LOCAL GOVERNMENT COMMISSION FOR ENGLAND

DRAFT RECOMMENDATIONS ON THE FUTURE ELECTORAL ARRANGEMENTS FOR GREENWICH

August 1999
This report sets out the Commission’s draft recommendations on the electoral arrangements for the London borough of Greenwich.

Members of the Commission are:

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

Barbara Stephens (Chief Executive)

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A large map illustrating the existing and proposed ward boundaries for Greenwich is inserted inside the back cover of this report.

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LOCAL GOVERNMENT COMMISSION FOR ENGLAND
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 Greenwich 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 Greenwich. 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 those interested 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 Greenwich:

- in six of the 36 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 more than 20 per cent from the average;
- by 2004 electoral equality is expected to worsen, with the number of electors per councillor forecast to vary by more than 10 per cent from the average in twelve wards, and by more than 20 per cent in four wards.

Our main draft recommendations for future electoral arrangements (Figures 1 and 2 and paragraphs 107-108) are that:

- Greenwich Borough Council should be served by 51 councillors, instead of 62 as at present;
- there should be 17 wards, 19 less than at present, which would involve changes to all of the existing wards.

These draft 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 15 of the 17 wards the number of electors per councillor would vary by no more than 10 per cent from the borough average.
- This improved electoral equality is forecast to continue, with the number of electors per councillor in all wards expected to vary by no more than 1 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 ten weeks from 3 August 1999. Because we take this consultation very seriously, we may move away from our draft recommendations in the light of Stage Three responses. It is therefore important 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 11 October 1999:

The Review Manager
Greenwich Review
Local Government Commission for England
Dolphyn 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</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1  Abbey Wood</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>Abbey Wood ward; Eynsham ward (part)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2  Blackheath South with Parks</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>Blackheath ward (part); Middle Park ward (part); Sutcliffe ward (part); Tarn ward (part)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3  Blackheath Westcombe</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>Blackheath ward (part); Ferrier ward (part); Vanbrugh ward (part)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4  Charlton</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>Charlton ward (part); Hornfair ward (part); Recoty Field ward (part); Woolwich Common ward (part)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5  Cudham</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>Cudham ward (part); New Eltham ward (part); Tarn ward (part)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6  Eltham North</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>Deansfield ward; Eltham Park ward (part); Sherard ward (part); Wellingham ward (part)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7  Eltham South</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>Avery Hill ward; Eltham Park ward (part); Middle Park ward (part); New Eltham ward (part); Tarn ward (part); Palace ward</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8  Eltham West</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>Ferrier ward (part); Kidbrooke ward (part); Sherard ward (part); Sutcliffe ward (part); Well Hall ward (part)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9  Greenwich Town</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>St Alfege ward (part); Vanbrugh ward (part); West ward (part)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10 Griffins</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>Arsenal ward (part); Burragge ward (part); Grydon ward (part); Lakedale ward (part); Plumstead Common ward (part)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11 Kidbrooke with Hornfair</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>Hornfair ward (part); Kidbrooke ward (part); Recoty Field ward (part); Well Hall ward (part)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12 Peninsula</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>Charlton ward (part); St Alfege ward (part); Trafulgar ward; Vanbrugh ward (part)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13 Plumstead</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>Eynsham ward (part); Grydon ward (part); Lakedale ward (part); Slade ward (part); St Nicholas Ward; Thamesmead Moorings ward (part)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14 Shooters Hill</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>Herbert ward (part); Plumstead Common ward (part); Shrewsbury ward (part); Slade ward (part); Woolwich Common ward (part)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15 Thamesmead Moorings</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>Glyndon ward (part); Thamesmead Moorings ward (part)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16 Woolwich Common</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>Arsenal ward (part); Burragge ward (part); Herbert ward (part); Nightingale ward; Plumstead Common ward (part); St Mary's ward (part); Woolwich Common ward (part)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17 Woolwich Riverside</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>Arsenal ward (part); Charlton ward (part); St Mary's ward (part); Woolwich Common ward (part)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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

## Figure 2: The Commission's Draft Recommendations for Greenwich

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
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<td>7</td>
<td>9,550</td>
<td>3,183</td>
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<td>7</td>
<td>9,564</td>
<td>3,188</td>
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<tr>
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<td>9,548</td>
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<td>3,183</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<td>6</td>
<td>9,531</td>
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<td>3,178</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>9,543</td>
<td>3,181</td>
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<td>9,700</td>
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<td>7</td>
<td>9,546</td>
<td>3,182</td>
</tr>
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<td>2,677</td>
<td>-10</td>
<td>9,604</td>
<td>3,201</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Totals:** 51 152,167  162,567

**Averages:** 9,521 2,978  3,188

**Source:** Election figures are based on material from Greenwich Borough Council.

**Note:** The 'variance from average' columns show by line for, in percentage terms, the number of electors per councillor figures 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 draft recommendations on the electoral arrangements for the borough of Greenwich.

2. In broad terms, the objective of this periodic electoral review (PER) of Greenwich 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, 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 B).

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).

Figure 3: Stages of the Review

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Stage</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<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

Our programme of periodic electoral reviews of all scheduled 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.)

Most London boroughs have not been reviewed as recently as 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.

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, in the great 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.

Before we started 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, Greenwich is in the final phase of reviews.

17. 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.

18. Following publication of the White Paper, we advised all authorities in our 1998/1999 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 set out in the March 1998 Guidance. Nevertheless, we added that local authorities and other interested parties would not 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.

19. 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.

20. 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 Greenwich

This is our first review of the electoral arrangements for Greenwich. The last such review was undertaken by our predecessor, the Local Government Boundary Commission (LGBC), which reported to the Secretary of State in July 1977 (Report No. 234).
2. CURRENT ELECTORAL ARRANGEMENTS

20 Greenwich covers an area of some 5,000 hectares, has a population of nearly 215,000, and is one of the 14 Inner London boroughs. It is situated in south-east London and is bounded to the north by the River Thames. With seven miles of river frontage, Greenwich has the longest river embankment of all the London boroughs. The borough includes three main town centres – Greenwich, Woolwich and Eltham, and also encompasses all or parts of the area of Chatham, Blackheath, Kidbrooke, Plumstead, Abbey Wood and New Eltham. The new town of Thamesmead is also partly in the borough, straddling Greenwich’s eastern boundary with Bexley.

