

LOCAL
GOVERNMENT
COMMISSION
FOR ENGLAND

FINAL
RECOMMENDATIONS
ON THE FUTURE
ELECTORAL
ARRANGEMENTS FOR
BROMLEY

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

November 1999

LOCAL GOVERNMENT COMMISSION FOR ENGLAND

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

Members of the Commission are:

Professor Malcolm Grant (Chairman)

Professor Michael Clarke (Deputy Chairman)

Peter Brokenshire

Kru Desai

Pamela Gordon

Robin Gray

Robert Hughes CBE

Barbara Stephens (Chief Executive)

© Crown Copyright 1999

Applications for reproduction should be made to: Her Majesty's Stationery Office Copyright Unit.

The mapping in this report is reproduced from OS mapping by The Local Government Commission for England with the permission of the Controller of Her Majesty's Stationery Office, © Crown Copyright. Unauthorised reproduction infringes Crown Copyright and may lead to prosecution or civil proceedings. Licence Number: GD 03114G.

This report is printed on recycled paper. 

CONTENTS

	page
LETTER TO THE SECRETARY OF STATE	<i>v</i>
SUMMARY	<i>vii</i>
1 INTRODUCTION	<i>1</i>
2 CURRENT ELECTORAL ARRANGEMENTS	<i>5</i>
3 DRAFT RECOMMENDATIONS	<i>9</i>
4 RESPONSES TO CONSULTATION	<i>11</i>
5 ANALYSIS AND FINAL RECOMMENDATIONS	<i>15</i>
6 NEXT STEPS	<i>45</i>
APPENDIX	
A Draft Recommendations for Bromley (June 1999)	<i>47</i>

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



Local Government Commission for England

30 November 1999

Dear Secretary of State

On 5 January 1999 the Commission began a periodic electoral review of Bromley under the Local Government Act 1992. We published our draft recommendations in June 1999 and undertook an 11-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 185) in the light of further evidence. This report sets out our final recommendations for changes to electoral arrangements in Bromley.

We recommend that the London Borough of Bromley should be served by 60 councillors representing 22 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 now 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 Bromley on 5 January 1999. We published our draft recommendations for changes to electoral arrangements on 29 June 1999, after which we undertook an 11-week period of consultation.

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

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

- **in four of the 26 wards the number of electors represented by each councillor varies by more than 10 per cent from the average for the borough;**
- **by 2004 electoral equality is expected to deteriorate, with the number of electors per councillor forecast to vary by more than 10 per cent from the average in three wards, and by more than 20 per cent in one ward, Biggin Hill.**

Our main final recommendations for future electoral arrangements (Figures 1 and 2 and paragraphs 185-186) are that:

- **Bromley Borough Council should be served by 60 councillors, as at present;**
- **there should be 22 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 none of the 22 wards would the number of electors per councillor vary by more than 10 per cent from the borough average by 2004.**

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 11 January 2000:

**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 Bickley	3	Bickley ward (part); Plaistow & Sundridge ward (part)
2 Biggin Hill	2	Biggin Hill ward (part)
3 Bromley Common & Keston	3	Bickley ward (part); Bromley Common & Keston ward (part); Farnborough ward (part)
4 Bromley Town	3	Bickley ward (part); Bromley Common & Keston ward (part); Hayes ward (part); Martin's Hill & Town ward (part); Plaistow & Sundridge ward (part)
5 Chelsfield & Pratt's Bottom	3	Chelsfield & Goddington ward (part); Crofton (part); Darwin ward (part)
6 Chislehurst	3	Chislehurst ward (part)
7 Clock House	3	Anerley ward (part); Clock House ward (part); Lawrie Park & Kent House ward (part); Penge ward (part)
8 Copers Cope	3	Copers Cope ward; Kelsey Park ward (part); Shortlands ward (part)
9 Cray Valley East	3	Orpington Central ward (part); St Mary Cray ward (part); St Paul's Cray ward (part)
10 Cray Valley West	3	St Mary Cray ward (part); St Paul's Cray ward (part)
11 Crystal Palace	2	Anerley ward (part); Lawrie Park & Kent House ward (part); Penge ward (part)
12 Darwin	1	Biggin Hill ward (part); Chelsfield & Goddington ward (part); Darwin ward (part); Farnborough ward (part)
13 Farnborough & Crofton	3	Crofton ward (part); Farnborough ward (part)
14 Hayes & Coney Hall	3	Bromley Common & Keston ward (part); Hayes ward (part); West Wickham South ward (part)
15 Kelsey & Eden Park	3	Clock House ward (part); Eden Park ward; Kelsey Park ward (part); Shortlands ward (part); West Wickham North (part)
16 Mottingham & Chislehurst North	2	Chislehurst ward (part); Mottingham ward
17 Orpington	3	Chelsfield & Goddington ward (part); Orpington Central ward (part); Petts Wood & Knoll ward (part)

*Figure 1 (continued):
The Commission's Final Recommendations: Summary*

Ward name	Number of councillors	Constituent areas (existing wards)
18 Penge & Cator	3	Lawrie Park & Kent House ward (part); Penge ward (part)
19 Petts Wood & Knoll	3	Petts Wood & Knoll ward (part)
20 Plaistow & Sundridge	3	Martin's Hill & Town ward (part); Plaistow & Sundridge ward (part)
21 Shortlands	2	Hayes ward (part); Shortlands ward (part)
22 West Wickham	3	Shortlands ward (part); West Wickham North ward (part); West Wickham South 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 Bromley

Ward name	Number of councillors	Electorate (1999)	Number of electors per councillor	Variance from average %	Electorate (2004)	Number of electors per councillor	Variance from average %
1 Bickley	3	11,015	3,672	-2	10,963	3,654	-3
2 Biggin Hill	2	7,626	3,813	2	8,133	4,067	8
3 Bromley Common & Keston	3	11,037	3,679	-1	11,010	3,670	-3
4 Bromley Town	3	11,131	3,710	-1	11,017	3,672	-3
5 Chelsfield & Pratt's Bottom	3	10,975	3,658	-2	11,613	3,871	3
6 Chislehurst	3	11,632	3,877	4	11,475	3,825	1
7 Clock House	3	11,165	3,722	0	11,390	3,797	1
8 Copers Cope	3	11,138	3,713	-1	10,961	3,654	-3
9 Cray Valley East	3	11,048	3,683	-1	11,225	3,742	-1
10 Cray Valley West	3	11,717	3,906	5	11,814	3,938	4
11 Crystal Palace	2	7,077	3,539	-5	7,143	3,572	-5
12 Darwin	1	3,632	3,632	-3	3,760	3,760	0
13 Farnborough & Crofton	3	11,570	3,857	3	11,714	3,905	4
14 Hayes & Coney Hall	3	11,906	3,969	6	11,930	3,977	5
15 Kelsey & Eden Park	3	10,713	3,571	-4	11,127	3,709	-2
16 Mottingham & Chislehurst North	2	7,233	3,617	-3	7,156	3,578	-5
17 Orpington	3	11,598	3,866	4	11,850	3,950	5
18 Penge & Cator	3	11,164	3,721	0	11,224	3,741	-1
19 Petts Wood & Knoll	3	10,914	3,638	-3	11,043	3,681	-2
20 Plaistow & Sundridge	3	11,122	3,707	-1	11,034	3,678	-2

Figure 2 (continued):
The Commission's Final Recommendations for Bromley

Ward name	Number of councillors	Electorate (1999)	Number of electors per councillor	Variance from average %	Electorate (2004)	Number of electors per councillor	Variance from average %
21 Shortlands	2	7,426	3,713	-1	7,425	3,713	-2
22 West Wickham	3	11,081	3,694	-1	11,283	3,761	0
Totals	60	223,920	—	—	226,290	—	—
Averages	—	—	3,732	—	—	3,772	—

Source: Electorate figures are based on information provided by Bromley 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 Bromley.

2 In broad terms, the objective of this periodic electoral review (PER) of Bromley 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. 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 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 achieving 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, Bromley was in the fourth 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 Bromley

14 This is our first review of the electoral arrangements for Bromley. The last such review was undertaken by our predecessor, the Local Government Boundary Commission (LGBC), which reported to the Secretary of State in October 1977 (Report No. 258).

15 This review was in four stages. Stage One began on 5 January 1999, when we wrote to Bromley 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 29 March 1999.

