

LOCAL
GOVERNMENT
COMMISSION
FOR ENGLAND

FINAL
RECOMMENDATIONS
ON THE FUTURE
ELECTORAL
ARRANGEMENTS FOR
ISLINGTON

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

September 1999

LOCAL GOVERNMENT COMMISSION FOR ENGLAND

This report sets out the Commission's final recommendations on the electoral arrangements for Islington.

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A large map illustrating the proposed ward boundaries for Islington is inserted inside the back cover of the report.



Local Government Commission for England

7 September 1999

Dear Secretary of State

On 22 September 1998 the Commission began a periodic electoral review of Islington under the Local Government Act 1992. We published our draft recommendations in March 1999 and undertook an eight-week period of consultation.

We have now prepared our final recommendations in the light of the consultation. We have substantially confirmed our draft recommendations, although some modifications have been made (see paragraph 91) in the light of further evidence. This report sets out our final recommendations for changes to electoral arrangements in Islington.

We recommend that Islington Borough Council should be served by 48 councillors representing 16 wards, and that changes should be made to ward boundaries in order to improve electoral equality, having regard to the statutory criteria.

We note that you have set out in the White Paper *Modern Local Government – In Touch with the People* (Cm 4014, HMSO), legislative proposals for a number of changes to local authority electoral arrangements. However, until such time as that new legislation is in place we are obliged to conduct our work in accordance with current legislation, and to continue our current approach to periodic electoral reviews.

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

Yours sincerely

PROFESSOR MALCOLM GRANT
Chairman

SUMMARY

The Commission began a review of Islington on 22 September 1998. We published our draft recommendations for electoral arrangements on 23 March 1999, after which we undertook an eight-week period of consultation.

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

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

- **in six of the 20 wards the number of electors represented by each councillor varies by more than 10 per cent from the average for the borough, and one ward varies by 20 per cent from the average;**
- **by 2003 electoral equality shows no overall improvement, with the number of electors per councillor forecast to vary by more than 10 per cent from the average in seven wards, and by more than 20 per cent in one ward.**

Our main final recommendations for future electoral arrangements (Figures 1 and 2 and paragraphs 91-92) are that:

- **Islington Borough Council should be served by 48 councillors, compared to 52 at present;**
- **there should be 16 wards, four fewer than at present, which would involve changes to the boundaries of all of the existing wards.**

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

- **In all of the 16 wards the number of electors per councillor would vary by no more than 10 per cent from the borough average.**

- **This level of 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 2003.**

All further correspondence on these recommendations and the matters discussed in this report should be addressed to the Secretary of State for the Environment, Transport and the Regions, who will not make an order implementing the Commission's recommendations before 19 October 1999:

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

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

Ward name	Number of councillors	Constituent areas (existing wards)
1 Barnsbury	3	Barnsbury ward (part); St Mary ward (part)
2 Bunhill	3	Bunhill ward; Clerkenwell ward (part)
3 Caledonian	3	Barnsbury ward (part); Holloway ward (part); Thornhill ward
4 Canonbury	3	Canonbury East ward (part); Canonbury West ward (part)
5 Clerkenwell	3	Clerkenwell ward (part)
6 Finsbury Park	3	Highbury ward (part); Sussex ward (part); Tollington ward (part)
7 Highbury East	3	Gillespie ward (part); Highbury ward (part); Mildmay ward (part); Quadrant ward (part)
8 Highbury West	3	Gillespie ward (part); Highbury ward (part)
9 Hillmarton with Holloway	3	Hillmarton ward; Holloway ward (part)
10 Hillrise	3	Highview ward (part); Hillrise ward (part)
11 Junction	3	Hillrise ward (part); Junction ward (part); St George's ward (part)
12 Mildmay	3	Mildmay ward (part); Quadrant ward (part)
13 St George's	3	Junction ward (part); St George's ward (part)
14 St Mary's	3	Canonbury West ward (part); Holloway ward (part); St Mary ward (part)
15 St Peter's	3	Canonbury East ward (part); St Peter ward
16 Tollington	3	Highview ward (part); Sussex ward (part); Tollington ward (part)

Note: Map 2 and the large map in the back of the report illustrate the proposed wards outlined above.

Figure 2:
The Commission's Final Recommendations for Islington

Ward name	Number of councillors	Electorate (1998)	Number of electors per councillor	Variance from average %	Electorate (2003)	Number of electors per councillor	Variance from average %
1 Barnsbury	3	7,221	2,407	-3	7,457	2,486	-4
2 Bunhill	3	6,783	2,261	-9	7,986	2,662	3
3 Caledonian	3	7,342	2,447	-1	7,603	2,534	-2
4 Canonbury	3	7,818	2,606	5	7,737	2,579	0
5 Clerkenwell	3	6,667	2,222	-10	7,962	2,654	3
6 Finsbury Park	3	7,192	2,397	-3	7,653	2,551	-1
7 Highbury East	3	7,604	2,535	2	7,618	2,539	-2
8 Highbury West	3	7,589	2,530	2	7,859	2,620	2
9 Hillmarton with Holloway	3	7,347	2,449	-1	7,558	2,519	-2
10 Hillrise	3	7,802	2,601	5	7,820	2,607	1
11 Junction	3	7,383	2,461	-1	7,658	2,553	-1
12 Mildmay	3	7,715	2,572	4	7,772	2,591	0
13 St George's	3	7,759	2,586	4	7,784	2,595	1
14 St Mary's	3	7,373	2,458	-1	7,620	2,540	-2
15 St Peter's	3	7,556	2,519	2	7,793	2,598	1
16 Tollington	3	7,789	2,596	5	7,906	2,635	2
Totals	48	118,940	—	—	123,786	—	—
Averages	—	—	2,478	—	—	2,579	—

Source: Electorate figures are based on information provided by Islington Borough Council.

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

1. INTRODUCTION

1 This report contains our final recommendations on the electoral arrangements for the London borough of Islington.

2 In broad terms, the objective of this periodic electoral review (PER) of Islington 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 these reviews, we have had regard to:

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

4 We have also had regard to our *Guidance and Procedural Advice for Local Authorities and Other Interested Parties* (second edition published in March 1998), which 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.

The London Boroughs

7 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 reviews by the Commission of the London boroughs. The Commission has no power to review the electoral arrangements of the City of London.

8 Most London boroughs have not been reviewed since 1977. Following discussions with local authority interests on the appropriate timing of London borough reviews, we 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 between June 1998 and February 1999.

9 We have sought to ensure that all concerned were aware of our approach to the reviews. Copies of our *Guidance* were 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 welcomed the opportunity to meet with chief

officers and, on an all-party basis, members in 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.

10 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 reviews are undertaken should be determined by the proportion of three-member wards in each borough under the current arrangements. On this basis, Islington was in the third phase of reviews.

11 The Government's subsequent White Paper, *Modern Local Government – In Touch with the People*, published in July 1998, set out 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.

12 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 has been that proposals for three-member ward patterns emerged from most areas in London.

13 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 Islington

14 This is our first review of the electoral arrangements for Islington. The last such review was undertaken by our predecessor, the Local Government Boundary Commission (LGBC), which reported to the Secretary of State in May 1977 (Report No. 219).

