ruisen Road under the officer's scheme to exclude a small part of the existing Kensington ward from the new ward. Ms Okagbue's northern boundary would broadly follow Ratland Road, Lincoln Road, High Street North and the railway line.

88 Under the officers' scheme the number of electors per councillor for East Green Street would be 1 per cent above the borough average and for North East Ham would be 1 per cent below, with little change forecast in 2004. Under Ms Okagbue's proposals the number of electors per councillor would be 2 per cent below and equal to the average in Green Street East and Manor Park South wards respectively in 2004.

89 Both schemes would provide an excellent level of electoral equality. Although there were relatively few differences between the two schemes in this area in terms of boundaries and electoral equality, we conclude that Ms Okagbue's proposals would facilitate a better electoral scheme across the area, and we are including her boundaries as part of our draft recommendations. However, we are adopting the officers' suggested ward name of East Green Street and Ms Okagbue's proposed ward name of East Ham North, particularly as we consider that the former name better reflects the area within the new ward, and is in line with neighbouring wards.

90 Under our draft recommendations we calculated that, initially, the number of electors represented by each councillor for East Green Street and East Ham North wards would be 3 per cent and 3 per cent above the average respectively (2 per cent below and equal to the average in 2004 respectively).

Castle, Central and Wall End wards

91 These three wards lie to the south of the District line, in the east of the borough. The two wards of Castle and Central are each represented by two councillors and Wall End by three councillors. The number of electors represented by each councillor is currently equal to the average, 6
per cent above and 7 per cent above the borough average in Castle, Central and Wall End wards respectively (4 per cent below, 1 per cent above and 3 per cent above in 2004).

The borough-wide schemes prepared by officers and Ms Okagbue both included a new three-member Boley ward which would be based on some extent on the existing Castle ward, extended to include parts of the existing Bemersyde and Piastra wards in the west, and Greatfield ward in the east.

The officers’ northern boundary for Boley ward would broadly follow the District line, Green Street and Grangewood Street, described earlier as forming the southern boundaries of East Green Street and West Green Street wards. Their southern boundary would broadly follow Barking Road, Green Street and Frinton Road. The eastern boundary would follow Abbots Road, Barking Road, Kimberley Avenue, Geoffrey Gardens and Burford Road, and the western boundary would be formed by Queen Road, a line bisecting the playing fields of Southern Road Primary School, Davis Street and Pragel Street.

Ms Okagbue also proposed the District Line as a northern Boley ward boundary with the southern boundary broadly following by Hensiker Gardens, part of Hatherley Gardens, Liffield Road and Green Street, and differed from the officers in that her proposed Boley ward included only a very small area of the existing Bemersyde ward (south of Eawn Road, comprising 64 electors) and that part of the existing Greatfield ward as far south as Hensiker Gardens. The eastern boundary would follow the eastern boundary of the existing Castle ward and the western boundary would broadly follow Western Road.

Both the officers’ Central East Ham ward and Ms Okagbue’s East Ham Central ward would be based on the existing Central ward, extended southwards to include part of the existing Greatfield ward, as far south as Mitcham Road under the officers’ scheme, or Masterman Road under Ms Okagbue’s scheme. The officers and Ms Okagbue recommended that the District line should form the ward’s northern boundary. The ward’s eastern boundary – with the officers’ Laurendon ward or Ms Okagbue’s Wall End ward – is described below. The ward’s western boundary would also form the eastern boundary of Boley ward, as described above, broadly following Abbots Road, Barking Road, Kimberley Avenue, Geoffrey Gardens and Burford Road under the officers’ scheme and the existing western ward boundary of Castle ward under Ms Okagbue’s proposals.

The two borough-wide schemes included a ward which would be almost identical to the existing Wall End ward. The ward’s eastern boundary is the borough boundary, and both schemes suggested retaining the existing ward’s northern and southern boundaries. For this ward, the only difference between the two schemes was that they included marginally different western boundaries, both of which terminated the existing boundary, and different ward names. The officers’ boundary followed Keppel Road, Kempston Road, Almore Avenue and Wellington Road and Ms Okagbue’s followed Stevington Road, Almore Avenue and Wellington Road. The officers suggested that the ward be renamed Langdon, while Ms Okagbue proposed retaining the existing name of Wall End.

The electoral variance in the three wards under the officers’ scheme would be 8 per cent, 6 per cent and 6 per cent above the borough average in Boley, Central East Ham and Langdon wards respectively (each at 2 per cent in 2004). Under Ms Okagbue’s proposals all three wards would have an electoral variance of 1 per cent in 2004.