16 At Stage Two we considered all the representations received during Stage One and prepared our draft recommendations. We also held a public meeting in Bromley in order to seek further evidence from interested parties regarding the appropriate number of councillors to serve on Bromley Borough Council. An independent assessor, Mr Roger Grant, was appointed to chair the meeting, which was held in Bromley Civic Centre, Stockwell Close, Bromley on 29 April 1999. Mr Grant reported his findings to us and we took them into account during our deliberations over the Bromley review.

17 Stage Three began on 29 June 1999 with the publication of our report, *Draft Recommendations on the Future Electoral Arrangements for Bromley*, and ended on 13 September 1999. Comments were sought on our preliminary conclusions.

18 At the beginning of Stage Three, it was brought to our attention by the Conservative Group that there were some anomalies regarding the electorate

figures in several of our proposed wards (Bickley, Biggin Hill, Bromley Common & Keston, Bromley Town, Darwin, Farnborough & Crofton, Petts Wood, Plaistow & Sundridge and Shortlands wards). While most of these anomalies were minimal and were unlikely to be material to our considerations, one significant change had been made relating to Plaistow & Sundridge and Bickley wards where, on the basis of our proposed boundaries, the number of electors for each ward would vary by some 1,200 electors from those published. After consideration, we have decided that it would assist consultation if local people could be informed of these anomalies at the earliest opportunity and on 22 July a letter to that effect was sent to all Stage One respondents and all those who had attended the public meeting referred to above. At that time the Borough Council was requested to take the appropriate steps to bring this matter to the attention of those considering making comments on our proposals. We also stated that we would give further consideration to the most appropriate warding arrangements for these areas, taking into account any representations received by the end of Stage Three.

¹⁹ 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

²⁰ Bromley is the largest London borough by geographical size, at some 15,000 hectares, and is situated in south-east London. The borough is bounded by the boroughs of Croydon, Lambeth, Southwark, Lewisham, Greenwich and Bexley, and by Sevenoaks District in Kent and Tandridge District in Surrey. Bromley is served by several railway connections to central London and the A20, on the northern fringe, and the A21 trunk road link the borough with central London.

²¹ It is an area of significant diversity, with densely populated urban areas in the north and less populated areas in the south which are predominantly green belt countryside. The green belt has prevented the spread of development in the east and south of the borough and has helped to preserve the character of several villages and hamlets, such as Downe, Cudham and Chelsfield, and the larger self-contained community of Biggin Hill. The borough's main settlements are Beckenham, Bromley and Orpington but it also includes smaller settlements such as Penge and parts of Mottingham and Crystal Palace.

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

²³ The electorate of the borough (February 1999) is 223,920. The Council currently has 60 councillors who are elected from 26 wards (Map 1 and Figure 3). Nine wards are each represented by three councillors, 16 wards elect two councillors each, while one ward (Darwin) is represented by one councillor. As in all London boroughs, the whole council is elected together every four years. Since the last electoral review, there has been a small increase in electorate in the borough, with around 2 per cent more electors than two decades ago.

²⁴ At present, each councillor represents an average of 3,732 electors, which the Borough Council forecasts will increase to 3,772 by the year 2004 if the present number of councillors is maintained. However, due to demographic and other changes over the past two decades, the number of electors per councillor in four of the 26 wards varies by more than 10 per cent from the borough average. The worst imbalances are in Mottingham and Copers Cope wards where each of the two councillors represents on average 17 and 16 per cent fewer electors than the borough average respectively.

Map 1:
Existing Wards in Bromley

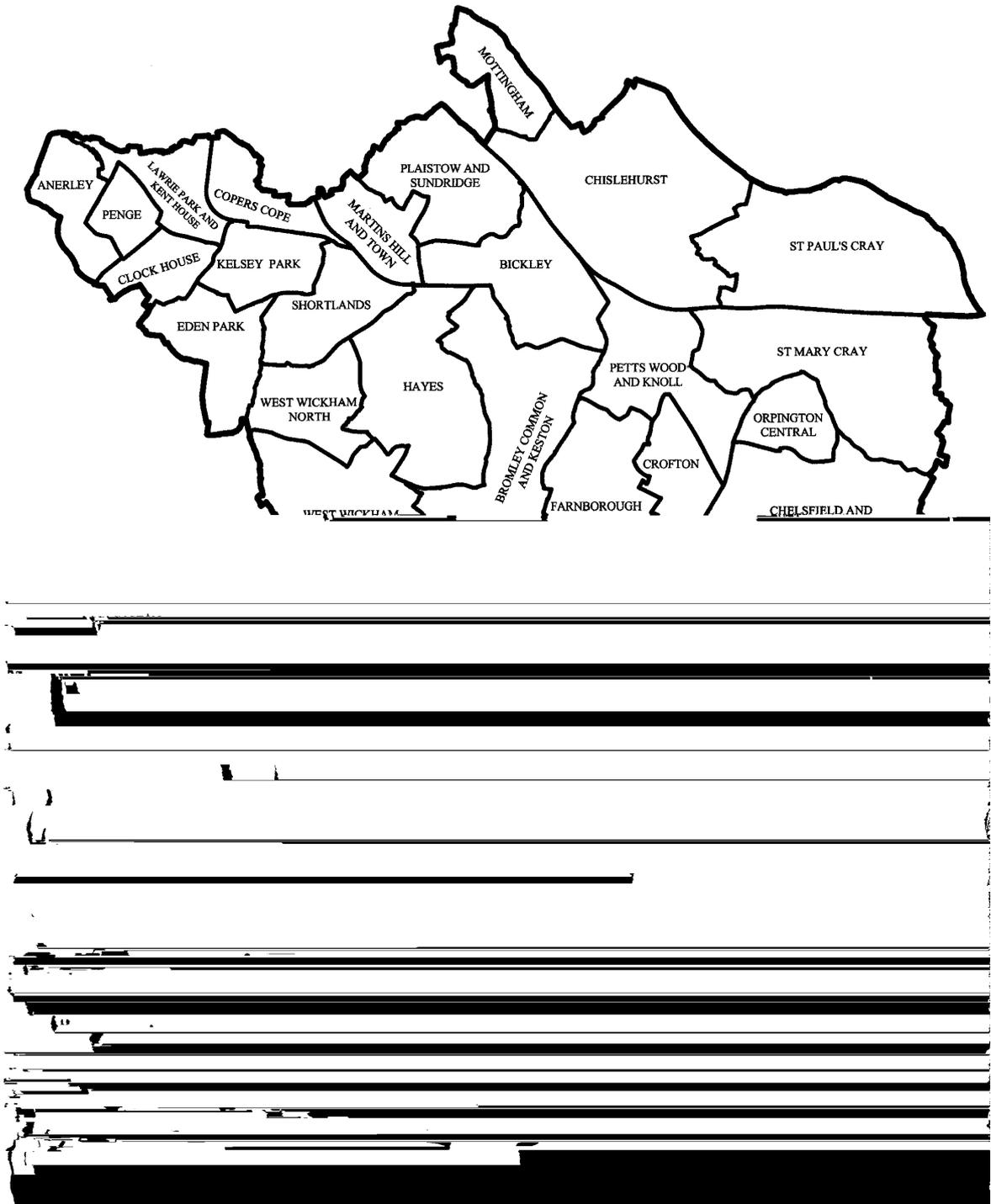


Figure 3:
Existing Electoral Arrangements

Ward name	Number of councillors	Electorate (1999)	Number of electors per councillor	Variance from average %	Electorate (2004)	Number of electors per councillor	Variance from average %
1 Anerley	2	7,501	3,751	0	7,581	3,791	1
2 Bickley	3	10,588	3,529	-5	10,543	3,514	-7
3 Biggin Hill	2	8,544	4,272	14	9,112	4,556	21
4 Bromley Common & Keston	3	12,174	4,058	9	12,134	4,045	7
5 Chelsfield & Goddington	3	11,632	3,877	4	12,387	4,129	9
6 Chislehurst	3	12,660	4,220	13	12,489	4,163	10
7 Clock House	2	8,022	4,011	7	8,229	4,115	9
8 Copers Cope	2	6,291	3,146	-16	6,238	3,119	-17
9 Crofton	2	7,996	3,998	7	7,977	3,989	6
10 Darwin	1	3,358	3,358	-10	3,441	3,441	-9
11 Eden Park	2	7,252	3,626	-3	7,372	3,686	-2
12 Farnborough	2	7,339	3,670	-2	7,501	3,751	1
13 Hayes	3	11,142	3,714	0	11,132	3,711	-2
14 Kelsey Park	2	7,304	3,652	-2	7,074	3,537	-6
15 Lawrie Park & Kent House	2	7,099	3,550	-5	7,086	3,543	-6
16 Martin's Hill & Town	2	7,517	3,759	1	7,382	3,691	-2
17 Mottingham	2	6,205	3,103	-17	6,142	3,071	-19
18 Orpington Central	2	6,743	3,372	-10	6,881	3,441	-9
19 Penge	2	6,784	3,392	-9	6,862	3,431	-9
20 Petts Wood & Knoll	3	11,848	3,949	6	11,988	3,996	6
21 Plaistow & Sundridge	3	11,424	3,808	2	11,358	3,786	0