15 This review was in four stages. Stage One began on 22 September 1998, when we wrote to Islington 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. At the start of the review and following publication of our draft recommendations, 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 was 14 December 1998. At Stage Two we considered all the representations received during Stage One and prepared our draft recommendations.

16 Stage Three began on 23 March 1999 with the publication of our report, *Draft Recommendations on the Future Electoral Arrangements for Islington*, and ended on 17 May 1999. Comments were sought on our preliminary conclusions. Finally, during Stage Four we reconsidered our draft recommendations in the light of the Stage Three consultation and now publish our final recommendations.

2. CURRENT ELECTORAL ARRANGEMENTS

17 Situated in inner London, Islington covers an area of 1,487 hectares and is one of the smallest of the London boroughs. With an estimated population of some 176,800, Islington has a population density approaching 120 people per hectare. It is bounded to the west by the borough of Camden, to the north by Haringey, to the east by Hackney and to the south by the City of London.

18 The south of the borough is predominantly commercial and industrial in character, with a relatively small but increasing residential population, while the northern part is mainly residential. Open space and parkland in Islington is limited, consisting mainly of Highbury Fields and Barnard Park; however, there is also New River Walk and many small, open squares. Islington has excellent transport links, with the Archway Road, Holloway Road and Upper Street (forming the southernmost part of the A1 trunk road) running through the centre of the borough. There is good access to six London Underground lines from a number of stations, local rail services via North London Railways and Thameslink stations and mainline rail services running from King's Cross and Liverpool Street stations which are within easy reach of the borough.

19 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'.

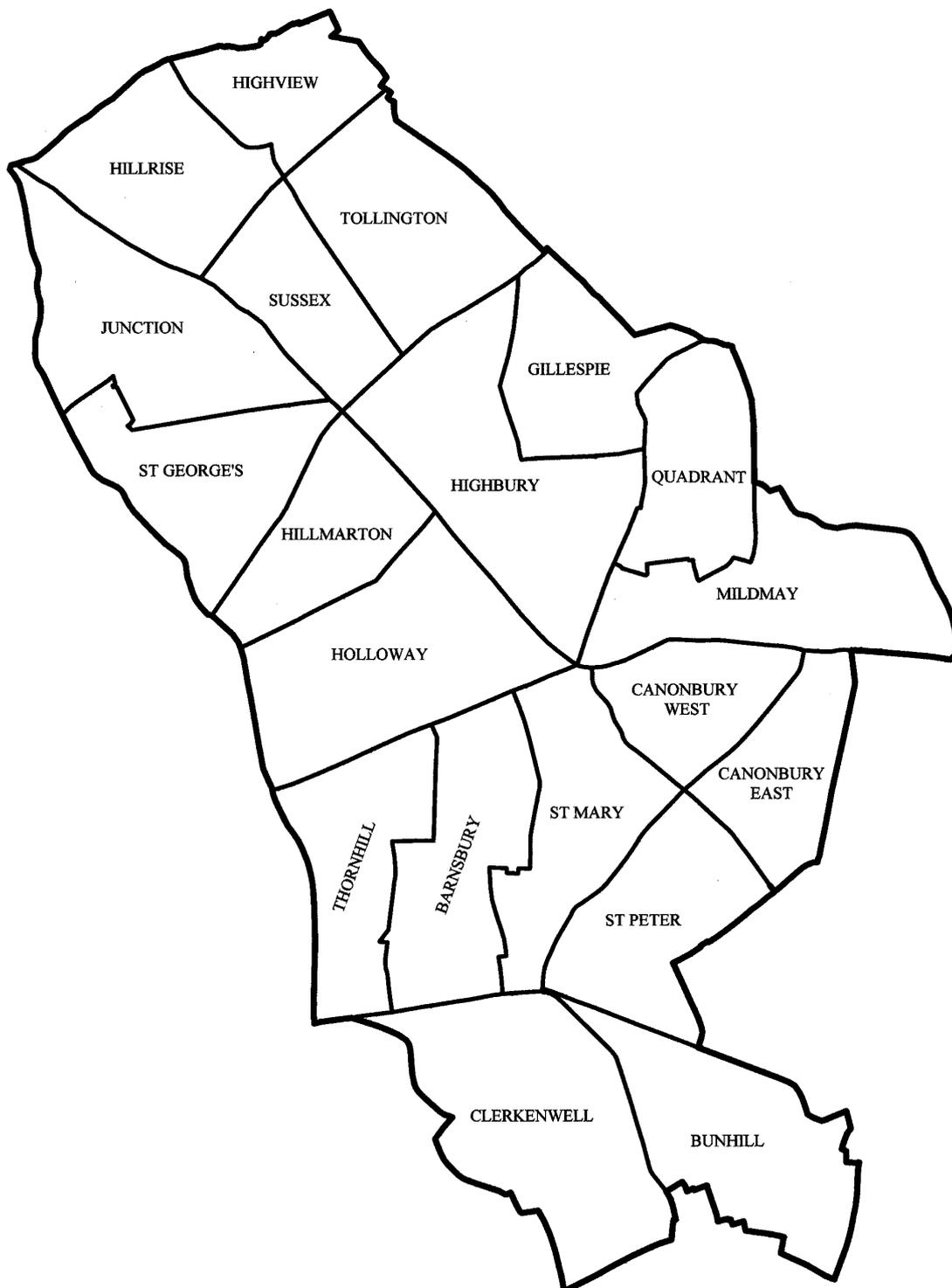
20 The electorate of the borough (February 1998) is 118,940. The Council currently has 52 councillors who are elected from 20 wards (Map 1 and Figure 3). Twelve wards are each represented by three councillors and eight wards elect two councillors each. As in all London boroughs, the whole council is elected together every four years.

21 Since the last electoral review, there has been a decrease in electorate in the borough, with around 4 per cent fewer electors than two decades ago,

mainly as a result of a decline in average household size. However, recent years have witnessed an increase in electorate, and the Council forecasts that this upward trend will continue, with an overall increase in the electorate of around 4 per cent by the year 2003.

22 At present, each councillor represents an average of 2,287 electors, which the Borough Council forecasts will increase to 2,381 by the year 2003 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 six of the 20 wards varies by more than 10 per cent from the borough average. The worst imbalance is in Bunhill ward, where each of the three councillors represents on average 20 per cent fewer electors than the borough average.