We note that the schemes included very similar warding arrangements in this area, and have based our recommendations for this area on achieving excellent electoral equality and using good boundaries, having regard to the borough-wide scheme. We conclude that the ward boundaries for the officers’ Central East Ham and Langdon wards would best facilitate this. Whilst we recognise that under 2004 figures Ms Okagbue’s scheme achieves marginally better electoral equality than the officers’, we judge that the officers’ scheme not only facilitates good electoral equality but also clear boundaries and a coherent borough-wide scheme. Furthermore, we are adopting the suggested ward name of Langdon which would be named after the large comprehensive school in the area which we understand is recognised locally, whereas we are unclear as to continuing relevance of the name Wall End. However, we propose adopting the name East Ham Central, as submitted by Ms Okagbue, which we consider to provide a better description of the area, and be in line with the suggested naming of wards elsewhere in the borough.

Under our draft recommendations, the councillors for East Ham Central and Langdon wards would represent 4 per cent and 6 per cent more electors than the average respectively (1 per cent fewer and 2 per cent more in 2004).

While both schemes included a new three-member Boley ward that would meet the criteria of the review, we are unable to look at any one area in isolation, but must consider the warding arrangements for the borough as a whole. In light of our proposals for surrounding areas, we have decided to put forward a three-member Boley ward on alternative boundaries to those already identified. Where possible we have sought to build on both existing boundaries and those submitted during Stage One, recognising that both schemes proposed a ward that would straddle Green Street in order to achieve a more balanced representation across the borough.

We propose that the ward’s northern boundary should be the District line and the southern boundary should broadly follow Haig Road, exclude Sutton Court Road and follow Green Street, progressing east to utilise parts of the southern boundary of the existing Castle ward (Central Park Road). The ward’s eastern boundary would broadly follow Katherine Road, Abbots Road, Barking Road and Mafeking Road and its western boundary would broadly follow Hollybush Street and the western edge of the allotments and school playing fields. Our proposed boundaries are illustrated on the large map in the back of the report.

Under our proposals the number of electors per councillor in Boley ward would be 4 per cent above the borough average (2 per cent below in 2004).

Greatfield, Bemersyde and Piastra wards

Three wards are located in the centre of the borough. Greatfield and Piastra are each served by three councillors, while Bemersyde elects two councillors. The current number of electors per councillor is equal to the average in Greatfield ward (7 per cent below the average in 2004), 19 per cent below in Bemersyde ward (25 per cent below in 2004) and 14 per cent below in Piastra ward (17 per cent below in 2004). Overall this area is currently over-represented.

Under the schemes prepared by officers and Ms Okagbue, a new three-member ward would comprise parts of the existing wards of Greatfield and South. The ward would be called South East Ham under the officers’ scheme and East Ham South under Ms Okagbue’s scheme. Both schemes included a western boundary that bisects the playing fields of Brampton Manor Comprehensive School, linking Newham Way and the Northern Outfall Sewer. The officers’ suggested southern boundary for the ward would follow Newham Way to the eastern boundary, while Ms Okagbue’s proposed boundary would follow part of Newham Way, the Northern Outfall Sewer and Royal Docks Road. The officers’ northern boundary would predominantly follow Liffield Road, Mitcham Road, Flanders Road and the southern boundary of Langdon School’s playing fields. Ms Okagbue’s northern boundary would run behind properties in Hatherley Gardens, Hensiker Gardens and Mitcham Roay, thereby including these properties in the neighbouring ward.

Under both schemes, Bemersyde ward would be almost wholly incorporated in a new three-member South Plaistow ward (officers’ scheme) or Plaistow South ward (Ms Okagbue’s scheme). Both schemes used Newham Way as the ward’s southern boundary and Boundary Road as its eastern boundary. The ward’s western boundary, under both schemes would broadly follow the Northern Outfall Sewer, Barking Road and Cumberland Road. Where the two schemes differed was for the ward’s northern boundary, where the officers suggested it should broadly follow Chesserton Terrace, Davis Street and Barking Road, while Ms Okagbue proposed that it should run to the south of properties on Howards Road, then east to follow Balaam Street, Dundee Road and generally the existing northern boundary of Bemersyde ward.