continued overleaf

Figure 3 (continued):
Existing Electoral Arrangements

Ward name	Number of councillors	Electorate (1999)	Number of electors per councillor	Variance from average %	Electorate (2004)	Number of electors per councillor	Variance from average %
22 St Mary Cray	3	10,407	3,469	-7	10,627	3,542	-6
23 St Paul's Cray	3	11,349	3,783	1	11,382	3,794	1
24 Shortlands	2	7,719	3,860	3	8,119	3,929	8
25 West Wickham North	2	7,046	3,523	-6	7,218	3,609	-4
26 West Wickham South	2	7,976	3,988	7	8,035	4,018	7
Totals	60	223,920	—	—	226,290	—	—
Averages	—	—	3,732	—	—	3,772	—

Source: Electorate figures are based on Bromley Borough Council's 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, electors in Mottingham ward are relatively over-represented by 17 per cent, while electors in Biggin Hill ward are relatively under-represented by 14 per cent. Figures have been rounded to the nearest whole number.

3. DRAFT RECOMMENDATIONS

²⁵ During Stage One we received 44 representations, of which three – from the Borough Council, the Conservative Group on the Council and a local resident, Mr Fawthrop – put forward borough-wide schemes. 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 Bromley*.

²⁶ In formulating our draft recommendations we noted that there was a lack of consensus regarding the appropriate number of councillors to serve on Bromley Council, the number and boundaries of wards and the number of councillors per ward. As a result, a public meeting was held on 29 April 1999 at Bromley Civic Centre to collect evidence specifically regarding the issue of council size. Our draft recommendations were based on a combination of our own proposals and of all the schemes submitted. Our proposals achieved improved electoral equality, provided good boundaries while having regard to the statutory criteria and proposed a mixed pattern of single-, two- and three-member wards. We proposed that:

- (a) Bromley Borough Council should be served by 60 councillors;
- (b) there should be 22 wards, involving changes to the boundaries of all existing wards.

Draft Recommendation

Bromley Borough Council should comprise 60 councillors serving 22 wards.

²⁷ Our proposals would have resulted in significant improvements in electoral equality, with the number of electors per councillor in all 22 wards varying by no more than 10 per cent from the borough average. This improved level of electoral equality was expected to continue in 2004.

4. RESPONSES TO CONSULTATION

28 During the consultation on our draft recommendations report, 217 representations were received. A list of respondents is available on request from the Commission. All representations may be inspected at the offices of Bromley Borough Council and the Commission.

Bromley Borough Council

29 At Stage Three, the Borough Council submitted a new 'minimal change' option, which differed significantly from its original borough-wide scheme. Its initial scheme had been based on 23 wards and 69 members with a pattern consisting entirely of three-member wards in order to facilitate annual elections. It stated that at its meeting on 28 July, the Council's Policy & Resources Committee had accepted that the number of councillors for the borough should remain unchanged, and its revised scheme was therefore based on 60 councillors.

30 The Council argued that as the Commission's draft recommendations did not increase the number of councillors or develop three-member wards, there was a case for minimum change to existing arrangements. It proposed that the current ward structure of 1 single-member ward, 16 two-member wards and 9 three-member wards should be maintained, with only minimal changes to achieve a better level of electoral equality. It considered that the 'minimal change' scheme would be a significant improvement on the draft recommendations, "whereby better electoral equality is achieved without unnecessary changes". The Borough Council's proposals had support from all political parties on the Council and no ward would have an electoral variance of more than 5 per cent from the average by 2004, with the exception of Biggin Hill and Darwin wards. Orpington Constituency Labour Party expressed support for the Borough Council's Stage Three proposals.

Bromley Borough Council Conservative Group

31 The Conservative Group (the Conservatives) expressed support for the Borough Council's revised scheme. However, in the event that we

considered the Council's scheme "to be too radical and unacceptable" they also submitted extensive comments on our draft recommendations. Under the Conservatives' alternative scheme, no changes would be made to the number of wards or councillors but there would be a number of changes to ward boundaries. In the Beckenham and Orpington areas, they proposed significant changes to wards which they argued would more appropriately reflect the local communities. They also put forward changes to the boundaries of Biggin Hill, Darwin, West Wickham and Hayes wards, which they argued would better reflect the local communities in those areas. The Conservative Group's proposed changes to our draft recommendations would provide electoral variances of no more than 5 per cent for all wards in the borough by 2004. We also received submissions from 11 councillors who expressed their support for the Borough Council's scheme, but stated that if these were deemed too radical by the Commission, they would support the Conservative Group's comments on our draft recommendations.

Mr Fawthrop

32 At Stage Three, Mr Fawthrop reiterated his view from Stage One regarding the suitability of single-member wards for Bromley. He argued that electoral balance was one of the main considerations of the review but that we had failed to adopt the most electorally balanced proposal. He further argued that we had failed to demonstrate why our proposal to combine communities in wards would better reflect communities than his single-member ward proposal. Commenting specifically on the draft recommendations, he welcomed the retention of a council size of 60 and a single member ward for Darwin.

Members of Parliament

33 One submission was received from a Member of Parliament at Stage Three. The Rt Hon Eric Forth, MP for Bromley and Chislehurst, expressed support for our draft recommendation for 60 councillors to serve on Bromley Council. However, he also noted the dissatisfaction of a large number of residents of Chislehurst ward at being

transferred to Mottingham, and requested that we should not make such a change.

Other Representations

34 A further 201 representations were received in response to our draft recommendations. Of these, 101 were concerned solely with the proposals for Mottingham and Chislehurst, and 49 were solely concerned with the Biggin Hill area. Two local residents submitted borough-wide comments on our draft recommendations. Another two respondents expressed support for three-member wards throughout the borough. Two respondents expressed support for Mr Fawthrop's proposal for single-member wards in Bromley and two local residents favoured the Borough Council's minimal change proposals for their area. Three residents supported the draft proposals to retain the existing council size of 60 members.

35 Our proposal to change the boundary between Mottingham and Chislehurst wards was opposed by The Chislehurst Society, Mottingham Community Forum and 99 local residents, including three petitions with a total of 600 signatures. They argued that the communities of Chislehurst and Mottingham are distinct and would be better represented by separate councillors.

36 Councillor Curry expressed support for the Council's new proposals in the Cray Valley area but proposed a minor modification to unite St Mary Cray High Street and Star Lane in St Mary Cray ward. Councillor Hawthorne and one local resident opposed the reorientation of the Cray Valley wards. Another respondent expressed support for our proposed Cray Valley East and Cray Valley West wards, stating that the ward boundary along Sevenoaks Way and Cray Avenue reflects the natural boundary between communities.

37 Councillor Rabbatts and six local residents opposed our draft recommendations for Crofton and Farnborough wards. Councillor Ross and three residents objected to the division of Crofton ward and the use of Crofton Road as a ward boundary, and expressed a preference for retaining the existing two-member Crofton ward. Grassmeade Residents' Association opposed our draft recommendation to transfer their area from Orpington Central ward to Cray Valley East ward. One local resident expressed a preference, on community grounds, for retaining the existing Petts Wood & Knoll ward.