Map 1:
Existing Wards in Islington



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Figure 3:
Existing Electoral Arrangements

Ward name	Number of councillors	Electorate (1998)	Number of electors per councillor	Variance from average %	Electorate (2003)	Number of electors per councillor	Variance from average %
1 Barnsbury	3	6,791	2,264	-1	6,987	2,329	-2
2 Bunhill	3	5,482	1,827	-20	6,285	2,095	-12
3 Canonbury East	2	5,035	2,518	10	5,077	2,539	7
4 Canonbury West	2	4,180	2,090	-9	4,088	2,044	-14
5 Clerkenwell	3	7,968	2,656	16	9,663	3,221	35
6 Gillespie	2	4,502	2,251	-2	4,644	2,322	-2
7 Highbury	3	7,011	2,337	2	7,209	2,403	1
8 Highview	2	3,919	1,960	-14	3,945	1,973	-17
9 Hillmarton	2	4,951	2,476	8	4,983	2,492	5
10 Hillrise	3	6,651	2,217	-3	6,679	2,226	-6
11 Holloway	3	6,314	2,105	-8	6,591	2,197	-8
12 Junction	3	6,550	2,183	-5	6,827	2,276	-4
13 Mildmay	3	8,048	2,683	17	8,106	2,702	14
14 Quadrant	2	5,267	2,634	15	5,275	2,638	11
15 St George's	3	6,950	2,317	1	6,957	2,319	-3
16 St Mary	3	5,938	1,979	-13	6,144	2,048	-14
17 St Peter	3	6,632	2,211	-3	6,838	2,279	-4
18 Sussex	2	4,705	2,353	3	5,124	2,562	8
19 Thornhill	2	4,816	2,408	5	5,060	2,530	6
20 Tollington	3	7,230	2,410	5	7,304	2,435	2
Totals	52	118,940	—	—	123,786	—	—
Averages	—	—	2,287	—	—	2,381	—

Source: Electorate figures are based on Islington Borough Council's Stage One submission.

Note: The 'variance from average' column shows by how far, in percentage terms, the number of electors per councillor varies from the average for the borough. The minus symbol (-) denotes a lower than average number of electors. For example, in 1998, electors in Bunhill ward were relatively over-represented by 20 per cent, while electors in Mildmay ward were relatively under-represented by 17 per cent. Figures have been rounded to the nearest whole number.

3. DRAFT RECOMMENDATIONS

²³ During Stage One we received two representations. The Borough Council submitted a borough-wide scheme, and we also received a representation from the Islington Green Party. In the light of these representations and evidence available to us, we reached preliminary conclusions which were set out in our report, *Draft Recommendations on the Future Electoral Arrangements for Islington*.

²⁴ Our draft recommendations were based on the Borough Council's scheme, which achieved improved electoral equality, provided good boundaries while having regard to the statutory criteria and proposed a pattern of entirely three-member wards. However, we moved away from the Borough Council's scheme in two areas, affecting eight proposed wards. We proposed that:

- (a) Islington Borough Council should be served by 48 councillors;
- (b) there should be 16 wards, involving changes to the boundaries of all existing wards.

Draft Recommendation

Islington Borough Council should comprise 48 councillors serving 16 wards.

²⁵ Our proposals would have resulted in significant improvements in electoral equality, with the number of electors per councillor in 15 of the 16 wards varying by no more than 10 per cent from the borough average. This level of electoral equality was forecast to improve further, with all wards expected to vary by no more than 2 per cent from the borough average in 2003.

4. RESPONSES TO CONSULTATION

26 During the consultation on our draft recommendations report, 16 representations were received. A list of respondents is available on request from the Commission. All representations may be inspected at the offices of Islington Borough Council and the Commission, by appointment.

Islington Borough Council

27 The Borough Council generally welcomed our draft recommendations, as they largely reflected its Stage One submission. However, it did not agree with our proposal to breach the Pentonville Road as a ward boundary and consequently transfer the Penton Rise area from the proposed Clerkenwell ward to the proposed Barnsbury ward. It argued that “there is an unusually strong sense of community identity in this southern part of the borough” and proposed retaining all of the Pentonville Road as a ward boundary. The Council therefore proposed slight consequential modifications, to the northern boundary of the proposed Barnsbury ward and to the boundary between the proposed Clerkenwell and Bunhill wards, in order to retain a reasonable level of electoral equality.

28 The Council believed that its proposed amendments would achieve a better overall balance between electoral equality, community identity and identifiable ward boundaries. The overall level of electoral equality would slightly worsen under the Council’s modified scheme, with the number of electors per councillor in its proposed Clerkenwell ward being 5 per cent above the borough average by 2003. The Council also suggested modifying two of our suggested ward names, proposing that Hillmarton ward be named Holloway, and that St John’s ward be named Archway or Hillrise.

Islington Green Party

29 The Islington Green Party supported the majority of our draft recommendations but contended that although the boundary between the proposed Clerkenwell and Barnsbury wards made sense “in terms of electoral equality”, it did not

make sense “in terms of community definition”. It stated that the area to the south of the Pentonville Road is different to that to the north, and that residents in that area believed that they lived in Clerkenwell. The Green Party also proposed four ward name changes, suggesting that the proposed Finsbury Park ward be named Seven Sisters, the proposed Hillmarton ward be named Holloway, the proposed Highbury West ward be named Highbury Vale and the proposed Highbury East ward be named Highbury Fields.

Islington South & Finsbury Labour Party

30 The Islington South & Finsbury Labour Party generally welcomed our proposals for the southern part of the borough, as they would “bring about minimal change”. It supported our proposed Canonbury, St Peter’s, St Mary’s, Hillmarton, Caledonian, Barnsbury and Bunhill wards, recognising that they “take into account existing neighbourhood ties”, and noting that they reflect, as far as possible, school catchment areas and local neighbourhood offices. However, it opposed the proposed transfer of the Penton Rise area from the proposed Clerkenwell ward to Barnsbury ward, arguing that electors in this area have a strong affinity to Clerkenwell, use its local amenities (including the Clerkenwell Neighbourhood Office for local council services) and are separated from Barnsbury by the Pentonville Road. It supported our proposed ward names in the southern part of the borough, arguing that many of these are well established names in Islington and Finsbury.

Other Representations

31 A further 13 representations were received in response to our draft recommendations, from two councillors, a Neighbourhood Forum and 10 local residents. Councillor Cox (one of the members for St Mary ward) supported our proposed St Mary’s ward as it would result in little change from the current arrangements. Councillor Haynes (one of the members for Mildmay ward) commented on our proposed Holloway and Mildmay wards,

stating that while the proposed Mildmay ward would be similar to the existing Mildmay ward, he would have preferred the area around Highbury Place to have been retained in the revised Mildmay ward.

32 The Elthorne Park Neighbourhood Forum expressed concern about our proposed changes to the Hillrise and Highview wards and the creation of a new St John's ward, and opposed the proposed transfer of an area between Holloway Road and Ashbrook Road into Junction ward. A local resident, however, disagreed with the Elthorne Park Neighbourhood Forum and supported our proposal to keep the Archway area, including the underground station, bus terminal and shopping area, within the same ward. This resident also proposed retaining the present ward boundary between Hillrise and Highview wards, and extending Highview ward southwards (taking in the northern part of Tollington ward). She additionally suggested that St John's ward be renamed Elthorne Park ward, as Elthorne Park is at the centre of the proposed ward.

33 A further nine representations were received from local residents, two of which supported our proposals in their areas. Seven local residents opposed our proposal to breach the Pentonville Road as a ward boundary and transfer part of the existing Clerkenwell ward into Barnsbury ward, arguing that there were no community ties between these two areas. However, five of these local residents did support our proposals elsewhere in the southern part of the borough.

5. ANALYSIS AND FINAL RECOMMENDATIONS

³⁴ As described earlier, our prime objective in considering the most appropriate electoral arrangements for Islington is to achieve electoral equality. In doing so we have regard to the statutory criteria set out in the Local Government Act 1992 – the need to secure effective and convenient local government, and reflect the interests and identities of local communities – and Schedule 11 to the Local Government Act 1972, which refers to the number of electors being “as nearly as may be, the same in every ward of the district or borough”.