21 Greenwich is a borough of contrasts. Steeped in history, it contains some of Europe’s finest historic buildings. Greenwich Town Centre, which is now a World Heritage Site, is a major tourist destination. The borough comprises many desirable residential areas, but at the same time there are many deprived areas with the characteristics and problems of the inner city. Indeed, the 1998 Index of Local Conditions shows Greenwich to be the eleventh most deprived local authority area in the country. Nineteen out of the existing 36 wards in Greenwich are within the highest 10 per cent of most deprived wards nationally.

22 Socially and culturally Greenwich is one of the most diverse local authority areas in London, with 16 per cent of the population from ethnic minorities. These are mainly Indian, Irish, Black Caribbean and Black African. Other significant ethnic groups in the borough are from Pakistan, Bangladesh, China and other Asian (including Vietnamese) origin.

23 Over the next five years, approximately 6,000 new homes are due to be constructed within the borough and the attraction of Greenwich as a visitor destination will be greatly strengthened. The Millennium Experience is expected to be the largest attraction of its kind ever in the UK. It is estimated that 'The Dome' will attract 12 million visitors to Greenwich in the year 2000, creating more than 10,000 jobs in direct on- and off-site employment. It is also likely to attract investment in tourism and leisure as well as increased trade across the business sector. The borough will also benefit substantially from improved transport links, such as the Jubilee Line and Docklands Light Railway extensions.

24 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'.

25 The electorate of the borough (February 1999) is 152,167. The Council currently has 62 councillors who are elected from 36 wards (Map 1 and Figure 4). Twenty-six wards are each represented by two councillors while the other ten wards elect one councillor each. As in all London boroughs, the whole council is elected together every four years.

26 At present, each councillor represents an average of 2,454 electors, which the Borough Council Forecast would increase to 2,622 by the year 2004 if the present number of councillors is maintained. However, due to demographic and other changes since the last electoral review, the number of electors per councillor in six of the 36 wards varies by more than 10 per cent from the borough average, and in one ward by more than 20 per cent. The worst imbalance is in Palace ward where the councillor represents on average 42 per cent more electors than the borough average.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Ward name</th>
<th>Number of councillors (1999)</th>
<th>Number of electors per councillor</th>
<th>Variance from average %</th>
<th>Electorate (2004)</th>
<th>Number of electors per councillor</th>
<th>Variance from average %</th>
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</thead>
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Source: Electorate figures are based on Greenwich Borough Council's submission.

Note: 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. For example, in 1999, electors in Eypham ward were relatively over-represented by 13 per cent, while electors in Palace ward were relatively under-represented by 62 per cent. Figures have been rounded to the nearest whole number.
3. REPRESENTATIONS RECEIVED

27 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 Greenwich Borough Council.

28 During this initial stage of the review, officers from the Commission visited the area and met with officers from the Council. We are most grateful to all concerned for their co-operation and assistance. We received six representations during Stage One. The Council submitted three borough-wide schemes on behalf of the Conservative, Liberal Democrat and Labour Groups. These, with accompanying mapping, along with copies of the other representations received, may be inspected at the offices of the Council and the Commission by appointment.

Greenwich Borough Council

29 The Council originally agreed six preliminary draft schemes that were developed with the leaders of all three political parties on the Council. The Council consulted locally in the “Greenwich Times” in the form of a questionnaire, and displayed detailed maps of each scheme in local libraries and at an exhibition in the Town Hall. This consultation exercise proved inconclusive. The Council ultimately put forward three schemes, one based on 15 wards involving a council size of 45 members and favoured by the Labour Group, one based on 17 wards involving a council size of 51 members and favoured by the Conservative Group, and the other based on 19 wards involving a council size of 57 members which was favoured by the Liberal Democrat Group.

30 Although unanimity was not reached by the Council’s political groups in respect of an agreed scheme, the Council highlighted the fact that a consensus was reached on certain key issues, and that the Council as a whole wanted a uniform pattern of three-member wards and a decrease in council size. It further highlighted that the greatest support “albeit marginally” was for the 17-ward option. The three schemes involved changes to all wards, and each scheme sought to reflect community identities and maintain clear boundaries wherever possible.

Greenwich Borough Liberal Democrats

31 As mentioned above, the Liberal Democrats on the Council supported the 19-ward option put forward by the Council. In its representation, the Group stated that it could not support the other schemes put forward by the Council because “each of these at some point ignores the borough’s natural barriers and creates wards divided by large open spaces. We question whether councillors can properly represent the interests of wards constructed in such a way that different parts of the ward may have opposing interests”. The Group commended that the wards in the 19-ward scheme were based as far as possible on existing polling districts and polling stations “as part of the renewal of local democracy”, and that although it had not sought to respect parliamentary constituency boundaries, only three of the proposed wards did cross constituency boundaries.

Greenwich & Woolwich Conservative Association

32 The Greenwich & Woolwich Conservative Association generally supported the 17-ward option favoured by the Conservative Group on the Council, agreeing with the proposals under that option for the eastern part of the borough. It stated that “in an area like Greenwich which has a diverse social and economic mix, reducing the number of wards below 17 risks inappropriately mixing diverse and non-homogeneous areas, leading to a potential conflict of priorities and a dichotomy of wishes, potentially resulting in both an impasse in terms of political representation and a failure to target assistance and resources appropriately. It proposed alternative warding arrangements in the west of the borough in order to keep the community of Blackheath within one ward, to reflect Single Regeneration Budget (SRB) funding and, in its view, to maintain community interests. The Association stated that its alternative proposals for the west of the borough would involve minimal change to the Greenwich & Woolwich and Eltham Parliamentary constituencies.
4. ANALYSIS AND DRAFT RECOMMENDATIONS

As indicated previously, our prime objective in considering the most appropriate electoral arrangements for Greenwich is to achieve electoral equality, having regard to the statutory criteria set out in the Local Government Act 1992 and Schedule 11 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.

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.

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.

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, 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. Regard 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

The Council submitted electorate forecasts, projecting an increase in the electorate of some 7 per cent from 182,167 to 192,567 over the five-year period from 1999 to 2004. It expected much of the growth to be in the present Thamesmead Moorings and Trafalgar wards and other areas in the north of the borough, as analysed in subsequent paragraphs. The Council estimated rates and locations of housing development having 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 Council on the likely effect on electorates of changes to ward boundaries has been obtained.

We are aware that this is an inexact science and, having given consideration to the Council's forecast electorates, are content that they represent the best estimates that can reasonably be made at this time. We would welcome any further views on electorate projections during Stage Three.

Council Size

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. Greenwich Borough Council currently has 62 members.