A new three-member North Plaistow ward (officers’ scheme) or Plaistow North ward (Ms Okagbue’s scheme) would incorporate large parts of the existing Plaistow and Plaister wards under both schemes. The officers suggested that sections of Portway and Plaister Road should form the ward’s northern boundary and its eastern boundary would broadly follow Claude Road, crossing the District line, following the edge of the allotments and school playing fields. The ward’s southern boundary would run along High Street and Chesserton Terrace, and its western boundary would follow Geere Road and Holbrook Road.
Ms Oakgbue’s proposal differed in that the part of Plashet ward, broadly west of Park Road and Maud Road, should not form part of this ward. Her proposal also included Queens Terrace, Western Road, Chesterton Road and Herbert Street, areas which had not formed part of the officers’ ward for this area.

Under the officers’ scheme the electoral variances would be 4 per cent, 1 per cent and 2 per cent in South Plaistow, North Plaistow and South East Ham ward (each at 8 per cent in 2004). Each of the three wards would have an electoral variance of 1 per cent in 2004 under Ms Oakgbue’s proposals.

Following careful consideration of the alternative proposals, we judge that the boundaries included in the officers’ scheme for South East Ham ward would be consistent with the concept that the A13 should form ward boundaries, where at all possible, as it is a significant physical boundary in the borough. Consequently, we propose adopting the boundaries included in the officers’ scheme for South East Ham ward, but renaming it East Ham South as proposed by Ms Oakgbue. The electoral variances would be the same as those under the officers’ scheme.

In the light of our conclusions for warding arrangements elsewhere in the borough, we are proposing our own boundaries for South Plaistow and North Plaistow wards, where possible building on boundaries that have been suggested to us by respondents. As included under both the officers’ and Ms Oakgbue’s schemes, the three-member North Plaistow ward would include parts of the existing Plashet, Plaistow and Bemersyde wards. The new ward’s southern boundary would be the same as the southern boundary of the existing Plaistow ward (the District line as far as the High Street), but would continue further east to include that part of Bemersyde ward west of Hollybush Street. The ward’s eastern boundary would follow the western boundary of the playing fields and allotment gardens, turning north along Donald Road and Gwendoline Avenue (thereby excluding them from the ward), as suggested under the officers’ scheme.

The northern boundary of our proposed South Plaistow ward would follow the northern boundary of the existing Greatfield ward from Geoffery Gardens to Boundary Road, continuing west to bisect Bemersyde ward, broadly following Upperon Road West and Stratton Court Road. The ward’s eastern boundary would follow Boundary Road, Litchfield Road, Brampton Road, Burford Road, Haldane Road and Geoffery Gardens. The ward’s southern boundary would follow Newham Way and its western boundary would be as suggested by officers (except that it would follow the centre of Cambeland Road). We note that the two borough-wide schemes did not propose straddling Green Street in the manner in which we propose for this ward; however, after careful consideration we judge that it is necessary to cross Green Street at some point in order to achieve an acceptable level of electoral equality.

Under our draft recommendations, the number of electors per councillor would be 5 per cent above the average in North Plaistow ward and 6 per cent above the average in South Plaistow ward (1 per cent above and 1 per cent below respectively in 2004).

Canning Town & Grange, Hudsons and Ordinance wards

These three wards are located in the south-west of the borough. Canning Town & Grange and Ordinance wards each elect two councillors, while Hudsons ward is served by three councillors. The number of electors per councillor is currently 10 per cent above the borough average in Canning Town & Grange ward (6 per cent in 2004), 16 per cent below in Hudsons ward (21 per cent in 2004) and 29 per cent below in Ordinance ward (32 per cent in 2004).

While the two borough-wide schemes included broadly similar changes to the warding arrangements in this area, the boundaries differed in detail. In order to provide for a pattern of three-member wards across the borough, a new North Canning Town ward (officers’ scheme) or Canning Town North & Grange ward (Ms Oakgbue’s scheme) would comprise the existing Canning Town & Grange ward, together with the northern part of the existing Ordinance ward and a small part of the existing Hudsons ward. Both schemes would utilise the existing northern and eastern boundaries of Canning Town & Grange ward as boundaries for the new ward, with the borough boundary forming the western boundary. The southern boundaries differed, with the officers’ boundary running from the borough boundary along Newham Way, Kidlare Road, Alexandra Street and Barking Road, and Ms Oakgbue’s boundary following Barking Road.