³⁵ In relation to Schedule 11, 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. We must have regard to the desirability of fixing identifiable boundaries and to maintaining local ties which might otherwise be broken.

³⁶ 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.

³⁷ Our *Guidance* states that, while we accept that the achievement of absolute electoral equality for the authority as a whole is likely to be unattainable, we consider that, if electoral imbalances are to be kept to the minimum, the objective of electoral equality 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 electoral equality, and then make adjustments to reflect relevant factors, such as community identity. Regard must also be had to five-year forecasts of changes in electorates. We will require particular justification for schemes which result in, or retain, an electoral imbalance 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

³⁸ At Stage One the Borough Council submitted electorate forecasts for the year 2003, projecting an increase in the electorate of 4 per cent from 118,940 to 123,786 over the five-year period from 1998 to 2003. It expected most of the growth to be in the southern part of the borough, most notably in the Bunhill and Clerkenwell wards, mainly as a result of new residential developments on formerly non-residential sites. The Council estimated rates and locations of housing development with regard to the unitary development plan for the borough, 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 was obtained.

³⁹ In our draft recommendations report we accepted that forecasting electorate is an inexact science and, having given consideration to the forecast electorates, we were satisfied that they represented the best estimates that could reasonably be made at the time. We received no comments on the Council's electorate forecasts during Stage Three, and remain satisfied that they represent the best estimates presently available.

Council Size

⁴⁰ 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.

⁴¹ Islington Borough Council currently has 52 members. At Stage One, the Council's submission, which was endorsed by both the Labour and

Liberal Democrat Groups (the only political groups represented on Islington Council), proposed reducing the current council size from 52 to 48 members. In our draft recommendations report we considered the size and distribution of the electorate, the geography and other characteristics of the area, together with the representations received. We concluded that the statutory criteria and the achievement of electoral equality would best be met by a council of 48 members.

42 At Stage Three, no further comments were received regarding this aspect of the review. Given the general support for a council size of 48 members, which would facilitate a scheme providing good electoral equality having regard to the five-year forecast of electorate, we are confirming our draft recommendation for a council size of 48 as final.

Electoral Arrangements

43 As set out in our draft recommendations report, we carefully considered the representations received at Stage One, including the Council's borough-wide scheme which was supported by both the Labour and Liberal Democrat Groups. We expressed our gratitude for the representations, from which some considerations emerged which helped to inform us when preparing our draft recommendations.

44 Firstly, the current electoral arrangements provide for a mixture of two- and three-member wards in Islington. Having had regard to the Government's White Paper, *Modern Local Government – In Touch with the People*, the Council submitted detailed proposals based on a uniform pattern of three-member wards for the borough. The Islington Green Party also supported an all three-member ward scheme. In addition, the Council proposed reducing the council size to 48 members. In the light of the consensus between both the Labour and Liberal Democrat Groups on the Council over the number of wards and the number of councillors that should represent each ward, we proposed a pattern of 16 three-member wards for the borough.

45 Secondly, there was also general recognition in the Council's submission that the existing arrangements provide some good natural boundaries, such as Holloway Road/St Paul's Road and Pentonville Road/City Road. We noted this view and, as these topographical features currently provide good recognisable boundaries, we strived

to maintain them wherever possible within our proposals, where this was compatible with our aim of securing good electoral equality.

46 The Council's proposed 16 three-member ward scheme would provide improved electoral equality throughout the borough. The number of wards in which the number of electors per councillor would vary by more than 10 per cent from the borough average would reduce from six to one. Due to the forecast changes in the number and distribution of electors, the Council's scheme would provide for all wards varying by more no than 6 per cent from the borough average by 2003.

47 In view of the improved level of electoral equality and the identifiable boundaries that the Council's proposals would provide, and as they had received support from both the Labour and Liberal Democrat Groups, we decided to base our draft recommendations on the Council's proposals. In order to secure an even better level of electoral equality across the borough, particularly having regard to the five-year electorate forecasts, we proposed making some modifications to the Council's scheme in two areas, affecting eight wards. This included breaching the Pentonville Road as a ward boundary in order to improve electoral equality.

48 In response to our draft recommendations report, the majority of Stage Three respondents, including the Council, opposed our proposal to breach the Pentonville Road, contending that it should be retained as a ward boundary as the area to the south of it is markedly different to that to the north and is regarded as part of the Clerkenwell community. The Council proposed retaining all of the Pentonville Road as a ward boundary, and put forward consequential modifications to ward boundaries in neighbouring areas, in order to retain a reasonable overall level of electoral equality.

49 We have reviewed our draft recommendations in the light of further evidence and the representations received during Stage Three, and judge that modifications should be made to a number of our proposed ward boundaries to better reflect community interests. We also conclude that two of our proposed ward names should be amended. The following areas, based on existing wards, are considered in turn:

- (a) Bunhill and Clerkenwell wards;
- (b) Thornhill, Barnsbury, St Mary, Holloway and Hillmarton wards;

- (c) St Peter, Canonbury East and Canonbury West wards;
- (d) Mildmay, Quadrant, Highbury and Gillespie wards;
- (e) St George's and Junction wards;
- (f) Tollington, Sussex, Hillrise and Highview wards.

50 Details of our final recommendations are set out in Figures 1 and 2, and illustrated on Map 2 and the large map inside the back cover of the report.

Bunhill and Clerkenwell wards

51 These two three-member wards are situated in the southernmost part of the borough. Bunhill ward is currently the most over-represented ward in the borough with an electoral variance of 20 per cent. This level of electoral inequality is forecast to improve slightly to 12 per cent by 2003. Conversely, Clerkenwell ward is considerably under-represented at present with an electoral variance of 16 per cent. This level of electoral inequality is forecast to deteriorate further to 35 per cent above the average by 2003 due to a forecast increase in electorate (see also paragraph 38).

52 As detailed earlier in this chapter, we based our draft recommendations on the Council's Stage One scheme. The Council proposed retaining the Pentonville and City Roads as the northern boundary of the two wards in this area, but in order to address the electoral imbalance that currently exists in these wards, it proposed transferring part of the south-eastern part of the existing Clerkenwell ward into Bunhill ward. Under this proposal, the number of electors per councillor in the revised three-member Bunhill and Clerkenwell wards would be 5 per cent below and 14 per cent below the borough average respectively. However, due to a projected increase in the electorate, this level of electoral equality was forecast to improve by 2003, when the number of electors per councillor would be 6 per cent above and almost equal to the borough average respectively.

53 In our draft recommendations report, we noted that under the Council's scheme the proposed Bunhill ward was forecast to be under-represented by 6 per cent by 2003, but that the Council's proposed St Mary's, Hillmarton and Tollington wards (in the centre and north of the borough) were forecast to be over-represented by 4 per cent,

5 per cent and 4 per cent respectively by 2003. Given this slight imbalance in the projected levels of electoral equality between the south and the centre/north of the borough, and in order to improve electoral equality overall, we proposed transferring the Northampton Square area from the Council's proposed Bunhill ward into its proposed Clerkenwell ward. We also proposed modifying the boundary between the Council's proposed Clerkenwell and Barnsbury wards to follow Penton Rise, rather than the Pentonville Road, thus transferring the north-western corner of Clerkenwell ward into Barnsbury ward. The number of electors per councillor in our proposed Bunhill and Clerkenwell wards would be 10 per cent below and 15 per cent below the borough average initially. However, in both wards it would be almost equal to the borough average by 2003, due to the forecast increase in electorate.