The Council stated that, at an early stage of Stage One of this review, "consensus was reached [between the three political groups] that it would be desirable to move away from the current mix of one- and two-member wards to a pattern of wards represented by three councillors each. Consensus was also reached that there should be a reduced number of councillors overall in the light of political management reform". However, no consensus was reached on the scale of the reduction.
in council size, as is evident from the Council's submission of three different options, of 57, 51 and 45 councillors, for our consideration.

45 Each of the three council size options were supported by a different political group represented on the Council. We were informed that the Labour Group preferred 45 councillors, the Conservative Group 51 councillors and the Liberal Democrat Group 57 councillors.

46 The Council supplied evidence that it had considered how all three of these possible council sizes could fit in with its proposals for a new political management structure. In a letter to us after the end of Stage One, the Council stated that "an exercise has been undertaken to look at the number of seats and allocations to each Party Group if the total number of councillors were reduced to 57, 51 or 45. In all cases, a formula could be adopted (of reducing the number of member-level bodies, or the number of seats on them allocated to councillors, or a mixture of both) which would be consistent with the principles of efficient government, and a clearer and more transparent system of responsibilities".

47 The Council's 45-member scheme was strongly opposed by the Etham Conservative Association, which argued that an overall reduction of 17 members, from 62 to 45, would leave the Council with too few councillors for an Inner London borough such as Greenwich. Additionally, the Association argued that optimum electoral equality would not be assured under the 45-member scheme.

48 We note the Council's assurances that it has considered how a council size of 57, 51 or 45 councillors would operate and fit with its proposals for a new structure of political management. We are also aware that it undertook local consultations on a range of council size and ward pattern options; a marginal preference was expressed by respondents for a council size of 51 members. Given that three of the six options consulted upon included a 51-member scheme, and the low response rate, these consultations cannot be regarded as conclusive. Nevertheless, we consider them relevant.

49 We have considered the size and distribution of the electorate in the borough, and the geography and other characteristics of the area. In the light of these factors, together with all the evidence that we have received on the issue of council size, we have concluded that the statutory criteria and the achievement of electoral equality would best be met by a council size of 51 members.

Electoral Arrangements

50 We recognise the difficulties involved in producing a scheme for the borough which produces good electoral equality having regard to the five-year forecast of electors, secure effective and convenient local government, and reflects local community identities and interests. The Council's 17-ward scheme, in our view, would generally secure better levels of electoral equality than the other proposals put to us, having regard to the five-year electorate projections, particularly in the north of the borough. We have decided to adopt the 17-ward scheme put forward by the Council as the basis of our draft recommendations.

51 We considered the alternative warding arrangements for the west of the borough put forward by the Greenwich & Woolwich Conservative Association. They argued that its proposals would keep that part of the Blackheath community which lies within Greenwich borough together within one ward. (Blackheath is already split, as part of the community lies within the London Borough of Lewisham. The Association also stated that its proposals would reflect Single Regeneration Budget (SRB) funding in parts of the Kidbrooke, Ferrier and Sherard wards. We went on to argue that its proposed wards reflected the communities in the Millennium Dome area and the Charlton Village area, the latter of which has "vital arterial access to the Millennium Dome" and which is "a separable community from any other part of Greenwich". The Kidbrooke ward included the identifiable centre in Charlton". Finally, the Association stated that its proposals would involve minimal change to the Greenwich & Woolwich and Etham Parliamentary constituencies.

52 We carefully considered the proposals and the arguments put forward by the Greenwich & Woolwich Conservative Association. The Association's proposed Peninsula ward would include part of the residential area to the south of the London to Dartford railway line, as opposed to an area to the east, as was proposed in the Council's 51-member option. We consider that the community interests of electors in the proposed Peninsula ward and Charlton wards would be better served under the Council's scheme. In our view, under the Council's proposed Peninsula ward, the area to the east is well connected to the Millennium Dome site, and the railway line provides a clear boundary in the south. In the Greenwich & Woolwich Conservative Association's proposed Charlton ward, Charlton Park and Charlton House are placed in separate wards, but these features are kept together in the Council's proposed Charlton ward.

53 The Greenwich & Woolwich Conservative Association's scheme achieves good electoral equality by 2004, but the Council's proposals under its 51-member scheme achieves even better equality. All wards except one (the proposed Greenwich Town ward) are projected to vary by less than half of one per cent from the borough average by 2004 under the Council's 51-member scheme. The proposals of the Greenwich & Woolwich Conservative Association would provide for electoral imbalances of up to 3 per cent by 2004.

54 We are of the view that the Council's scheme better reflects community identities in the area, albeit marginally. The Association's proposed Blackheath ward is a good reflection of the Blackheath community, although the northern boundary proposed for that ward was not clear and definitive. It was argued that the proposed wards covering Blackheath and Hornfair wards would reflect Single Regeneration Budget (SRB) funding. However, this reason alone does not provide sufficient justification for us to base our proposals on this scheme. The Association's proposed scheme does provide a possible alternative in the western part of the borough, but not necessarily a better one than the 17-ward scheme put forward by the Council.

55 Overall, the Council's scheme provides for slightly better levels of electoral equality and, in our view, clearer boundaries. We have therefore decided to base our draft recommendations on the Council's 51-member scheme throughout the borough, although we do propose some minor alterations in certain areas. The following areas, based on existing wards, are considered in turn:

- St Alfege, Trafalgar, Vanbrugh and West wards;
- Charlton, Hornfair, Kidbrooke and Rectors Field wards;
- Blackheath, Middle Park and Southwark wards;
- Ferrier and Sherard wards;
- Arsenal, Burton, Nightingale, St Mary's and Woolwich Common wards;
- Abbey Wood, Eynsham, Glyndon and Thamesmead Moorings wards;
- Hermit, Lakedale, Plume, Common, Shrewsbury, Slade and St Nicholas wards;
- Deansfield, Etham Park and New Hall wards;
- Avery Hill, Goldthorpe, New Etham, Palace and Tarn wards.

Details of our draft recommendations are set out in Figures 1 and 2, and illustrated on Map 2 and on the large map inserted at the back of the report. In the following narrative, all proposed wards would return three members each. When alluding to the Council's scheme, it is its 51-member option to which we are referring.

St Alfege, Trafalgar, Vanbrugh and West wards

56 These four wards lie in the north-west of the borough and are each represented by two councillors. St Alfege ward, Vanbrugh ward and West wards are over-represented by 9 per cent, 8 per cent and 8 per cent respectively (9 per cent below, 9 per cent below and 8 per cent above the borough average by 2004). The Trafalgar ward is currently under-represented by 1 per cent based on the current 62-member council size. This is forecast to increase to 37 per cent by 2004 due to significant development in the area, due mainly to the Millennium Dome complex.