Under both schemes, a new three-member South Canning Town ward (officers’ scheme) or Canning Town South ward (Ms Oakgbue’s scheme) would incorporate the south of Ordinance ward, and the western parts of Hudsons and Beckton wards, and the north-west corner of the existing Custom House & Silvertown ward, to the north of Royal Victoria Dock. Under both schemes Royal Victoria Dock would form the ward’s southern boundary. The officers’ suggested eastern boundary for the ward would follow Freemasons Road, turning west along Coolfin Road and Boreham Avenue, north along Bouchers Road, east along Newham Way, west at Chadwin Road and north at Cambeland Road as far as Barking Road. Ms Oakgbue’s proposed boundary would lie east of Coolfin Road, Hopper Road, Bouchers Road and Beeby Road, and along Cambeland Road to the junction with Barking Road.

The ward’s north-western boundary with the officers’ North Canning Town ward would follow Barking Road, to the west of properties on Chandler Avenue and Alexandra Street, and then along Newham Way, and with Ms Oakgbue’s Canning Town North & Grange ward the boundary would follow Barking Road.

Under the officers’ scheme the number of electors per councillor in North Canning Town ward and South Canning Town ward would be 3 per cent and 2 per cent above the borough average respectively (both 2 per cent below in 2004). Under Ms Oakgbue’s scheme the number of electors per councillor would be 2 per cent and 1 per cent below the average for Canning Town North & Grange and Canning Town South respectively by 2004.

A further representation was received regarding the warding arrangements for the Canning Town area. A resident of Canning Town urged the Commission to create a new ward south of the A13, stating that the existing Ordinance ward is physically and psychologically divided by this main road.

We noted that the boundaries and ward names included in the scheme prepared by officers for this area would achieve excellent electoral equality, utilising clear boundaries that were consistent with the approach taken in other parts of the borough. We are therefore adopting them as our draft recommendations, subject to a modification to the eastern boundary of Canning Town South ward, so that it would follow the centre of Cambeland Road, as proposed by Ms Oakgbue. Under these recommendations the number of electors per councillor would be 3 per cent and 2 per cent above the average in North Canning Town and South Canning Town wards respectively (2 per cent and 3 per cent below in 2004).

Beckton, Custom House & Silvertown and South wards

The wards of Beckton, Custom House & Silvertown and South are situated in the extreme south of the borough. Custom House & Silvertown and South wards are each served by three councillors, while Beckton ward elects two councillors. This area includes the worst imbalances in the borough under the current arrangements. The number of electors per councillor is currently 23 per cent below the borough average in Beckton ward (unchanged in 2004), 20 per cent above in Custom House & Silvertown ward (62 per cent in 2004) and 72 per cent above in South ward (91 per cent in 2004).

The schemes prepared by officers and Ms Oakgbue included significant change to the warding arrangements in the south of the borough, in order to take account of the substantial housing development which has occurred, and further development that is planned for the area. A new three-member Custom House ward (officers’ scheme) or Custom House & West Beckton ward (Ms Oakgbue’s scheme) would include the eastern part of the existing Beckton ward, broadly east of Bouchers Road, and that part of the existing Custom House & Silvertown ward which lies north of the docks and east of Freemasons Road. Both schemes included a northern ward boundary along Newham Way and a southern ward boundary formed by Royal Victoria Dock.

The ward’s western boundary differed under both schemes. The officers suggested that the boundary should follow the centre of Bouchers
Road, while Ms Oakabue's boundary would lie broadly to the east of Reely Road, Butchers Road, Goldwing Close, Hooper Road and Coolin Road. The two schemes both suggested modifying the eastern boundary of the existing Custom House & Silvertown ward, extending it further east to incorporate some 1.56 electors located to the east of the Golf Course within Beckton District Park, in the area around Allhallows Road. Ms Oakabue's proposals included a slightly larger area, to also include Linton Gardens and some 753 electors.

Both schemes included a new ward covering the most southerly part of the borough, to the south of the docks. The officers' Royal Docks ward and Ms Oakabue's Silvertown & North Woolwich ward would both unite the housing development in the south of the borough in one ward. The ward would incorporate that part of the existing Custom House & Silvertown ward south of Royal Victoria Dock, and that part of the existing South ward south of King George V Dock. The ward's southern boundary would be the borough boundary. Under both schemes the ward's northern boundary would be formed by Royal Victoria Dock and Royal Albert Dock.

The only area where these two schemes differed was in the east, where the officers' boundary would follow part of Armada Way (to the north of The Normans development area), while Ms Oakabue's boundary would run further south, in the area of Bascul Bridge, thereby including The Normans area in the proposed Beckton ward.