54 At Stage Three, the majority of the representations received opposed our proposal to breach the Pentonville Road as a ward boundary and transfer the Penton Rise area from Clerkenwell ward to Barnsbury ward. The Council argued that "there is an unusually strong sense of community identity in this southern part of the borough that survives from ... when the area south of the Pentonville Road was separate from Islington and formed part of the old Metropolitan Borough of Finsbury". The Council also outlined how its attempt to incorporate the Penton Rise area within a Neighbourhood Office area to the north of Pentonville Road had not succeeded, and how it had had to reincorporate the area into a Clerkenwell-based Neighbourhood Office, even though it was further away. It also argued that the "severance effect" of the Pentonville Road would be likely to have an adverse effect on voter turnout if the Penton Rise area were transferred to Barnsbury ward.

55 The Council reiterated its Stage One proposal to retain all of the Pentonville Road as a ward boundary between Clerkenwell and Barnsbury wards, and also proposed some slight consequential modifications to the proposed Caledonian, St Mary's and Bunhill wards, in order to achieve a reasonable level of electoral equality overall in the southern part of the borough. The Council proposed retaining the existing northern boundary of Barnsbury ward, which follows the railway line between Liverpool Road and Roman Way, and proposed that the southern part of the boundary between the proposed Clerkenwell ward and Bunhill ward be modified to follow the centre of a

longer section of St John Street (and not the centre of Agdon Street). It was of the view that these amendments would achieve a better overall balance between electoral equality, community identity and identifiable ward boundaries. The number of electors per councillor under the Council's modified Bunhill and Clerkenwell wards would be 11 per cent below and 8 per cent below the borough average initially (1 per cent above and 5 per cent above the borough average by 2003). Consequentially, the number of electors per councillor in the Council's revised Barnsbury, Caledonian and St Mary's wards would be initially 3 per cent below, 1 per cent below and 1 per cent below the borough average respectively (4 per cent below, 2 per cent below and 2 per cent below by 2003).

56 The Islington Green Party contended that although our proposed boundary between the proposed Clerkenwell and Barnsbury wards made sense "in terms of electoral equality", it did not "in terms of community definition". It stated that the area to the south of the Pentonville Road is different to that to the north, and that residents in that area believed that they lived in Clerkenwell. The Islington South & Finsbury Labour Party opposed the proposed transfer of the Penton Rise area from Clerkenwell to Barnsbury ward, arguing that electors in that area had a strong affinity to Clerkenwell, used its local amenities (including the Clerkenwell Neighbourhood Office for local council services) and were separated from Barnsbury by the Pentonville Road. A further seven local residents opposed our proposal to breach the Pentonville Road, although one local resident supported our proposal to retain the Northampton Square area within Clerkenwell ward.

57 Having considered all the representations received at Stage Three, we have noted the strength of opposition to breaching the Pentonville Road as a ward boundary, and have therefore considered the boundary modifications put forward by the Council. Given that both the Labour and Liberal Democrat Groups support these modifications, and in the light of the fact that the majority of representations received during Stage Three supported the retention of the Pentonville Road as a ward boundary, we are of the view that the Council's modified boundaries would be a better reflection of the statutory criteria than our draft proposals. We therefore propose adopting the Council's modified wards in the southern part of the borough (as shown on the large map inserted at the back of the report) as our final recommendations, subject to one further amendment in order to improve electoral equality.

58 We acknowledged in our draft recommendations report that if the Pentonville Road were retained as a ward boundary, the wards to the north of it would be slightly over-represented, while the wards to the south of it would be slightly under-represented. Given the strength of local support in favour of retaining the Pentonville Road as an identifiable ward boundary, we are now of the view that a slightly worse level of electoral equality in the revised Barnsbury ward (to the north of the Pentonville Road) is acceptable, as any further modifications to the ward would be detrimental to the boundaries that are now proposed.

59 However, we are of the view that electoral equality could be more evenly balanced between the revised Clerkenwell and Bunhill wards (to the south of the Pentonville Road). Given that in its Stage Three submission the Council stated that "it is, of course open to the Commission to make other changes in the interests of electoral equality while accepting our central proposal for the retention of the Penton Rise area in Clerkenwell", we are therefore proposing that the northern part of the boundary between Clerkenwell ward and Bunhill ward be modified to follow the centre of St John Street before running behind the properties on the northern side of Rawstone Street, thus transferring 160 electors from Clerkenwell ward into Bunhill ward. We are of the view that it would be more appropriate to transfer electors from this part of Clerkenwell ward in order to retain the Northampton Square/City University area within one ward. The number of electors per councillor in our modified Bunhill and Clerkenwell wards would be 9 per cent below and 10 per cent below the borough average initially (3 per cent above the average in both wards by 2003). Our final recommendations for ward boundaries in this area are shown on the large map inserted at the back of this report.

Thornhill, Barnsbury, St Mary, Holloway and Hillmarton wards

60 These five wards are situated in the centre and west of the borough. The number of electors per councillor in the two-member Thornhill ward and the three-member Barnsbury and St Mary wards, (situated to the north of Pentonville Road and to the south of the North London railway line) is 5 per cent above, 1 per cent below and 13 per cent below the borough average respectively (6 per cent above, 2 per cent below and 14 per cent below the average by 2003). The number of electors per councillor in the three-member Holloway ward

and the two-member Hillmarton ward (both situated to the north of the North London railway line and to the west of the Holloway Road) is 8 per cent below and 8 per cent above the borough average initially (8 per cent below and 5 per cent above the average by 2003).

61 The Council put forward modifications to all five wards in this area at Stage One, proposing that this part of the borough be represented by four three-member wards. It proposed a new three-member Caledonian ward, focussed on the Caledonian Road, which would comprise all of the current Thornhill ward, combined with small areas from the northern and western parts of Barnsbury ward and the south-western part of Holloway ward. The Council also proposed a modified three-member Barnsbury ward which would combine the majority of the existing ward with the south-western corner of St Mary ward. The number of electors per councillor in the Council's proposed Caledonian and Barnsbury wards would be almost equal to and 1 per cent above the borough average initially (equal to and 1 per cent below the average by 2003).

62 As a consequence of its proposal for a modified Barnsbury ward, the Council also put forward a new three-member St Mary's ward which would be centred around Upper Street. The Council's proposed ward would comprise the majority of the current St Mary ward, the northern edge of the current Barnsbury ward, the western edge of Canonbury West ward and the south-eastern part of the present Holloway ward. The Council also put forward a modified three-member Hillmarton ward comprising all of the current Hillmarton ward and the northern part of Holloway ward. The number of electors per councillor in both the Council's proposed St Mary's and Hillmarton wards would be 4 per cent below the borough average initially (4 per cent below and 5 per cent below the average respectively by 2003).