57 In the north-western corner of the borough, the Council proposed combining most of the existing St Alfege ward with the West ward and part of Vanbrugh ward. The remainder of Vanbrugh ward would be included in the proposed Blackheath ward which is discussed later in the report. The eastern boundary would run along Park Row, Park Vista and then along Maze Hill Road until it meets the borough boundary. The Council argued that this ward would comprise the historical and visitor heart of Greenwich and would include all the key elements of the Maritime Greenwich World Heritage site. St Alfege's Church and the Greenwich and the proposed Cutty Sark railway stations would also be included in the ward. It further stated that the part of St Alfege ward not included in this ward (polling district 2E, east of the Naval College) is 'distinct from the
town centre, and is an integral part of the East Greenwich community. This area would instead be placed in the proposed Peninsula ward. The Council suggested the names Greenwich Town ward or Greenwich ward. The proposal would result in much improved levels of electoral equality, with the proposed Greenwich Town/Sa Aligee ward being equal to the average number of electors per councillor both now and in 2004, under the proposed 51-member council size.

The Council also proposed a new ward to cover the existing Sa Aligee ward and part of the existing Charlton ward. The eastern boundary would run along Anchor & Hope Lane until it meets Woolwich Road, where it would run along eastwards and then south along Ransom Walk to the railway line. The proposed ward would retain the railway line as its southern boundary, with the addition of Toa Smith Close (near Maze Hill railway station), from the current Vauxhall ward. The Council further proposed that the southwestern boundary run along Park Row to include an area currently in the St Aligee ward. It argued that, “this ward comprises the mixed residential, commercial and industrial communities of East Greenwich”, and the Council proposed that this new ward be named “Peninsula” ward. Its proposal would result in the number of electors per councillor being 19 per cent below the borough average initially, but due to the development on the Millennium Dome site would improve significantly to be equal to the borough average by 2004, based on a 51-member council.

The Council’s proposals for this area give good levels of electoral equality having regard to the five-year projections, whilst in our view taking into account the identities of local communities. Although the proposals for the Peninsula ward include part of the existing Charlton ward, we have noted that the proposed ward’s constituent areas are well connected by road. As mentioned earlier, the Greenwich & Woolwich Conservative Association’s proposed Peninsula ward would include part of the residential area to the south of the London to Dartford railway line, as opposed to an area to the east, as under the Council’s proposal. Having considered the Council’s scheme for the area, we are content to put forward its proposals as part of our draft recommendations. We would welcome local comments on the proposed new ward names of Greenwich Town and Peninsula, as well as on the proposed boundaries (see large map inserted at the back of this report).

Charlton, Hornfair, Kidbrooke, Rectory Field wards

These wards stretch from the north to the centre of the borough and are therefore over-represented at present. The two-member Charlton ward, situated in the north of the borough, currently has 3 per cent less electors per councillor than the borough average. The 9 per cent less electors per councillor than the borough average (9 per cent) road runs through the Hornfair, Kidbrooke and Rectory Field wards each return two councillors and are 9 per cent, 4 per cent and 7 per cent below the borough average (13 percent, 11 percent and 13 percent per cent by 2004), under the current 62-member council size.

A modified Charlton ward was proposed by the Council, based on the area of the existing Charlton ward south of the railway line. The ward would extend further south to include most of the existing Rectory Field ward. The western boundary would run along the A102 road from the railway line until it meets Old Dover Road, where it would continue until it meets Reynolds Place. From here, the southern boundary would continue along the rear of the properties in Old Dover Road, along Indus Road, into Cranberry Road to include Charlton Park and Charlton House in the proposed ward. The Council further proposed that the eastern boundary run to the west of the Queen Elizabeth Hospital site, and then to the east of Charlton Cemetery (currently in Woolwich Common ward) so that it would be included in the new Charlton ward.

However, we believe that a minor boundary modification between the proposed Charlton and Kidbrooke with Hornfair wards would be a better reflection of local interests. We propose to incorporate the Blackheath Bluescoats School and its grounds into the proposed Kidbrooke with Hornfair ward along with those few properties which face Old Dover Road. This proposal would have no adverse affect on electoral equality but would, in our view, better reflect the local community interest along that part of Old Dover Road. We are putting these proposals forward for consultation as part of our draft recommendations. We would welcome further views on these proposals at Stage Three, including on the proposed ward names of Charlton and Kidbrooke with Hornfair (see large map inserted at the back of this report).

Blackheath, Middle Park and Sutcliffe wards

These three wards stretch along the western boundary of the borough. The two-member Blackheath ward is slightly under-represented by 9 per cent (2 per cent below the borough average by 2004). Middle Park ward also returns two councillors and equals the borough average number of electors per councillor now (7 per cent below by 2004). The number of electors per councillor in the single-member Sutcliffe ward is 12 per cent above the average (5 per cent by 2004), under the current 62-member council size. The Council proposed that the Blackheath ward be modified to include two polling districts (RA and RB) of the three from the existing Blackheath ward, most of the current Vauxhall ward and part of Ferrier ward. The railway line would provide the proposed ward’s northern boundary, with Blackheath Park Road and the neighbouring sports grounds providing most of the southern boundary. The eastern boundary would be formed by the A102 road whilst the boundary to the west is the borough boundary.

The Council argued that the proposed Blackheath ward would comprise the Vauxhall and Wenscombe Park communities, and most of the Blackheath community, including part of the village. It further argued that although Shooters Hill Road is a busy roadway and may be regarded as a barrier between communities on either side, “it is generally regarded as preferable to use Shooters Hill Road rather than the A102 motorway into Charlton. This proposal maintains the ‘heathside’ character of the [present Blackheath] ward, a feature which does unite the communities north and south of Shooters Hill Road. A further advantage of this ward is that it unites the communities east and west of Kidbrooke Grove.” The proposal would result in the number of electors per councillor being 7 per cent below the average initially, forecast to improve significantly to equal the average by 2004 under a 51-member council size. It was proposed that the ward either retain the name “Blackheath” or be renamed “Blackheath Westcombe”.

Under the Council’s scheme, the remainder of the existing Blackheath ward (policing district BC) would be joined with most of Charlton and Middle Park wards, along with small parts of Tarn and Sherard wards, to create a new ward. The proposed eastern boundary of this ward would run along Kidbrooke Park Road, to the west of Sutcliffe Park and would continue along Editham Hill Road, which provides much of an existing ward boundary. It would continue southwards along King'sdown and King John's Walk and would include the electors from Shootsbridge Close within the proposed ward.
The Council argued that this ward would contain a number of "distinct and close-knit communities which are linked together by open spaces and the River Quaggy". It contended that the parks and open spaces in the ward provide a dominant feature, and that the River Quaggy is a unifying factor. The Council therefore proposed that the ward be named South (or Southern) Parks. Upon reconsideration, the number of electors per councillor would be 7 per cent above the borough average initially, and equal the average by 2004, assuming a 51-member council size.