38 In Biggin Hill, the proposed transfer of the Aperfield area to Darwin ward was opposed by Biggin Hill & District Residents' Association, Biggin Hill Community Care, Councillor Shekyls, Councillor Gostt and 43 local residents, the majority of whom submitted proforma letters. They expressed support for the Borough Council's Stage Three proposal transferring the former RAF married quarters near Biggin Hill airfield, as well as a self-contained area to the west of Main Road to Darwin ward. Biggin Hill Airport Ltd requested that the airport and its environs remain part of Biggin Hill ward. Pratt's Bottom Residents' Association opposed our draft recommendation to create a new Chelsfield & Pratt's Bottom ward and favoured retaining the village within Darwin ward. Conversely, Chelsfield Village Society supported the proposed Chelsfield & Pratt's Bottom ward, on the basis that it would unite two villages with similar interests. Leaves Green & Keston Vale, Cudham and Downe residents' associations and three local residents expressed general support for our proposed Darwin ward. Old Hill & Cudham Lane North Residents' Association and two local residents argued that their community of 180 residents should form part of Darwin ward rather than Chelsfield & Pratt's Bottom ward. Beechwood Residents' Association favoured their estate being linked for warding purposes with either Farnborough or the rural area to the south, rather than being combined with Chelsfield to the east.

39 West Wickham Residents' Association proposed transferring the Coney Hall area of West Wickham South ward to Hayes ward, in order to unite the West Wickham community, which strides the Elmers End to Hayes railway line, within one ward. Councillor Manning and two local residents opposed transferring the north-east part of West Wickham North ward to Hayes ward and favoured retaining a two-member West Wickham ward. Hayes Village Association proposed the inclusion of the Westlands Drive area in a revised Hayes ward, and the transfer of the Mason's Hill area, in the north of the current Hayes ward, to one of the neighbouring wards. Councillor Michael expressed reservations over the southern boundary of the proposed Bromley Town ward, and the transfer of part of Farnborough ward to a revised Bromley Common & Keston ward, proposing instead that the Keston area be combined with Hayes.

40 Copers Cope Area Residents' Association generally supported the draft recommendations for Copers Cope ward, but suggested a minor

boundary amendment to include all of the High Street within Copers Cope ward. They also commented that they had no objection to the Borough Council's revised proposals. Beckenham Constituency Labour Party said that it found no adequate justification for two-member wards in Crystal Palace and Shortlands wards, and argued for a further period of consultation which would enable consideration of a council size increase to 62 or 65. It also submitted a number of ward boundary changes. Beckenham Constituency Conservative Association supported the Conservatives' proposed amendments to our draft recommendations, but wished to make no comments on the Council's Stage Three proposals. A local resident opposed our proposed Penge & Cator ward, on historical and community grounds, and another respondent expressed a preference for the Council's Stage Three proposals for Beckenham. The Gardens Residents' Association and a local resident both expressed a preference for their area to remain in Kelsey Park ward. Two respondents supported our draft recommendations for a two-member Shortlands ward. Councillor Green proposed that the Langley Court development should remain within Shortlands ward and proposed several boundary changes in the area. Beckenham South Branch of Beckenham Liberal Democrats favoured retaining a two-member Eden Park ward and combining Kelsey Park with Shortlands ward.

5. ANALYSIS AND FINAL RECOMMENDATIONS

41 As described earlier, our prime objective in considering the most appropriate electoral arrangements for Bromley 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 per councillor being “as nearly as may be, the same in every ward of the district or borough”.

42 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.

43 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.

44 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

45 At Stage One the Borough Council submitted electorate forecasts for the year 2004, projecting an increase in the electorate of around 1 per cent from 223,920 to 226,920 over the five-year period from 1999 to 2004. It expected most of the growth to be in six new housing developments: at Cosmos House (Bromley Common & Keston ward), Farnborough Hospital (Farnborough ward), Orpington Hospital (Chelsfield & Goddington ward), the redevelopment of Lewisham College (Copers Cope ward) and the redevelopment of the Glaxo Wellcome site at Langley Park (Shortlands ward). The Council estimated rates and locations of housing development with regard to the unitary development plan for the borough, and the expected rate of building over the five-year period and assumed occupancy rates. Advice from the Borough Council on the likely effect on electorates of changes to ward boundaries was obtained.

46 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

47 We indicated in our *Guidance* that we would normally expect the number of councillors serving on a London borough to be in the range of 40 to 80. The London Borough of Bromley is currently served by 60 councillors.

48 At Stage One the Borough Council proposed an

increase in council size from 60 to 69 members, whereas the Conservative Group and Mr Fawthrop proposed retaining the existing council size of 60 in their borough-wide schemes. In support of its proposals, the Borough Council noted the Bromley is the largest borough in London by area and has one of the highest populations, and argued that it “has been under-represented when compared with other London boroughs”. Taking this factor into account, together with the preference for three-member wards, and that wards should reflect communities, the Council prepared a scheme for 69 councillors, representing 23 three-member wards.

49 In its submission, the Conservative Group argued that the Council had been run efficiently for many years with 60 councillors and that it had developed committee structures and business procedures appropriate for the current council size of 60. In addition, it noted that the borough’s electorate had remained relatively unchanged over the last 20 years. The Conservative Group stated that in formulating its proposals it had considered various council sizes and concluded that while a smaller council size “might make for cheaper and more efficient local government ... it might be seen to be less democratic”, and that a larger council size would be unwieldy and costly, and would have no counterbalancing advantages. On this basis, it put forward a scheme for 60 councillors representing 20 three-member wards.

50 Mr Fawthrop considered that there was no compelling argument for any increase in council size and prepared a scheme for 60 councillors, representing 60 single-member wards. Old Hill & Cudham Lane North Residents’ Association and Mr John Horam MP also opposed an increase in council size.

51 As with all our reviews, we started from the general assumption that the existing council size already secures effective and convenient local government, but were willing to look carefully at arguments why this might not be so. At the end of Stage One, we considered that we required further information and evidence from the parties concerned before reaching a conclusion on the most appropriate council size for Bromley. We therefore appointed an independent assessor, Mr Roger Grant, to conduct the public meeting which was held on 29 April 1999, and to report his findings to the Commission. He concluded that there was little objective evidence to support the proposed increase in council size for Bromley and that our draft recommendations should be based on a council size of 60. We considered the evidence presented to us at Stage One and Mr

Grant’s report, and concurred with this view.

52 We noted that the electorate of Bromley has remained relatively unchanged since the time of the last review in 1977. We had received no evidence to suggest that there was a general concern amongst members of the public or the Council’s auditor that the Council was failing to provide effective and convenient local government or to meet the needs of local people. While we accepted that the role of members and pressure on their time is always an issue in local government, no evidence had been presented to persuade us that the pressure upon councillors in Bromley is particularly acute or that their workload is more significant than that of councillors in other London boroughs. We therefore were not persuaded that the proposed increase in council size would lead to more convenient and effective local government or that it would better reflect the identities and interests of local communities. We concluded that the statutory criteria and the achievement of electoral equality would best be met by a council of 60 members.

53 At Stage Three we received relatively few comments regarding the issue of council size. The Conservative Group, the Rt Hon Eric Forth MP, Mr Fawthrop and two residents expressed support for our draft recommendation to retain the existing council size of 60. The Borough Council stated that it accepted that the number of councillors should remain at 60, arguing that its earlier submission was premised on the formation of 23 three-member wards to facilitate annual elections. Beckenham Constituency Labour Party requested that the Commission reconsider the issue of council size, arguing for an increase in the number of councillors to either 62 or 65, which it considered would “enable a better fit to the local communities of which the borough is comprised”. One local resident supported an increase in council size to 69, arguing it would decrease the councillor-electorate ratio for the borough. We have given further consideration to the issue of council size in view of submissions made to us, and remain content that the statutory criteria and the achievement of electoral equality would best be met by a council of 60 members.

Electoral Arrangements

54 As set out in our draft recommendations report, we carefully considered the representations received at Stage One, including three borough-wide schemes – from the Borough Council, the

Conservative Group and Mr Fawthrop, a local resident – and the other representations which addressed individual parts of the borough. From these representations, some considerations emerged which helped to inform us when preparing our draft recommendations.

55 We noted that the current electoral arrangements for the borough provided a mixed pattern of wards: 1 single member ward (Darwin), 19 two-member wards and 9 three-member wards. The Borough Council and the Conservative Group submitted proposals for a pattern of three-member wards throughout the borough, intended to facilitate annual elections as proposed in the Government's White Paper, *Modern Local Government – In Touch with the People*. Mr Fawthrop proposed a structure consisting entirely of single-member wards, which he argued would be compatible with annual elections but would ensure that identifiable communities are separately represented.