63 Given the excellent level of electoral equality secured by the Council's proposed Caledonian ward we were content to adopt it as part of our draft recommendations. However, in order to further improve the electoral imbalance (under the Council's proposals) between the south and the centre/north of the borough and to improve electoral equality overall while retaining the Holloway Road as a strong ward boundary, we proposed modifying the other three wards put forward by the Council in this area. In addition to modifying the southern boundary of the Council's

proposed Barnsbury ward (as detailed earlier), we proposed modifying Barnsbury ward's eastern boundary to run all the way along the centre of Liverpool Road, and the northern boundary of the Council's proposed St Mary's ward to follow the centre of Liverpool Road and Sheringham Road, in order to improve electoral equality in both the proposed St Mary's and Hillmarton wards. Under our draft recommendations, the number of electors per councillor in the Barnsbury, St Mary's and Hillmarton wards would be almost equal to, 1 per cent above and 1 per cent below the borough average initially (2 per cent below, 1 per cent above and 2 per cent below the average by 2003).

64 At Stage Three, as a consequence of its proposal to retain the Pentonville Road as a ward boundary, the Council proposed slight modifications to the proposed wards in this area, as detailed earlier in paragraph 55. The Liberal Democrat Group on the Council noted that the proposed Hillmarton ward contained a "significant part" of the current Holloway ward. It contended that "historically, the latter [Holloway] is a more widely known name" and proposed that Hillmarton ward instead be named Holloway.

65 Councillor Cox (one of the members for St Mary ward) supported our proposed St Mary's ward as it would result in less net change from the current arrangements and as Liverpool Road is a "logical boundary". Councillor Haynes (one of the members for Mildmay ward) expressed concern at the break up of the existing Holloway ward, stating that as it was the sole remaining ward that had been unchanged since 1900, it was considered very useful for local history and comparative purposes.

66 The Green Party suggested that as the proposed Hillmarton ward area is also known as Lower Holloway, the ward should be named Holloway as it would better describe the area it covers. Notwithstanding their opposition to breaching the Pentonville Road as a ward boundary, four local residents and the Islington South & Finsbury Labour Party supported our proposed wards in this area. The Labour Party also supported our proposed ward names, stating that many of them had become "well established" within Islington. One other local resident supported our proposed St Mary's ward.

67 In order to retain the Pentonville Road as a ward boundary, we are proposing to adopt the Council's Stage Three boundary modifications for wards in this area as part of our final

recommendations (as detailed earlier in this chapter). Given the broad support in favour of our proposed Hillmarton ward, with an electoral variance of 1 per cent (2 per cent by 2003), we are also endorsing it as final. The number of electors per councillor in the revised Barnsbury, Caledonian and St Mary's wards would be initially 3 per cent below, 1 per cent below and 1 per cent below the borough average respectively (4 per cent below, 2 per cent below and 2 per cent below the average by 2003).

68 Having considered the representations received regarding ward names in this area we are also proposing one ward name amendment. In the light of the comments received from the Liberal Democrat Group and the Green Party, we are proposing, as part of our final recommendations, that Hillmarton ward be named Hillmarton with Holloway in order to better reflect the area that it covers. Our final recommendations are shown on the large map inserted at the back of this report.

St Peter, Canonbury East and Canonbury West wards

69 These three wards are situated in the centre-east of the borough, to the north of City Road and to the south of St Paul's Road. The number of electors per councillor in the three-member St Peter ward is 3 per cent below the borough average (4 per cent below the average by 2003). The number of electors per councillor in the two-member Canonbury East and Canonbury West wards is 10 per cent above and 9 per cent below the borough average respectively (forecast to be 7 per cent above and 14 per cent below the average by 2003).

70 At Stage One, the Council proposed creating two new wards in this area, each represented by three councillors. It proposed a new St Peter's ward, by modifying the north-eastern boundary of St Peter ward to include part of Canonbury East ward, and a new Canonbury ward, comprising the remainder of the present Canonbury East ward and the majority of the present Canonbury West ward. As detailed earlier, the western part of Canonbury West ward would be included in the new St Mary's ward. The number of electors per councillor in the Council's proposed St Peter's and Canonbury wards would be 2 per cent above and 5 per cent above the borough average initially (improving to 1 per cent above and equal to the average by 2003). Given the good level of electoral equality that would be achieved under the Council's proposals, we decided to endorse its proposed St Peter's and Canonbury wards as our draft recommendations.

71 Given that we adopted its Stage One proposals as our draft recommendations, the Council supported our proposals for wards in this area at Stage Three. The Islington South & Finsbury Labour Party and four local residents also supported all our proposed wards in this area, and another local resident supported our proposals to merge the two existing Canonbury East and West wards into one new Canonbury ward as "it takes into account local community ties".

72 Given the degree of support for our draft recommendations, and given the good level of electoral equality that would result, we are confirming our draft recommendations for St Peter's and Canonbury wards, as shown on the large map at the back of the report, as final.

Mildmay, Quadrant, Highbury and Gillespie wards

73 These four wards are situated to the east of Holloway Road in the eastern part of the borough. The three-member Mildmay ward is currently the most under-represented ward in the borough with an electoral variance of 17 per cent. This level of electoral inequality is forecast to improve slightly to 14 per cent above the borough average by 2003. The two-member Quadrant ward is also considerably under-represented with an electoral variance of 15 per cent (11 per cent by 2003). The three-member Highbury ward and the two-member Gillespie ward currently have good levels of electoral equality. The number of electors per councillor in Highbury ward is 2 per cent above the borough average while in Gillespie ward it is 2 per cent below (1 per cent above and 2 per cent below the average respectively by 2003).

74 As detailed earlier, we based our draft recommendations on the Council's Stage One submission. In this part of the borough we adopted its proposals in their entirety, as they provided for improved electoral equality while having regard to the statutory criteria. The Council put forward a revised Mildmay ward comprising the central and eastern parts of the current Mildmay ward and the Highbury New Park area in the south-eastern part of Quadrant ward. It also proposed a new Highbury East ward comprising the remaining western part of Mildmay ward, the Highbury Fields area in the southern part of Highbury ward, the majority of Quadrant ward and the eastern part of Gillespie ward. Finally in this area, the Council proposed a new Highbury West ward comprising an area to the west of Blackstock Road in Gillespie ward and the central part of the existing Highbury

ward. The number of electors per councillor in the Council's proposed Mildmay, Highbury East and Highbury West wards would be initially 4 per cent above, 2 per cent above and 2 per cent above the borough average respectively (almost equal to, 2 per cent below and 2 per cent above the borough average by 2003).

75 Given that we adopted its Stage One proposals as our draft recommendations, the Council supported our proposals for wards in this area at Stage Three. Councillor Haynes stated that while our proposed Mildmay ward would be similar to the existing Mildmay ward, he would have preferred for the area around Highbury Place to have been retained in the revised ward.

76 The Green Party stated that the proposed Highbury West and Highbury East wards were "ill-defined" and that the Highbury West ward "consists of two disparate communities which have little in common", believing that the area to the north of the railway was more part of the Finsbury Park community than that of Highbury. However, it accepted that the other areas within the proposed Highbury East and Highbury West wards were clearly identifiable with Highbury. The Green Party suggested that Highbury West ward be named Highbury Vale "as this is already a known concept through the existence of a neighbourhood forum with this name", and that Highbury East ward be named Highbury Fields "as this is a major well-known feature of the ward".