The Council considered the disadvantages of using the Blackheath Park Road as a ward boundary in this area, as it would divide the Blackheath area between two wards. However, the Council also stated that this option did receive some local support, and that "this division could only be avoided by a too great departure from the electoral quota.

To divide those parts of Blackheath that lie within Greenwich borough between two wards is not ideal, and for this reason the Greenwich & Woolwich Conservative Association's proposals for this part of the borough were unattractive to us. However, we stated earlier in the report (paragraphs 49-53) why, overall, we were not convinced that these proposals were better than the Council's for this part of the borough. Given our acceptance of the Council's proposals in the Blackheath area, and that to depart from using Blackheath Park Road as a ward boundary would result in a relatively large electoral imbalance, we believe that the Council's suggested ward boundaries in this area are preferable. We would particularly welcome further views on this issue during Stage Three.

The Council's proposals would, in our view, provide a satisfactory balance between reflecting community identities and securing good levels of electoral equality, with the proposed wards in this area both having electoral/councillor ratios equal to the borough average by 2004. We consider that these proposals would generally provide clear boundaries and are therefore content to put them forward for consultation. While accepting the Council's name of Blackheath Westcombe, we are suggesting an alternative for the other ward in this area. Because the southern part of the existing Blackheath ward would form part of the new ward, we propose to name it Blackheath South with Parks. We would welcome further representations and evidence during Stage Three, both in relation to ward names and to the proposed boundaries (see large map inserted at the back of this report).

Ferrier and Sherard wards

These two wards border the existing Blackheath and Kidbrooke wards in the west of the borough. The two-member Ferrier ward is currently over-represented by 10 per cent and is forecast to increase to 16 per cent by 2004. The Sherard ward also returns two councillors, but is slightly under-represented by 5 per cent (3 per cent by 2004), based on the current 62-member council size.

The Council proposed a new ward comprising most of the current Sherard ward, together with parts of the existing Well Hall, Ferrier, Kidbrooke and Sutcliffe wards. This ward would lie between the proposed Kidbrooke with Hornfair and Blackheath South with Parks wards. Its eastern boundary would run to the rear of the properties in Arbour Road, along Well Hall Road and round Tom Cobbs Close and behind the shopping parade to the west of Well Hall Road. It would then continue southwards along Sherard Road, to the rear of the properties in Evergreen Road, east along Lassa Road and to the rear of the properties in Spencer Gardens, running by Well Hall Road to Etham Church and then west along Etham High Street. The southern boundary would run along Etham Road and on to Etham Hill Road to include Sutcliffe Park within the ward. It was further proposed that this ward be named "Nebit" ward after the author Edith Nesbit who lived at the Well Hall for over twenty years early this century.

The Council argued that although the ward is crossed by the railway line from Eltham Blackheath stations, and by the A2 and Westcombe Avenue, it is considered that there is a very strong and distinctive community based on well-established as well as newer public housing stock. Sutcliffe Park, it was argued, was included in this proposal in view of its close relationship and setting for the Ferrier estate. The Council pointed out that there was support in the public consultation from local residents for the inclusion of the park in the same ward as the estate. These proposals result in the number of electors per councillor being 4 per cent above the borough average initially (equal to the average by 2004), based on a 51-member council size.

We have concluded that there is a significant community argument to place Sutcliffe Park in the proposed Nebit ward, and after examining the evidence for the proposal the Nebit ward have concluded that it provides an appropriate balance between community identity and electoral equality. However, we are not content at this stage to adopt the Council's proposed ward name of Nebit, and would welcome, for consultation purposes, that the ward be named Etham West. We are generally satisfied with the Council's proposals for the area, but believe we can further improve the proposed boundary between Etham West and the proposed Eltham North wards. We recommend that the electors in Everest Road and Lassa Road should form part of the proposed Eltham West ward, with the new boundary running along the back of the properties and following Sherard Road until it meets the proposed Etham North ward. We therefore put these proposals forward for public consultation, and would welcome further representations at Stage Three, particularly with regard to the naming of the ward (see large map inserted at the back of this report).

Arsenal, Burragge, Nightingale, St Mary's and Woolwich Common wards

These wards stretch from the north-east to the centre of the borough. The single-member wards of Arsenal, Burragge and Nightingale are presently reasonably well represented under a 62-member council. The number of electors per councillor varies from the borough average by 1 per cent, 4 per cent and 7 per cent respectively. However, development along the riverfront of the existing Arsenal ward would result in the ward being under-represented by 30 per cent by 2004. The Burragge ward would improve to 2 per cent and the Nightingale ward to the borough average by 2004. The two-member wards of St Mary's and Woolwich Common are presently over-represented, varying from the borough average by 5 per cent and 11 per cent respectively (2 per cent below and 16 per above by 2004).

The Council proposed creating a Woolwich Riverside ward comprising most of St Mary's ward, with parts of the current Arsenal, Charlton and Woolwich Common wards. The ward would be bounded to the north by the River Thames. The boundary would then follow the eastern boundary of the river between Shooters Hill Road to the south and south of General Gordon Place, then along Wellington Street, along Artillery Place and Hillcrest. From this point, the boundary would run south of two residential blocks in Little Heath, and north to the west of properties in Kidbrooke around the western edge of Mykonos Park, and then west along the railway line to the boundary with the proposed Peninsula ward.

The Council stated that the proposed ward would contain Woolwich Town centre, "the biggest town centre in the borough, and the civic heart of the borough". To the east of the town centre is the Royal Arsenal site which regeneration opportunity" contributing to the revival of Woolwich Town centre. The ward would also contain the riverside residential area of Woolwich Dockyard, most of the New Charlton residential area, and part of the mixed residential and light industrial area of lower Charlton. The Council further added that the proposed ward, which would contain the Woolwich Arsenal and Dockyard stations and the Waterfront Leisure Centre, would provide a Woolwich ward with "a strong historical identity", distinct from the proposed Woolwich Common ward.