A new three-member Beckton ward, consisting of most of the existing South ward, with a southern boundary of Royal Albert Dock, was included under both schemes. The officers' northern ward boundary would follow Newham Way, while Ms Oakabue's boundary would follow part of Newham Way, deviating southwards along the Northern Outfall Sewer and Royal Docks Road (although no electors are affected under these alternative boundaries). The western boundary would be the boundary with the officers' proposed Custom House ward or Ms Oakabue's Custom House & West & East Beckton ward in the area east of Beckton District Park (Allhallows Road and Linton Gardens area), as described above.

The number of electors per councillor under the officers' scheme would be 1 per cent above the average in Custom House ward (3 per cent below in 2004), 57 per cent below in Royal Docks ward (improving to 6 per cent above in 2004 as a result of forecast housing development) and 1 per cent below in Beckton ward (3 per cent above in 2004).

Under Ms Oakabue's scheme, in 2004 the number of electors per councillor would be 1 per cent above the borough average in Beckton ward and equal to the average in Custom House & West Beckton and Silvertown & North Woolwich wards.

It should be noted that under Newham Indepedents' Association's scheme, although the proposals in this area would lead to good electoral equality initially, the poor electoral imbalance that exists under the current arrangements would re-emerge by 2004. We therefore concluded that we could not adopt their proposed ward pattern. A further representation was received from the Chairman of the North Woolwich & Silvertown Area Team Royal Docks Consultative Group who proposed that the North Woolwich and Silvertown areas be merged to form one ward, instead of being split north and south of the Royal Docks as at present.

Having compared the slightly different ward boundaries proposed in this area, both of which would achieve good electoral equality over the five-year period, we noted that the main difference was in the east, to the north of Gallions Point Marina, where a proposed new housing development, known as The Normans (150 units), would fall within the officers' Royal Docks ward, but in Ms Oakabue's Beckton ward. We considered future road access to the new development, north of the docks, which is likely to be from Armada Way in the proposed Beckton ward, and concluded that the area subject to development would more appropriately form part of Beckton ward. We are therefore adopting Ms Oakabue's boundary in this area. However, we judge that the ward name of Royal Docks, as suggested by officers, would better reflect the fact that this would be a new ward and would comprise the whole area south of the Royal Victoria, Royal Albert and King George V docks.

Furthermore, in the light of our proposals for wards to the east and west, and noting that the existing eastern boundary includes properties to the east of the Golf Course in Beckton District Park, we propose adopting the officers' Custom House ward as the basis for our proposed ward in the area, subject to extending the eastern boundary further east, to follow the centre of Renfrew Road and Linton Gardens and include Woodwhatch Close, Leamouth Road, Greencroft Close, Robson Close and Fraser Close in the new Custom House ward. This ward pattern would achieve good electoral equality in the wider area, having regard to future growth.

Under our draft recommendations the electoral variance in Royal Docks ward is expected to improve substantially from 57 per cent below the borough average initially to 4 per cent above in 2004, due to ongoing development in the area. For Custom House and Beckton wards the number of electors per councillor would be 4 per cent above the average and 4 per cent below respectively (equal to the average and 2 per cent above in 2004).

Conclusions

We have carefully considered all the evidence and representations received during the initial stage of the review. Overall, the electoral schemes prepared by officers and Mrs Oakabue would significantly improve electoral equality and utilise good boundaries. Our draft recommendations propose combining elements of both schemes, together with some of our own boundary modifications. We believe that our proposals strike a satisfactory balance of the criteria guiding our work. The detail of these ward boundaries is contained in the appropriate sections in this chapter and are shown on the large map at the back of the report. Consequently, we propose that:

(a) there should be no change to the council size of 60,
(b) there should be 20 wards, four fewer than at present, which would involve changes to the boundaries of all of the existing wards. Each ward would be served by three councillors. Our proposed ward boundaries are illustrated on the large map in the back of the report.

Figure 5 shows the impact of our draft recommendations on electoral equality, comparing them with the current arrangements, based on 1999 electorate figures and with forecast electorates for the year 2004.