77 We have given careful consideration to the representations received regarding our proposed wards in this area, but we are not convinced that there is sufficient evidence to justify moving away from our draft recommendations. We acknowledge the Green Party's concerns regarding electors to the north of the railway line being included in Highbury West ward. However, as detailed in our draft recommendations report, in order to retain the Holloway Road as the southern and western boundary of the wards in this part of the borough, and given the constraint of the borough boundary to the east, it is necessary, in a three-member warding pattern, to include this area within the new Highbury West ward. Furthermore, electors to the north of the railway line would have access to the rest of the proposed Highbury West ward via Hornsey Rise, as is the case at present in the current Highbury ward.

78 In the light of both the Labour and Liberal Democrat Groups' support for our proposals in this area, and given the good electoral equality that

would result, we are confirming our draft recommendations for these three wards, as shown on the large map inserted at the back of this report, as final. Given that there was only very limited support in favour of modifying any of the ward names in this area we are also confirming our proposed ward names for these wards as final.

St George's and Junction wards

79 The number of electors per councillor in the three-member wards of St George's and Junction, situated in the north-western part of the borough, is 1 per cent above and 5 per cent below the borough average (3 per cent below and 4 per cent below the average by 2003).

80 At Stage One the Council put forward two revised three-member wards for this area in order to improve electoral equality in these and neighbouring wards. The Council proposed retaining the centre of Camden Road as the southern boundary of St George's ward, and proposed modifying its northern boundary to include the south-eastern corner of Junction ward in St George's ward, and to transfer the north-western corner of St George's ward into Junction ward. As a consequence of its proposals for a revised St George's ward, the Council proposed a revised Junction ward comprising its current central and northern parts, the north-western corner of St George's ward and an area to the north-east of Highgate Hill/Holloway Road, currently in Hillrise ward. The number of electors per councillor in the Council's proposed St George's and Junction wards would be 4 per cent above and 1 per cent below the borough average initially (1 per cent above and 1 per cent below the average by 2003).

81 As stated earlier in the report, we noted the consensus on the Council between the political groups in support of these proposals. In the light of this and the good level of electoral equality that would be secured under the Council's proposals, we put them forward as our draft recommendations.

82 At Stage Three the Council supported our draft proposals for wards in this area. The Elthorne Park Neighbourhood Forum opposed the proposed transfer of the area between Holloway Road and Ashbrook Road into Junction ward, arguing that that area has been an "integral part" of its community for many years and that the Holloway Road "is a far more natural boundary" than

Ashbrook Road. In contrast, however, a local resident supported our proposal to keep the Archway area, including the underground station, bus terminal and shopping area, within the same ward.

83 We have carefully considered the representations received regarding our proposed wards in this area, but we are not convinced that there is sufficient evidence to justify moving away from our draft recommendations. We remain of the view that the proposals would provide for a good level of electoral equality and would allow for unified representation of the area around Archway underground station and the local shopping centre, which we consider are main focal points of the ward. Given that both the Labour and Liberal Democrat Groups support our proposals in this area and that a good level of electoral equality would result, we are confirming our draft recommendations for these two wards, as shown on the large map inserted at the back of this report, as final.

Tollington, Sussex, Hillrise and Highview wards

84 These four wards are situated in the northern part of the borough, to the north and east of Highgate Hill and Holloway Road. The three-member Tollington ward and the two-member Sussex ward are both slightly under-represented at present, with electoral variances of 5 per cent and 3 per cent respectively (2 per cent and 8 per cent by 2003). The three-member Hillrise ward and the two-member Highview ward, on the other hand, are both over-represented, with electoral variances of 3 per cent and 14 per cent respectively, which are forecast to worsen further to 6 per cent and 17 per cent by 2003.

85 In its Stage One submission the Council proposed creating three new wards covering the majority of this area, proposing that each be represented by three councillors. It proposed a new Finsbury Park ward, which would comprise the northern part of Highbury ward, the southern part of Sussex ward (to the south of Tollington Way) and the southern part of Tollington ward (to the south of Tollington Park). It further proposed a modified Tollington ward, which would use the Holloway Road as a strong western boundary, and comprise the northern part of the current Tollington ward, the northern part of Sussex ward and an area to the south of Shaftesbury Road in the southern part of Highview ward. The Council also proposed a new three-member St John's ward, comprising the central and eastern parts of Hillrise ward and the majority of Highview ward. The

number of electors per councillor in the Council's proposed Finsbury Park, Tollington and St John's ward would be 1 per cent above, 1 per cent below and 7 per cent above the borough average initially (3 per cent above, 4 per cent below and 3 per cent above the average by 2003).

86 As detailed earlier in this chapter, we decided to base our draft recommendations on the Council's Stage One submission. However, we noted that under the Council's scheme, Tollington ward was forecast to be over-represented by 4 per cent by 2003, while St John's and Finsbury Park wards were both forecast to be under-represented by 3 per cent by that time. In order to secure a better level of electoral equality in this area, and to provide for an improved electoral balance in the borough overall, we proposed two slight modifications to the Council's proposals.

87 We proposed modifying the southern boundary of the Council's proposed Tollington ward to include all of the southern side of Tollington Park (including Everleigh Street and Dulas Street) in the revised ward. In addition, we proposed modifying the ward's northern boundary to include all the properties on the northern side of Shaftesbury Road in Tollington ward. The number of electors per councillor in our proposed Finsbury Park, Tollington and St John's wards would be 3 per cent below, 5 per cent above and 5 per cent above the borough average initially (improving to 1 per cent below, 2 per cent above and 1 per cent above the average by 2003). Given the improved level of electoral equality that our proposals would secure (having regard to the five-year forecast of electorate), we put them forward as our draft recommendations.

88 At Stage Three the Council supported our draft proposals for wards in this area. As detailed earlier in paragraph 82, the Elthorne Park Neighbourhood Forum expressed concern about our proposed changes, while a local resident supported our proposal to keep all of the Archway area within the same ward (Junction ward). The resident also suggested retaining the original ward boundary between Hillrise and Highview wards, and extending Highview ward southwards (taking in the northern part of Tollington ward). She also proposed that St John's ward be named Elthorne Park ward, as Elthorne Park is at the centre of the proposed ward.

89 The Labour Group on the Council suggested that the proposed St John's ward be named Archway or Hillrise ward, as "some of the features to which [St John's] applies actually lie outside the

boundaries of the proposed ward”. The Green Party proposed that Finsbury Park ward be named Seven Sisters ward, as the Seven Sisters Road “forms the backbone of the new ward”.

90 Having considered the representations received at Stage Three, we remain of the view that our draft recommendations would provide for the best balance of the criteria guiding our work. Given both the Labour and Liberal Democrat Groups’ support for our proposals in this area, we are confirming our draft recommendations for these three wards, as shown on the large map inserted at the back of this report, as final, subject to one ward name amendment. In the light of the local opposition to the proposed St John’s ward name, and given the broad support for the Labour Group’s suggestion that the existing ward name be retained, we are proposing the retention of Hillrise as the name of this ward.