The Council's proposed new Woolwich Common ward would be formed from the present Nightingale ward, and parts of the current Arsenal, Burragge, Herbert, Plumstead Common, St Mary's and Woolwich Common wards. The ward would be bounded by the proposed Charlton ward to the west and the Woolwich Riverside ward to the north. The boundary would continue to the east along Burragge Road, along a line behind the Oaks and a number of properties in Plumstead Common Road at the corner of Plumstead Common, along Plumstead Common Road, and then south along Adaman Road. From here it would run west along Hirstock and Geresta Roads, down Ripon Road, south-west along Herbert Road, south immediately to the east of properties in Red Lion Lane north of Eastleigh School. School and then west of all other Red Lion Lane properties, west along Shooters Hill Road, and then north along Baker Road to the proposed Charlton ward.

The Council contended that the ward would contain the communities to the south of Woolwich town centre. It also stated that the proposed ward would unite the community of the Woolwich Common estates, which are between the south of General Gordon Place, then along Wellington Street, along

L O C A L G O V E R N M E N T C O M M I S S I O N F O R E N G L A N D
area at the north end of Herbert Road. The Council further stated that the ward would encompass the Woolwich Barracks and military properties and grounds including the Queen Elizabeth Hospital.

Finally in this area, the Council proposed a Griffin ward which would adopt the name of one of the ward's principal roads. The ward would comprise most of the current Glyndon ward, together with parts of the existing Arscul, Barrow, Lakehead and Plumstead Common wards. The ward boundary would be with the proposed Woolwich Common and Woolwich Riverside wards to the west, and with the River Thames and the proposed Thamesmead Moorings ward to the north and north-east. The boundary would continue southwards along Griffin Road, east along Conway Road, east along Epper Road, east along Brewery Road, south along Lakehead Road and The Slade, thence west along Plumstead Common Road to its junction with the proposed Woolwich Common ward.

The Council stated that the ward would be predominantly residential, with local shopping centres in Brewery Road, Plumstead Common Road, and Whitchurch Road. The ward would encompass Plumstead Common as well as Plumstead station and bus garage. Although we had some concerns that the ward would include a distinctive 'Thamesmead' area of housing to the north of the A206 road, we accept that, to attain good electoral equality by 2004, this area needs to be incorporated within the proposed Griffin ward.

Under the Council's scheme the number of electors per councillor in the proposed wards of Griffin, Woolwich Common and Woolwich Riverside would initially vary from the borough average by 2 per cent, 7 per cent and 10 per cent respectively based on a 51-member council size. However, each of the three wards would equal the borough average by 2004. We consider that these proposals generally provide clear boundaries and provide for a substantially improved level of electoral equality; and, apart from a slight boundary modification to the proposed Griffin ward (see paragraph 88), we are putting them forward for consideration. We also consent, to accede to the Council's proposed ward names, but we would welcome further comments during Stage Three (see large map inserted at the back of this report).

Abbay Wood, Eyesham, Glyndon and Thamesmead Moorings wards

The two-member wards of Abbey Wood, Eyesham, Glyndon and Thamesmead Moorings presently suffer from varying degrees of electoral imbalance. Abbey Wood, Glyndon and Thamesmead Moorings wards are under-represented, with the number of electors per councillor varying from the borough average by 8 per cent, 5 per cent and 10 per cent respectively. Electoral equality is projected to deteriorate in Thamesmead Moorings due to large-scale housing development, resulting in the worst electoral variance in the borough at 70 per cent by 2004. Glyndon ward will continue to be under-represented, varying from the borough average by 10 per cent by 2004, although Abbey Wood ward would improve to just 1 per cent from the average. The Eyesham ward is presently over-represented, with the number of electors per councillor varying from the borough average by 13 per cent (19 per cent by 2004), based on a 62-member council size.

As described above, the majority of the existing Glyndon ward form part of the Griffin ward, with the remainder forming part of the Council's proposed Thamesmead Moorings ward. This new ward would comprise the wards of the existing Thamesmead Moorings ward and parts of Eyesham and Glyndon wards. The ward would be bounded by the River Thames to the north, the borough boundary with Bexley to the east, the Southern Outfall Sewers to the south, and by a line running north along Pettman Crescent and then northwards along Whitchurch Road and finally west to the River Thames.

The Council acknowledged that while the boundary through the Broadwater Estate was not ideal, it was made in order to provide for a good level of electoral equality, and "is probably the best that can be achieved" (see paragraph 92). However, the Council did provide an alternative boundary which would not divide the estate and would result in the boundary being redrawn in the south-west along Plumstead Road. If this alternative was adopted the projected electorate for the ward would be 11,080, resulting in an electoral variance of 16 per cent, and would also impact on the level of electoral equality in the proposed Griffin ward. However, while acknowledging that the Broadwater estate has to be divided to provide a good level of electoral equality, we believe that the proposed western boundary could be modified to continue along Whitchurch Road and incorporate Herringsgate School.

The Council proposed to create a new Abbey Wood ward comprising the current electorate of Abbey Wood and Eyesham wards. The ward would be bounded to the north by the Southern Outfall Sewers, to the east and south by the borough boundary with Bexley, and to the west by the proposed Plumstead ward. The Council stated that the ward would incorporate the well-established Eyesham and Abbey Wood communities. A boundary of the present Eyesham ward (containing no electors) would become part of the Thamesmead Moorings ward to provide an improved southern boundary.

Under the Council's scheme the number of electors per councillor in the proposed wards of Abbey Wood and Thamesmead Moorings would initially vary from the borough average by 7 per cent and 11 per cent respectively based on a 51-member council size. However, both wards would equal the borough average by 2004. We consider that these proposals generally provide clear boundaries and provide for a substantially improved level of electoral equality, and we therefore recommend them for consideration (albeit with a slight boundary modification between the proposed Griffin and Thamesmead Moorings wards). We are also content to accept the Council's proposed ward names, but would welcome further comments during Stage Three (see large map inserted at the back of this report).

Herbert, Lakehead, Plumstead Common, Shrewsbury, Slade and St Nicholas wards

The two-member wards of Herbert and Slade are presently under-represented, both varying from the borough average by 2 per cent (both becoming 5 per cent below by 2004). The single-member ward of Plumstead Common is presently under-represented, varying from the borough average by 13 per cent (6 per cent by 2004). The two-member wards of Lakehead and St Nicholas and the single-member ward of Shrewsbury are presently over-represented, varying from the borough average by 4 per cent, 1 per cent and 2 per cent respectively (10 per cent, 7 per cent and 8 per cent by 2004).