56 We recognised that Bromley is not a typical London borough. It is the largest borough by area and also one of the least densely populated boroughs in outer London. While urban development spreads across the north of the borough from Penge in the west to Chislehurst in the east, the constituent communities have retained their distinctive characters. In the south of the borough, settlement patterns are more dispersed and there remain significant areas of open space and green belt which provide clear boundaries between communities.

57 We also recognised that in most London boroughs to date we have put forward a pattern consisting entirely of three-member wards. Nevertheless, many of these boroughs already had a pattern of predominantly three-member ward and were more densely populated, predominantly urban and that community boundaries tended to be less marked. We noted that this is not the case in Bromley.

58 We considered that, in order to reflect the nature of Bromley Borough and its communities, we should not put forward a structure consisting entirely of three-member wards in our draft recommendations. We considered that, particularly on the fringes of the borough in areas such as Mottingham and Biggin Hill, such an approach may not provide the most appropriate warding structure. However, we were not persuaded that a

structure consisting entirely of single-member wards would better reflect the statutory criteria. We considered that such an approach would be less flexible in meeting community identities and interests by unnecessarily dividing communities.

59 Finally, we noted the arguments put to us about community identities in the borough and tried to reflect such considerations in our draft recommendations where it would be consistent with our objective of achieving electoral equality. However, we noted that the absence of consensus locally on the precise boundaries of such communities.

60 Given our preliminary conclusion in relation to the most appropriate council size and number of councillors per ward for Bromley, we were unable to adopt in their entirety any of the borough-wide schemes submitted. In our draft recommendations we devised a scheme for 22 wards (1 single-member, 4 two-member and 17 three-member wards), based on a combination of our own proposals and those submitted at Stage One. We considered that these draft recommendations would build on existing arrangements, while also reflecting the views of a number of respondents at Stage One.

61 In response to our draft recommendations report, we received a total of 217 representations, including a new borough-wide scheme from the Borough Council and extensive comments from the Conservative Group and two local residents. In addition, we received submissions from a large number of residents' associations, residents and other interested parties which commented on the draft recommendations insofar as they related to their local areas.

62 As already stated, it was brought to our attention at Stage Three that there were some anomalies regarding the electorate figures for several of our proposed wards. While most of these anomalies were minimal and unlikely to be material to our considerations, one significant error was made relating to Plaistow & Sundridge and Bickley wards where the number of electors for each ward varied by some 1,200 electors from those published. To assist consultation, we took measures to ensure that local people were informed of these anomalies at the earliest opportunity. A letter was sent on 22 July 1999 to all Stage One respondents and all those who attended the public meeting. At that time the Borough Council also was requested

to take appropriate steps to bring this matter to the attention of those considering making comments on our proposals. We stated that we would give further consideration to the most appropriate warding arrangements for these areas taking into account any representations received by the end of Stage Three, a period of over seven weeks. As a result, we received alternative warding arrangements for the Bickley and Plaistow & Sundridge areas from the Borough Council, the Conservative Group and a local resident.

63 At Stage Three, the Borough Council submitted a new scheme and stated that its Stage One submission had been based on three-member wards in order to facilitate annual elections. It argued that “had the Council realised that the LGC would be making draft recommendations which retain a mixture of one-, two- and three-member wards, it is probable that its initial submission would have been very different and may well have reflected the recent [Stage Three] response”. The Council considered that, in the light of the proposed council size and the mixed pattern of wards, “there must be a case for a minimum change for the purpose of achieving greater electoral equality”. Its minimal change option would retain the existing structure of 1 single-member, 16 two-member and 9 three-member wards, with some boundary changes in order to improve electoral equality. It further argued that its new scheme would “better meet the review criteria than the Commission’s own recommendations”.

64 The Borough Council accepted that Stage Three was an opportunity to comment on the Commission’s draft recommendations. However, it contended that “it is often difficult to determine whether proposals amount to amendments or a completely new proposition ... Even if the Commission concluded that any particular degree of change amounts to a new proposition ... there is no reason why the Commission should not publish and consult if they believe that the proposals are significantly better than the draft recommendations, taking account of the criteria in the Guidance.” Beckenham Constituency Labour Party argued that “rather than proceed directly to Stage Four the Commission should acknowledge the arbitrariness of its Stage Three proposals and conduct a further period of consultation which will provide for consideration of an increase in the number of councillors to 62 or 65.”

65 The Commission recognises that the Borough

Council has now departed from its previous preference for three-member wards throughout the borough in response to the Commission’s draft recommendations. We maintain that our approach to the issue of three-member wards in London has remained constant throughout the programme of periodic electoral reviews. Following the publication of the Government’s White Paper *Modern Local Government – In Touch with the People*, published in July 1998, the Commission’s Chief Executive wrote to all local authorities in October 1998, expanding further on our *Guidance*, and stating that while councils and local interests may wish to have regard to this White Paper, the Commission would be continuing to take the same approach as outlined in its March 1998 *Guidance*, a view which was reiterated at local meetings with Bromley council officers. Our approach has been to continue to reflect the statutory criteria, and to give consideration to submissions made to us.

66 During Stage One, the borough-wide schemes from the Borough Council and the Conservative Group on the Council were based on a uniform pattern of three-member wards, whereas Mr Fawthrop’s scheme proposed 60 single-member wards in Bromley. In formulating our draft recommendations, we recognised the preference of the Council and the Conservatives for three-member wards, but also noted significant local demand for the maintenance of single- and two-member wards in order to better represent distinct geographical areas and community interests throughout the borough. Our draft recommendations were produced after considering the locally generated schemes and comments which we received at Stage One, having regard to electoral equality and our statutory criteria of community identities and interests and effective and convenient local government.

67 It is relevant to reflect on the nature and status of our draft recommendations. We develop draft recommendations which, given the evidence available at the time, we would be content to present to the Secretary of State. We then undertake consultation on those draft recommendations in order to gauge local opinion on the recommendations and to seek further evidence in support or opposition to them. We consider that the purpose of Stage Three is primarily to consult on our draft recommendations – not to invite entirely new schemes – so that we are in a position to make any modifications to them

in the light of the further evidence received, which we consider would result in a demonstrable improvement to the current arrangements. If however, in the light of a preponderance of new evidence submitted during Stage Three, we were minded to subsequently move to a totally new scheme, we would wish to undertake further consultation.

68 We have given consideration to all the submissions we received at Stage Three and recognise that, as a result of our Stage Three consultations, we should modify our draft recommendations in some areas. We have not, however, been persuaded to adopt in full the Borough Council's Stage Three proposals. We do not consider that the Borough Council has demonstrated that, in general, its proposals would better reflect the statutory criteria than our draft recommendations. In particular, the Council has not demonstrated why its new proposals would better reflect community ties or why, since Stage One of the review, it has changed its views in relation to community ties in some areas from those which underlay its initial proposals. On the other hand, in specific instances, the Borough Council's Stage Three proposals include amendments to our draft recommendations which seem to us beneficial and which we are content to adopt (as set out in the following paragraphs).

69 It is acknowledged that the definition of a community area is a subjective issue. However, in our final recommendations we have given weight to those submissions which provide evidence in support of arguments over the location of proposed ward boundaries. We recognise that we have been unable to achieve consensus on the most appropriate ward boundaries for Bromley, with a number of differing views expressed at Stage Three. We also recognise that some of our proposals have been opposed locally, most notably, our proposal to extend Mottingham ward to include part of Chislehurst. In general, however, there has not been a groundswell of opposition to our draft recommendations and we conclude that there is no evidence to suggest that our draft recommendations are fundamentally flawed.

70 In the light of further evidence and representations received during Stage Three, we have reviewed our draft recommendations, and judge that modifications should be made to a number of our proposed ward boundaries. The

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

- (a) Mottingham and Chislehurst wards;
- (b) St Paul's Cray and St Mary Cray wards;
- (c) Crofton, Farnborough, Orpington Central and Petts Wood & Knoll wards;
- (d) Biggin Hill, Chelsfield & Goddington and Darwin wards;
- (e) Bromley Common & Keston, Hayes, West Wickham North and West Wickham South wards;
- (f) Bickley, Martin's Hill & Town and Plaistow & Sundridge wards;
- (g) Copers Cope, Eden Park, Kelsey Park and Shortlands wards;
- (h) Anerley, Clock House, Lawrie Park & Kent House and Penge wards.