As shown in Figure 5, our draft recommendations for Newham Borough Council would result in a reduction in the number of wards where the number of electors per councillor varies by more than 10 per cent from the borough average from eight to one. Although this one ward, Royal Docks, would initially vary by more than 50 per cent from the borough average, the area

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<th>Current electorate</th>
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<tr>
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<tr>
<td>Number of wards</td>
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<td>Average number of electors per councillor</td>
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<tr>
<td>Number of wards with a variance more than 20 per cent from the average</td>
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covered by the proposed new ward is subject to ongoing residential developments which is expected to redress this imbalance. This balance of representation is expected to improve further by 2004, with no ward having an electoral variance of more than 4 per cent.

Draft Recommendation

Newham Borough Council should comprise 60 councillors serving 20 wards, with each ward returning three councillors, as detailed and named in Figures 1 and 2, and illustrated on Map 2 and the large map inserted in the back of the report.

We have not finalised our conclusions on the electoral arrangements for Newham and welcome comments from the Borough Council and others on the proposed ward boundaries, number of councillors and ward names. We will consider all the evidence submitted to us during the consultation period before preparing our final recommendations.
5. NEXT STEPS

135 The Commission is putting forward draft recommendations on the future electoral arrangements for Newham. Now it is up to the people of the area. We will take fully into account all representations received by 13 September 1999. Representations received after this date may not be taken into account. All representations will be available for public inspection by appointment at the offices of the Borough Council and the Commission, and a list of respondents will be available on request from the Commission after the end of the consultation period.

136 Views may be expressed by writing directly to us:

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Newham Review
Local Government Commission for England
Dolphyn Court
10/11 Great Turnstile
London WC1V 7JU

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137 In the light of representations received, we will review our draft recommendations to consider whether they should be altered. As indicated earlier, it is important that all interested parties let us have their views and evidence, whether or not they agree with our draft recommendations. We will then submit our final recommendations to the Secretary of State for the Environment, Transport and the Regions. After the publication of our final recommendations, all further correspondence should be sent to the Secretary of State, who cannot make an order giving effect to our recommendations until six weeks after he receives them.
APPENDIX A

The Statutory Provisions


1. Section 13(2) of the Local Government Act 1992 places a duty on the Commission to undertake periodic electoral reviews of each principal local authority area in England, and to make recommendations to the Secretary of State. Section 13(3) provides that, so far as is reasonably practicable, the first such review of any area should be undertaken not less than 10 years, and not more than 15 years, after this Commission's predecessor, the Local Government Boundary Commission (LGBC), submitted an initial electoral review report on the county within which that area, or the larger part of the area, was located. This timetable applies to districts within shire and metropolitan counties, although not to South Yorkshire and Tyne and Wear. Nor does the timetable apply to London boroughs; the 1992 Act is silent on the timing of periodic electoral reviews in Greater London. Nevertheless, these areas have been included in the Commission's review programme. The Commission has no power to review the electoral arrangements of the City of London.

2. Under section 13(5) of the 1992 Act, the Commission is required to make recommendations to the Secretary of State for any changes to the electoral arrangements within the areas of English principal authorities as appear desirable to it, having regard to the need to:

(a) reflect the identities and interests of local communities; and
(b) secure effective and convenient local government.

3. In reporting to the Secretary of State, the Commission may make recommendations for such changes to electoral arrangements as are specified in section 14(4) of the 1992 Act. In relation to principal authorities, these are:

- the total number of councillors to be elected to the council;
- the number and boundaries of electoral areas (wards or divisions);
- the number of councillors to be elected for each electoral area, and the years in which they are to be elected (although current legislation provides for elections in London boroughs to be held every four years); and
- the name of any electoral area.

Local Government Act 1972: Rules to be Observed in Considering Electoral Arrangements

4. By virtue of sections 27 of the Local Government Act 1992, in undertaking a review of electoral arrangements the Commission is required to comply so far as is reasonably practicable with the "rules" set out in Schedule 11 to the 1972 Act. For ease of reference, the provisions of Schedule 11 which are relevant to this review are set out below:

5. In relation to London boroughs:

Having regard to any changes in the number or distribution of the local government electors of the borough likely to take place within the period of five years immediately following the consideration (by the Secretary of State or the Commission):

(a) the ratio of the number of local government electors to the number of councillors to be elected shall be, as nearly as may be, the same in every ward in the borough.

6. The Schedule also provides that, subject to (a) above, regard should be had to:

(a) the desirability of fixing ward boundaries which are and will remain easily identifiable; and
(b) any local ties which would be broken by the fixing of any particular ward boundary.

1 The Local Government Boundary Commission did not submit reports on the counties of South Yorkshire and Tyne and Wear.