The Council proposed a new Plumstead ward, which would comprise the current St Nicholas ward and parts of the existing Glyndon, Lakehead and Slade wards. The ward would be bounded by the proposed Griffin and Thamesmead Moorings wards to the west and north, and to the east and south by a line running along Church Manorway, Blithedale Road, Woodhurst Road, Plumstead High Street/Bostall Hill, Old Park Road, and thence along a path through Bostall Woods and around the north edge of Plumstead Cemetery to the borough boundary with Bexley. The eastern boundary is a boundary of the proposed Plumstead ward, which then forms the boundary extending along Kirkham Street to The Slade and the proposed Griffin ward.

The Council contended that Plumstead High Street would be the "northern focus" for this ward, providing an important shopping centre for the residential communities on either side. To the south the residential area extends upwards to the open space of Winn's Common and beyond to the residential communities based around the Slade shopping parade and Wickham Lane shopping parade.

The Council also proposed a new Shooters Hill ward, which would comprise the majority of the current Shrewsbury ward and parts of the existing Herbert, Plumstead Common, Slade and Woolwich Common wards. The ward was bounded on the north and the north by the proposed Kidbrooke with Hornfair, Woolwich Common, Griffin and Plumstead wards. Its eastern boundary would be with the neighbouring borough of Bexley. The boundary would continue to the south by Wellin,Way, Rochester Way and a line along the northern edge of properties in Crookston Road and Castlewood Drive to the junction with Well Hall.

The Council contended that the present ward boundaries divide the area of Shooters Hill in a "quite unsatisfactory way", Shrewsbury Park, although physically dividing also unites the two fairly similar areas of housing to the east and west of it, and to the south of the large and important area of Metropolitan Open Land. Herbert Road provides a good divide where the north-eastern slope of the Hill flattens into Woolwich Common, with All Saints' Church (Shooters Hill) being at the junction of Ripon and Herbert Roads. Again to the north a similar divide is needed and the Gnesia, Admaston and Plumstead Common Roads provide a reasonable boundary in the absence of clear topographical features, and achieves a high degree of electoral
equality. There are local shopping parades in Plumstead Common Road, The Slade and Swingeate Lane. The Council further contended that it did not recommend that the southern boundary of the ward should be the old Roman Road, because this would "lead to very inconvenient polling arrangements for those living immediately to the south".

94. Under the Council’s scheme the number of electors per councillor in the proposed wards of Plumstead and Shooters Hill would initially vary from the borough average by 6 per cent and 7 per cent respectively based on a 51-member council. However, both wards would equal the borough average by 2004. We consider that these proposals generally provide clear boundaries and provide for a substantially improved level of electoral equality, and we put them forward for consultation. We are also content to accept the Council’s proposed ward names, but we would welcome further comments during Stage Three (see large map inserted at the back of this report).

Deansfield, Eltham Park and Wall Hall wards

95. The single-member ward of Deansfield and the two-member wards of Eltham Park and Wall Hall presently suffer from varying degrees of electoral imbalance. Deansfield and Wall Hall wards are under-represented, with the number of electors per councillor varying from the borough average by 7 per cent and 5 per cent respectively. Electoral equality is projected to deteriorate in Wall Hall ward, with the ward varying from the borough average by 18 per cent by 2004. However, Deansfield ward is expected to equal the borough average by 2004. Eltham Park ward is at present reasonably well represented, with the number of electors per councillor varying from the borough average by 1 per cent (7 per cent over by 2004).

96. The Council proposed a new Westmount ward which it contended would provide "for a satisfactory north Eltham ward". The ward would comprise the current Deansfield ward, the majority of Eltham Park ward and parts of the existing Sherard and Wall Hall wards. The ward would be bounded by the proposed Eltham West and Kingsbrook with Hornfair wards to the west, the proposed Shooters Hill ward to the north and the borough boundary with Becken to the east. The boundary would continue along the railway line, then south and east along the southern perimeter of Eltham Park South, to the east of even-numbered properties in Glenesk Road, then west along Beckley Road and Eltham High Street to the junction with Well Hall Road and the proposed Eltham West ward.

97. The Council contended that Westmount Road which runs north to south through the proposed ward "provides a good, well known local name. The ward would contain the communities of east and north Eltham, covering the area from the woods north of Eltham High Street and from Well Hall to Falconwood Field in the east. It would contain the northern side of Eltham town centre which is the major town centre in the south of the borough. The ward would also include a shopping parade in Well Hall Road and the shopping area in Westmount Road between its junction with Earlshall Road and the bridge across the railway. The proposed ward would also incorporate Eltham station and bus terminus, Eltham Police Station and Eltham Parks. The Council acknowledged that the A2 Rochester Relief Road crosses the ward, but contends that "it is not a divisive feature as it is sunk into a cutting and there are several well-used routes across it including a bridge joining Eltham Park North with Eltham Park South". The Council also stated that the inclusion of the properties to the west of Well Hall Road was made to provide for common representation of the shopping parades anc in view of the community links between Spencer Gardens and Well Hall Road.

98. Under the Council’s scheme the number of electors per councillor in the proposed Westmount ward would initially vary from the borough average by 7 per cent based on a 51-member council size. However, the ward would equal the borough average by 2004. As described above (paragraph 75), we propose a boundary modification between the Council’s proposed Eltham West (Neatby) and Westmount wards. We consider that these proposals generally provide clear boundaries and provide for a substantially improved level of electoral equality. We are also putting forward an alternative ward name, Eltham North, for consultation as we believe this name could be a better reflection of local community identities. We would welcome further comments during Stage Three (see large map inserted at the back of this report).

Avery Hill, Coldharbour, New Eltham, Palace and Tarn wards

99. The two-member ward of Coldharbour and the single-member ward of Tarn are both presently over-represented, varying from the borough average by 10 per cent and 1 per cent respectively (16 per cent and 7 per cent by 2004). The single-member ward of Avery Hill is presently equal to the borough average, but is expected to become over-represented (6 per cent by 2004). The two-member ward of New Eltham is presently under-represented, varying from the borough average by 7 per cent and 6 per cent to equal the borough average by 2004. The single-member ward of Palace is presently the most under-represented ward in the borough, varying from the borough average by 42 per cent. It is not expected to improve a great deal (82 per cent by 2004).

100. The Council proposed an Eltham South ward which would comprise the existing Avery Hill and Palace wards, with parts of the current Eltham Park, Middle Park, New Eltham and Tarn wards. The boundaries of the proposed Eltham South ward would be the proposed Blackheath South with Parks, Eltham West and Eltham North wards to the west and north, and the borough boundary with Becken to the east. The boundary would then continue along Footscray Road, Southwood Road, along a line to the rear of properties on the west side of Footscray Road and on the east side of properties in Park View Road, along the railway line that runs between Sidcup and Lee stations, to its junction with the proposed Blackheath South with Parks ward.