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

Mottingham and Chislehurst wards

72 Mottingham and Chislehurst wards are located in the north of Bromley, bordering the London boroughs of Bexley, Greenwich and Lewisham. Borough boundary changes in 1994 resulted in the net loss of 735 electors from Mottingham ward to the adjoining boroughs to its north. These changes, together with a declining electorate, account for the fact that Mottingham ward has the lowest number of electors per councillor in Bromley – 17 per cent fewer than the borough average, forecast to decrease to 19 per cent fewer by 2004. Chislehurst ward, on the other hand, has the largest electorate in the borough with 13 per cent more electors per councilor than the borough average and 10 per cent more by 2004.

73 At Stage One, the Borough Council noted that "the unique geographical configuration of Mottingham, having a boundary on three sides with adjoining boroughs, contributes to a strong community identity and constrains options" for creating a three-member ward for the area. Recognising these limitations, it put forward an enlarged three-member Mottingham ward incorporating the northern part of Chislehurst ward and a three-member Chislehurst Common

ward combining the remainder of Chislehurst ward with part of St Paul's Cray ward. Under the Council's Stage One proposals, Mottingham and Chislehurst Common wards would have 5 per cent and 7 per cent more electors per councillor than the borough average (3 per cent and 4 per cent more by 2004), based on a council size of 69. As part of the Borough Council's own consultation exercise, the St Mary Cray Action Group stated that a small number of their members from Chislehurst regretted that they would be transferred to Mottingham ward under the Council's scheme.

74 The Conservative Group proposed combining the existing Mottingham ward with the part of Chislehurst ward abutting Elmstead Lane and part of Plaistow & Sundridge ward to create a new Sundridge & Mottingham ward. They asserted that the other option of extending the ward further eastwards into Chislehurst ward would be "too problematical, as such a major extension would seriously cut into the community of Chislehurst". The Conservative Group put forward a revised Chislehurst ward broadly based on the existing boundaries, albeit with minor changes to include part of St Paul's Cray ward. Their proposals would have resulted in electoral variances of no more than 7 per cent in each of the proposed wards and 5 per cent by 2004. Bromley & Chislehurst Conservative Association and the Rt Hon Eric Forth MP supported the Conservative Group's proposals for this area.

75 Mr Fawthrop proposed dividing this area between five new single-member wards: Mottingham, Elmstead, West Chislehurst, Chislehurst and Chislehurst Common. The proposed Mottingham ward would cover the northern part of the existing ward, while Elmstead ward would cover the southern part of the ward, together with part of Chislehurst ward around Elmstead Woods railway station. The new wards of West Chislehurst, Chislehurst and Chislehurst Common would replace the existing Chislehurst ward. Mr Fawthrop's proposals would provide for electoral variances of no more than 6 per cent in each of the proposed wards.

76 In our draft recommendations report, we noted that the particular geography of the existing two-member Mottingham ward, situated in the extreme northern section of the borough and bounded on three sides by the boroughs of Lewisham and Greenwich, presented formidable obstacles to the modification of ward boundaries in the area. In

addition, we considered that Mottingham is a distinct community within the borough with relatively few links with Chislehurst to its south. As such, the creation of a three-member ward would have necessarily impinged on large portions of the equally distinct communities of Chislehurst, Elmstead and Sundridge. In the light of the submissions received, the geographical distinctiveness of the area and the statutory criteria guiding our review of Bromley, we considered that Mottingham ward should continue to be represented by two councillors, with only minor boundary changes intended to provide a reasonable level of electoral equality. We proposed that the adjacent area of Chislehurst ward bounded by Oakdene Avenue and Elmstead Lane to Old Manor Way, containing around 1,000 electors, be transferred into a revised Mottingham ward. Chislehurst ward would remain unchanged, with the exception of the area transferred to Mottingham ward. Under our draft recommendations, Mottingham and Chislehurst wards would have 3 per cent fewer and 4 per cent more electors per councillor than the borough average respectively (5 per cent fewer and 1 per cent more by 2004).

77 At Stage Three, the Borough Council proposed revised Mottingham and Chislehurst wards identical to our draft recommendations. The Conservative Group, in its alternative scheme, also expressed support for our proposals for this area. The Chislehurst Society, Mottingham Community Forum and 99 local residents, as well as three petitions with a total of 600 signatures, opposed our draft recommendations. The Chislehurst Society argued that residents of Chislehurst are not concerned by their relative under-representation in electoral equality terms, and that the area we had proposed to transfer has more in common with neighbouring parts of Chislehurst than the Mottingham estate. They also expressed concern that a change in the ward boundary may act as a precursor to a change in postal addresses and a transfer to the neighbouring borough of Greenwich. The Rt Hon Eric Forth, MP for Bromley and Chislehurst, also noted the dissatisfaction of a large number of Chislehurst residents at being transferred to Mottingham ward and asked if it was possible for this proposal not to be implemented. A local resident proposed creating a three-member Mottingham ward comprising the existing ward, the Elmstead area in Chislehurst ward and part of Plaistow & Sundridge ward to the south of Sundridge Park. One resident suggested

that Elmstead ward might be a more suitable name for the revised Mottingham ward and another respondent suggested including North Chislehurst or West Chislehurst as part of the ward name, in order to better reflect the area covered by the revised ward boundaries.

78 We have given careful consideration to the representations received and have found that there is little evidence to support any changes to our draft recommendations for Mottingham and Chislehurst wards. None of the submissions received provided any alternative proposal for the area, which currently has the worst level of electoral equality in the borough (17 per cent fewer electors per councillor than the borough average). We are aware that the area of Chislehurst we proposed to combine with Mottingham as part of our draft recommendations is very different in nature to Mottingham. We consider, however, that the high level of electoral equality should be addressed. We do not discount lightly the concerns expressed to us by the residents of Chislehurst. We believe that fears over postal code and borough boundary changes to be unwarranted. In practice, changes to ward boundaries do not act as a precursor to changes in postal addresses or borough boundaries. Indeed, in its 1992 review of the London borough boundaries, our predecessor, the Local Government Boundary Commission considered that there was little evidence for a significant change to the borough boundary in this area.

79 Given the geographical distinctiveness of Mottingham ward, bounded on three sides by other London boroughs, the limited warding options available for this area and the absence of alternative proposals, we have decided to confirm our draft recommendations for this area as final. We recognise, however, that the revised ward would combine communities, and to reflect this we propose renaming Mottingham ward as Mottingham & Chislehurst North ward, which we consider would better reflect the totality of the revised ward.

St Paul's Cray and St Mary Cray wards

80 St Paul's Cray and St Mary Cray wards are located in the Cray Valley community in the north east of the borough, adjoining the London Borough of Bexley and Sevenoaks District in Kent. Both wards are currently represented by three councillors. St Mary Cray ward currently has 7 per

cent fewer electors per councillor than the borough average, while St Paul's Cray ward has 1 per cent more than the average.

81 At Stage One the Borough Council proposed that the electoral imbalance in these two wards should be addressed by re-orienting them "to reflect the north-south alignment of the roads in the valley and unite communities on either side of the heavily trafficked A224, Sevenoaks Way/ Cray Avenue". The Borough Council deemed that under its proposed Cray Valley East and Cray Valley West "the railway line loses its boundary status and although it splits the new ward(s), it can be crossed at several places." Under its proposal, Cray Valley East and Cray Valley West wards would have electoral variances equal to the borough average based on a Council size of 69 members.

82 The Conservative Group also put forward two three-member wards, Cray East and Cray West, divided east-west along the Sevenoaks Way and Austin Road. Their proposed Cray West ward would comprise most of the western part of the Cray Valley area, with the exception of the area transferred to Chislehurst Common ward, while Cray East ward would cover the area to the east of the A224, and would include the north part of Orpington Central ward. The Conservative Group's proposals would result in an electoral variance of 3 per cent in Cray West ward and 1 per cent in Cray East ward, currently and in 2004, based on a Council size of 60 members. At Stage One, Orpington Constituency Conservative Association supported the Conservative Group's proposals.