Conclusions

91 Having considered carefully all the representations and evidence received in response to our consultation report, we have decided substantially to endorse our draft recommendations, subject to the following amendments:

- (a) the boundary between the proposed Clerkenwell and Barnsbury wards should be modified to follow the whole length of the Pentonville Road;

- (b) the northern boundary of the proposed Barnsbury ward should be modified to follow the railway line between Liverpool Road and Roman Way;
- (c) the northern part of the boundary between the proposed Clerkenwell and Bunhill wards should be modified to follow the centre of St John Street before running behind the properties on the northern side of Rawstone Street;
- (d) the southern part of the boundary between the proposed Clerkenwell and Bunhill wards should be modified to follow the centre of a longer section of St John Street (and not the centre of Agdon Street);
- (e) two ward names should be modified – the proposed Hillmarton ward should be named Hillmarton with Holloway and the proposed St John’s ward should be named Hillrise.

92 We conclude that, in Islington:

- (a) there should be a reduction in council size from 52 to 48;
- (b) there should be 16 wards, four less than at present, which would involve changes to the boundaries of all of the existing wards.

93 Figure 4 shows the impact of our final recommendations on electoral equality, comparing them with the current arrangements, based on 1998 and 2003 electorate figures.

Figure 4 : Comparison of Current and Recommended Electoral Arrangements

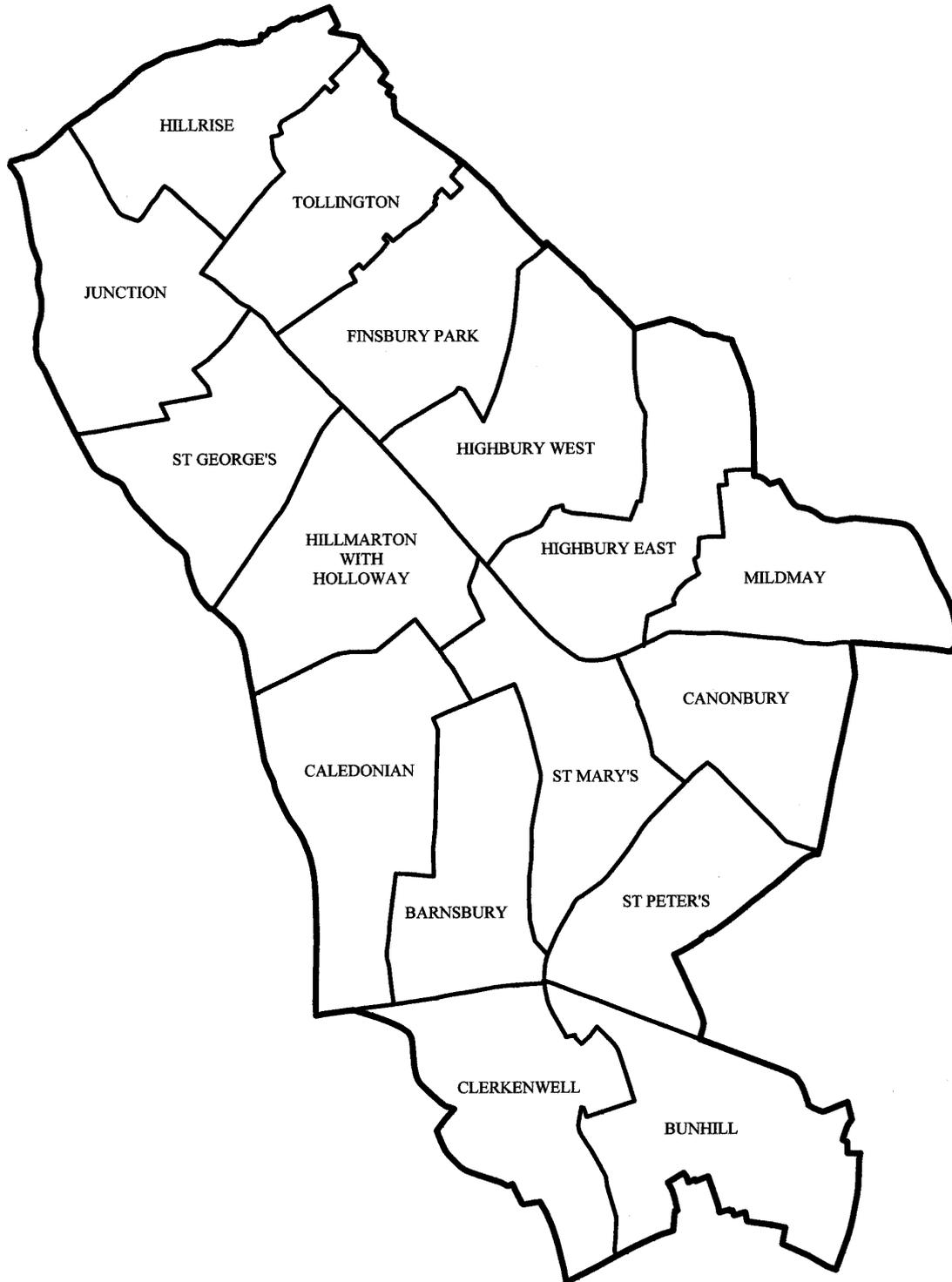
	1998 electorate		2003 forecast electorate	
	Current arrangements	Final recommendations	Current arrangements	Final recommendations
Number of councillors	52	48	52	48
Number of wards	20	16	20	16
Average number of electors per councillor	2,287	2,478	2,381	2,579
Number of wards with a variance more than 10 per cent from the average	6	0	7	0
Number of wards with a variance more than 20 per cent from the average	0	0	1	0

⁹⁴ As shown in Figure 4, our final recommendations for Islington 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 six to zero. This improved balance of representation is expected to improve further with all wards expected to vary by less than 10 per cent in 2003, in fact varying by 4 per cent or less. Our final recommendations are set out in more detail in Figures 1 and 2, and illustrated on Map 2 and the large map at the back of this report.

Final Recommendation

Islington Borough Council should comprise 48 councillors serving 16 wards, as detailed and named in Figures 1 and 2, and illustrated on Map 2 and the large map in the back of the report.

Map 2:
The Commission's Final Recommendations for Islington



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6. NEXT STEPS

95 Having completed our review of electoral arrangements in Islington and submitted our final recommendations to the Secretary of State, we have fulfilled our statutory obligation under the Local Government Act 1992.

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

97 All further correspondence concerning our recommendations and the matters discussed in this report should be addressed to:

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

APPENDIX A

Draft Recommendations for Islington

Our final recommendations, detailed in Figures 1 and 2, differ substantively from those we put forward as draft recommendations in respect of five wards where our draft proposals are set out below. The only other changes from draft to final recommendations, which are not included in Figure A1, are that we propose renaming Hillmarton ward as Hillmarton with Holloway and St John's ward as Hillrise.

Figure A1:

The Commission's Draft Recommendations: Number of Councillors and Electors by Ward

Ward name	Number of councillors	Electorate (1998)	Number of electors per councillor	Variance from average %	Electorate (2003)	Number of electors per councillor	Variance from average %
Barnsbury	3	7,424	2,475	0	7,590	2,530	-2
Bunhill	3	6,658	2,219	-10	7,755	2,585	0
Caledonian	3	7,466	2,489	0	7,737	2,579	0
Clerkenwell	3	6,321	2,107	-15	7,722	2,574	0
St Mary's	3	7,517	2,506	1	7,831	2,610	1

Source: Electorate figures are based on information provided by Islington Borough Council.

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