101. The ward would contain the southern part of Eltham High Street and coincides with the boundary between the existing Palace and Eltham Park wards, which has proven to be satisfactory in ensuring a good group of councillors interested in issues affecting the High Street. It is considered that the Eltham High Street shopping centre is too large and pervasive in its impact for it to be desirable to be wholly included in a single ward. The ward would include the communities in the immediate vicinity of the High Street, the Eltham Palace precincts, the Grove Woods area (known locally as Eltham Heights), the Avery Hill communities, the northern part of New Eltham and the communities of Footscray Road and Court Road. The area contains Eltham Palace and Royal Blackheath and Eltham Warren Golf Clubs, the Avery Hill Campus of the University of Greenwich, Avery Hill Park and New Eltham station. All of these open spaces form part of the Southeast London Green Chain network. Although many of the ward’s residential and leisure-related, in addition to Eltham High Street there are local shopping areas in Becken Road (Avery Hill) and in Footscray Road (New Eltham).

102. With regard to the proposed ward name the Council contended that the proposed ward contains residential areas where people would "walk in the vicinity of Eltham Heights", "live in New Eltham", and so on, therefore a ward name of Eltham or Eltham South would be a "good and unifying compromise".

103. The Council also proposed a Montebelle/South ward which would comprise the current Coldharbour ward, with parts of the existing New Eltham and Tarn wards. The ward would be bounded to the north by the eastern part of Blackheath South with Parks and Eltham South, and by the borough boundaries with Becken and Bromley to the east and south. The ward would be primarily formed by the residential areas south of the arc of open spaces forming the southern boundary of Eltham town centre to the borough boundary. It contains the well-established Coldharbour estate, together with that part of Morttingham in the borough, the Green Lane/Cheilhushe borders area, the Montebelle triangle and the southern part of New Eltham. Essentially it is the southern tip of the borough bounded by the railway line, a divisive feature except in the area of New Eltham station.

104. The area is predominantly residential, with local shopping parades in Sidcup Road, William Barefoot Drive and Court/Morttingham Road, and also contains Morttingham station and the new Coldharbour Leisure Centre. Although the area is crossed by the A20, which may be considered something of a barrier, it was argued that this factor is outweighed by the interests of the communities in this southernmost part of the borough, and that the railway line and open spaces beyond form a more appropriate boundary. Moreover, using the A20 as a boundary would make it impracticable to achieve a ward electorate reasonably close to the quota.

105. Under the Council’s scheme the number of electors per councillor in the proposed wards of Eltham South and Mousell/South would initially equal the borough average and vary by 7 per cent respectively, based on a 51-member council size. However, both wards would equal the borough average by 2004. We consider that these proposals would generally provide clear boundaries, but we believe the boundary between the wards could be further improved if it continued along the railway line to the junction with Footscray Road. This would result in New Eltham station and the grounds and library area north of the station forming part of the proposed Montebelle/South ward. This revised boundary would have no adverse effect on electoral equality.
While accepting the Council's proposed ward name of Eltham South, we do not, at this stage, believe that the proposed ward name of Montpelley/South should be adopted. Therefore, because the existing Coldharbour ward is retained in its entirety, we propose for consultation purposes to name the ward 'Coldharbour'. We would welcome further representations and evidence during Stage Three (see large map inserted at the back of this report).

Conclusions

Having considered all the evidence and representations received during the initial stage of the review, we propose that:

1. there should be a reduction in council size from 62 to 51 members;
2. there should be 17 wards, 19 fewer than at present, which would involve changes to the boundaries of all of the existing wards.

As already indicated, we have based our draft recommendations on the Council's proposed warding pattern under its 51-member scheme, but propose the following boundary modifications:

1. we propose to modify the proposed western boundary between Griffin and Thamesmead Moorings wards to continue along Whinchat Road and incorporate Hornsmead School within the latter;
2. we propose to incorporate the grounds of Blackheath Bluecoats School into the proposed Kidbrooke with Hornfair ward along with those few properties which face Old Dover Road;
3. we propose that the boundaries of East Dulwich and Lass Road should form part of the proposed Eltham West ward, with the new boundary running along the back of the properties in those roads and following Sheard Road until it meets the proposed Eltham North ward; and
4. we propose to continue the boundary between Coldharbour and Eltham South wards along the railway line to the junction with Footscray Road.

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 Greenwich 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 two. By 2004 no wards are forecast to vary by more than 1 per cent from the average. Our draft recommendations are set out in more detail in Figures 1 and 2, and illustrated on Map 2 and the large map inserted at the back of this report.

Draft Recommendation

Greenwich Borough Council should comprise 51 councillors serving 17 wards, as detailed and named in Figures 1 and 2, and illustrated on Map 2 and the large map inserted at the back of this report.

We have not finalised our conclusions on the electoral arrangements for Greenwich 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

The Commission is putting forward draft recommendations on the future electoral arrangements for Greenwich. Now it is up to the people of the area. We will take fully into account all representations received by 11 October 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.

Views may be expressed by writing directly to us:

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

Fax: 0171 404 6142
E-mail: reviews@gce.gov.uk

In the light of representations received, we will review our draft recommendations to consider whether they should be altered. As indicated earlier, it is therefore important that all interested parties let us have their views and evidence, whether or not they agree with our draft recommendations. We will make 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

Proposed Electoral Arrangements

The following tables illustrate the electoral variances that would be attained by 2004 under the schemes submitted by the Borough Council for 15 three-member wards, favoured by the Labour Group and for 19 three-member wards, favoured by the Liberal Democrat Group. Full details of each submission, including accompanying mapping, may be inspected at the offices of the Borough Council and the Commission, by appointment.

Greenwich Borough Council
Labour Group’s Proposal

Figure A1: Number of Councillors and Electors by Ward

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<th>Ward name</th>
<th>Number of councillors</th>
<th>Electorate (2004)</th>
<th>Number of electors per councillor</th>
<th>Variance from average %</th>
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continued overleaf
### Greenwich Borough Council Liberal Democrat Group’s Proposal

#### Figure A2: Number of Councillors and Electors by Ward

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Source: Electorate figures are based on Greenwich Borough Council's submission.

Note: No ward names were supplied under this proposal.
APPENDIX B

The Statutory Provisions

Local Government Act 1992:
The Commission's Role

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 Tees 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 section 27 of the Local Government Act 1972, 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, those 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:

(b) the desirability of fixing ward boundaries which are and will remain easily identifiable; and
(c) 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 Tees and Wear.