83 Mr Fawthrop proposed the creation of six single-member wards in the Cray Valley area: St Paul's Wood, St Paul's Cray, Ruxley, Poverest, St Mary Cray and Hockenden, Kevington & Derry Downs wards. The existing St Paul's Cray ward would be replaced by St Paul's Wood, St Paul's Cray and Ruxley wards, whereas St Mary Cray ward would be replaced by St Mary Cray, Hockenden and Kevington & Derry Downs wards. Mr Fawthrop's proposals for this area would result in electoral variances of no more than 5 per cent in each ward.

84 Mr John Horam, MP for Orpington, expressed his support for the Conservative Group's proposals, which would "retain two equal sized wards in the Cray Valley area". St Mary Cray Action Group, as part of the Borough Council's

own consultation exercise, accepted the Council's proposed modifications in principle and was "pleased that certain railway lines are no longer seen as ward boundaries".

85 In our draft recommendations report, we noted that there was considerable support for a reorientation of wards in the Cray Valley area, to unite communities on either side of the A224 (Sevenoaks Way/Cray Avenue) trunk road. We concurred with the three borough-wide schemes that the London Victoria to Chatham railway line does not constitute an insurmountable boundary and that, to an extent, the A224 trunk road does separate residential communities. We therefore put forward as part of our draft recommendations two new three-member wards, Cray Valley East and Cray Valley West, oriented east-west, in accordance with the proposals put forward by the Borough Council and the Conservative Group for this area. We were persuaded by the proposals put forward by the Conservative Group and Mr Fawthrop to include the north part of Orpington Central ward with areas to its north, in order to provide an improved level of electoral equality and a better southern boundary for the ward. Under our draft recommendations, Cray Valley West and Cray Valley East wards would have 1 per cent fewer and 4 per cent more electors per councillor than the borough average respectively (equal to and 4 per cent more than the average by 2004).

86 At Stage Three the Borough Council put forward an entirely new proposal for this area which would broadly maintain the existing north-south warding arrangement of St Paul's Cray and St Mary Cray wards. It argued that while the proposal to unite the Cray villages to the east of Sevenoaks Way had some local support, the communities to the west of Sevenoaks Way have been historically divided by the railway line and have few communications links. It argued that the Commission had chosen a less appropriate boundary and achieved less satisfactory electoral variance. It put forward a minor amendment, similar to our draft recommendations, to combine the northern part of Orpington Central ward with the area to its north. With regard to our draft recommendations, the Council suggested that the Cray River would be a more suitable boundary between Cray Valley East and Cray Valley West wards, ensuring that a small number of electors to the east of Sevenoaks Way would not be isolated from the rest of the ward.

87 The Conservative Group's alternative scheme

proposed no changes to the draft recommendations for this area. Mr Fawthrop reiterated his preference for single-member wards for this area, arguing that the Commission's draft recommendations do not reflect natural communities. He argued that the distinctive rural nature of the Hockenden and Kelvington & Derry Downs areas is best reflected in a single-member ward. He accepted, however, that his proposed St Paul's Cray, St Paul's Wood and Ruxley wards could be combined in a three-member ward. Councillor Curry expressed support for the Council's new proposals for St Paul's Cray and St Mary Cray wards, arguing that the current wards have a clear sense of identity and place and should not be divided. He stated, however, that the part of St Mary Cray High Street and Star Lane to the north of the railway line could form part of a revised St Mary Cray ward. Councillor Hawthorne opposed the proposed Cray Valley East and Cray Valley West wards on the basis that they would divide the local community. Grassmeade Residents' Association objected to the proposed transfer of their area to a revised St Mary Cray ward, on the basis that St Mary Cray is an area of great need and should have fewer electors per councillor. One local resident opposed the new ward names put forward in our draft recommendations, whereas another respondent expressed support for our draft recommendations in the Cray Valley area, stating that the boundary along Sevenoaks Way and Cray Avenue "reflects the natural boundary between local communities".

88 We have carefully considered the representations received during the consultation period. We remain of the view that our draft recommendations for the Cray Valley area, based on the Borough Council's Stage One submission and the Conservative Group's proposals, provide the best balance between electoral equality and the statutory criteria. We remain persuaded by the Borough Council's initial assertions regarding the "re-orientation of the wards to reflect the north-south alignment of roads in the valley and unite communities on either side of the heavily trafficked A224, Sevenoaks Way/Cray Avenue". We also consider that our draft proposals reflected that Council's observation that "the original Cray village centres, recognised by conservation area status, are united in the new [Cray Valley East] ward." We are therefore content to confirm that our proposals for Cray Valley East and Cray Valley West wards as final, subject to one minor boundary amendment. We have noted the Borough Council's

suggestion that the Cray River is a more appropriate boundary between Cray Valley East and Cray Valley West wards in the north. We consider that this proposal has some merit. It would affect a small area which is relatively isolated from the rest of the ward to its east, and would appear to have great affinity with areas to its west. Under our final recommendations, Cray Valley East and Cray Valley West wards would have 1 per cent fewer and 5 per cent more electors per councillor than the borough average (1 per cent fewer and 4 per cent more by 2004).

Chelsfield & Goddington, Crofton, Orpington Central and Petts Wood & Knoll wards

89 The wards of Chelsfield & Goddington, Crofton, Farnborough, Orpington Central and Petts Wood & Knoll are located in the east of the borough, and cover the Chelsfield, Farnborough and Orpington areas. Currently, Farnborough and Orpington Central wards are over-represented, with 2 per cent and 10 per cent fewer electors per councillor than the borough average respectively (1 per cent and 9 per cent fewer by 2004). Chelsfield & Goddington, Crofton and Petts Wood & Knoll wards are currently under-represented with 4 per cent, 7 per cent, and 6 per cent more electors per councillor than the borough average respectively (6 per cent, 6 per cent and 9 per cent more by 2004).

90 At Stage One, the Borough Council put forward substantial revisions to the existing electoral arrangements in this area. It proposed a three-member Petts Wood ward covering the northern part of the existing Petts Wood & Knoll ward, and a revised three-member Crofton ward combining the existing ward with the southern part of Petts Wood & Knoll ward. In the Orpington area, it proposed joining Orpington Central ward with the northern part of Chelsfield & Goddington ward and the Orpington High Street area from Petts Wood & Knoll ward to create a three-member Orpington Town ward. It also proposed creating a Chelsfield ward containing most of the existing Chelsfield & Goddington ward and a small part of Darwin ward abutting Green Street Green. Under its proposals, Farnborough ward would be combined with part of Darwin ward to form a new Farnborough & Downe ward. On the basis of a council size of 69, all five wards would have electoral variances of no more than 3 per cent currently (4 per cent by 2004).

91 In its Stage One submission the Conservative

Group also proposed combining the existing Orpington Central ward with the northern part of the Chelsfield & Goddington ward. They proposed creating a three-member Green Street Green & Chelsfield ward, containing the south part of Chelsfield & Goddington ward and the south-eastern part of Crofton ward. The Conservative Group put forward only minor changes to the existing three-member Petts Wood & Knoll ward, whereby the streets around Station Road (polling district PW5) would be transferred to a revised Orpington Central ward. They proposed that the whole of Farnborough ward be combined with the part of Crofton ward to the west of Tubbenden Lane in a new Farnborough & Crofton ward. Under the Conservative Group's proposals, the number of electors per councillor would vary by no more than 6 per cent from the borough average in all four wards. Orpington Constituency Conservative Association and Councillor Bowman supported the Conservative Group's proposals for this area.

92 Mr Fawthrop proposed 12 single-member wards for this area: Chelsfield & Pratt's Bottom, Crofton, Farnborough, Goddington, Green Street Green, Locks Bottom, Orpington Central, Petts Wood, Sparrow Wood, St Olaves, The Knoll & Broom Hill and Tubbenden wards. Petts Wood and The Knoll & Broom Hill wards would broadly cover the existing Petts Wood & Knoll ward. Orpington Central ward would contain the town centre area of Orpington, and Chelsfield & Pratt's Bottom ward would largely cover the rural area around Pratt's Bottom and Chelsfield villages. Farnborough and Locks Bottom wards would largely cover the areas of the same name. Goddington ward would contain Goddington and the Ramsden Estate, while St Olaves ward would cover the north-western part of Chelsfield & Goddington ward together with the southern part of Petts Wood & Knoll ward. The proposed Crofton and Tubbenden wards broadly would be located in the current two-member Crofton ward. Mr Fawthrop's proposed electoral arrangements for this area would result in an electoral variance of no more than 5 per cent in each of the 12 proposed wards.

93 In his submission, Mr John Horam MP expressed his support for the Conservative Group's proposal for a three-member Farnborough & Crofton ward, arguing that it is "sensible on community and geographical grounds..[and] irons out a number of anomalies in the present situation". With respect to Orpington Central ward, he supported the Conservatives' proposal to

enlarge the current ward to include the whole of the High Street and “the heart of Orpington” within one ward. Mr Horam also expressed his support for the creation of a three-member ward for the settlements of Green Street Green, Chelsfield and Pratt’s Bottom, saying that the inclusion of Pratt’s Bottom, currently in Darwin ward, “is logical since it too looks towards Green Street Green and Chelsfield.”

94 Chelsfield Village Society suggested that if changes were to be made to existing arrangements, the Chelsfield area should be joined with Pratt’s Bottom, which was also part of the green belt. Commenting on the Borough Council’s proposals, Pratt’s Bottom Residents’ Association expressed its support for maintaining the village as part of a single-member Darwin ward, together with the other rural villages of Bromley’s green belt area. Similarly, Cudham Residents’ Association, Leave Green & Keston Vale Residents’ Association and three local residents all expressed opposition to the Borough Council’s proposal to combine urban and rural areas in a new Farnborough & Downe ward. Old Hill & Cudham Lane North Residents’ Association opposed the Borough Council’s proposals for this area, arguing that “they will result in the dividing of natural communities and areas of similar character”.

95 Our draft recommendations for these four wards reflected a combination of the submissions received during Stage One. We put forward a three-member Orpington ward covering most of the Orpington town centre, as proposed by the Borough Council and Conservative Group. Under our draft proposals this ward would contain most of Orpington Central ward, the area to the south of Crofton Lane, currently located in Petts Wood & Knoll ward, and the area to the north of Park Lane, currently located in Chelsfield & Goddington ward. We proposed that the northern part of Petts Wood & Knoll ward should be combined with similar residential areas to the north of Crofton Road, currently in Farnborough and Crofton wards, to create a three-member Petts Wood ward.

96 With regard to Chelsfield & Goddington ward, we proposed combining the southern part of the existing ward with the areas around Pratt’s Bottom in the east of Darwin ward to create a new three-member Chelsfield & Pratt’s Bottom ward. The western boundary of this new ward would be broadly based on the Conservative Group’s Green St Green & Chelsfield ward, subject to a minor change to include 178 electors at the north end of

Cudham Lane North within the proposed Chelsfield & Pratt’s Bottom ward. This would ensure that areas which share access to the A21 (Sevenoaks Road) trunk road would be united within one ward.

97 We noted that there was strong opposition from local residents’ associations and residents of Darwin ward to the Borough Council’s proposed Farnborough & Downe ward, which would combine a predominantly urban area with a largely rural one. In the light of the evidence received and having regard to our statutory criteria, we were not persuaded that a new Farnborough & Downe ward would best reflect community ties. We considered that the predominantly urban Farnborough ward has little in common with the villages and communities of the rural Darwin ward and we put forward for consultation a new three-member Farnborough & Crofton ward, broadly based on the Conservative Group’s proposals. This ward would cover the areas to the south of Crofton Road currently located in Farnborough and Crofton wards. We also put forward a small boundary change in the extreme south-west corner of the existing Farnborough ward, thereby transferring the relatively isolated electors located on Shire Lane into Darwin ward. In order to improve further the level of electoral equality in Farnborough & Crofton ward, we proposed transferring around 250 electors from the area to the west of the A21 at Farnborough Common from Farnborough ward to a revised Bromley Common & Keston ward as described below.

98 Under our draft recommendations, Orpington, Petts Wood and Farnborough & Crofton wards would have 4 per cent, 1 per cent and 6 per cent more electors per councillor than the borough average respectively. Chelsfield & Pratt’s Bottom would have 6 per cent fewer than the average. We considered that our proposed warding arrangements for this area provided a reasonable balance between electoral equality and the statutory criteria, and put them forward for consultation.

99 At Stage Three the Borough Council proposed retaining the existing two-member Crofton and Orpington wards and the three-member Chelsfield & Goddington, Farnborough, Petts Wood & Knoll wards, albeit with several minor boundary amendments to improve electoral equality. In support of its proposal, the Council stressed the desirability of maintaining the Petts Wood and Knoll community within one ward. The Council considered that our recommendations to

amalgamate Farnborough and Crofton wards were acceptable in principle. However, it considered that the severance of the area to the north of Crofton Road and its combination with Petts Wood was unsatisfactory as this area has connections with Locks Bottom. With regard to the Pratt's Bottom area, it proposed retaining the majority of the Pratt's Bottom community within Darwin ward. Under its proposals, the area to the north of the A21 would form part of a revised Chelsfield & Goddington ward. The Borough Council's proposals would result in electoral variances of no more than 5 per cent in each of the proposed wards currently, and 3 per cent by 2004.

¹⁰⁰ In their alternative proposals, the Conservative Group proposed that Petts Wood & Knoll ward should remain largely unchanged, with the exception of transferring the area adjacent to Orpington High Street and Station Road into Orpington ward, as in their Stage One submission. To improve further the level of electoral equality in this part of the borough, they proposed extending Orpington ward southwards to include the area to the north-east of the Orpington to Chelsfield railway line, currently in Chelsfield & Goddington ward, and transferring the area to the south and east of Tubbenden Lane, currently in Crofton ward, to their proposed new Chelsfield & Pratt's Bottom ward. The Conservative Group proposed combining the existing Farnborough ward with most of Crofton ward. However, they retained the existing southern boundary of Petts Wood & Knoll ward, retaining properties on either side of Crofton Road in their proposed ward. They proposed combining the majority of the existing Farnborough ward with part of Crofton ward to the north-east of Tubbenden Lane. The Conservative Group considered that their proposals for this area would better reflect the local communities and the geography of the area, than our draft recommendations, while also providing an improved level of electoral equality based on a pattern of three-member wards.

¹⁰¹ Mr Fawthrop did not comment extensively in respect of these wards, reiterating his preference for single-member wards. However, he noted that our draft recommendations for Orpington seemed to reflect natural communities. Orpington Constituency Labour Party expressed general support for the Borough Council's Stage Three proposals. Councillors Woods and Ince (Petts Wood & Knoll ward) supported the Borough Council's Stage Three proposal, but stated that if these were

deemed too radical by the Commission, they would support the Conservative Group's comments on our draft recommendations. Councillor Rabbatts and three local residents opposed the proposal to amalgamate Crofton and Farnborough wards, arguing that the two areas are distinct. Three residents objected to the division of Crofton ward and the use of Crofton Road as a ward boundary, and expressed a preference for the existing two-member Crofton ward. Councillor Ross (Crofton ward) and a local resident argued that if any area should be transferred from Crofton Ward it should be the Stapleton Road Estate in the east of the current ward, and not the area to the north of Crofton Road. Councillor Michael (Bromley Common & Keston ward) opposed the proposal to transfer 250 electors from Farnborough ward to Bromley Common & Keston ward, on the basis that this would break up a distinct community. Councillor Maines (Orpington Central ward) opposed transferring the north part of Crofton ward to Petts Wood ward and argued that the Knoll area has little in common with the area covered by our proposed Orpington ward. Grassmeade Residents' Association opposed the proposal to transfer their area out of Orpington Central ward. One local resident expressed a preference to retain the existing Petts Wood & Knoll ward on community grounds. Another local resident suggested combining the existing two-member Crofton ward with Farnborough Village and the areas to the south of Crofton ward to create a revised Farnborough & Crofton ward. He also suggested extending Petts Wood ward southwards to include the remainder of Farnborough ward.

¹⁰² We received submissions from seven respondents regarding the proposed Chelsfield & Pratt's Bottom ward. Pratt's Bottom Residents' Association, Councillor Maines and two respondents opposed our draft recommendations to create a Chelsfield & Pratt's Bottom ward and favoured retaining the village of Pratt's Bottom in Darwin ward. Conversely, Chelsfield Village Society, on the other hand, supported our draft recommendations for this ward, on the basis that it would unite two villages with similar interests. Old Hill & Cudham Lane North Residents' Association and two local residents argued that their community of 180 residents should form part of a revised Darwin ward rather than Chelsfield & Pratt's Bottom ward, as the area is physically divided from Green Street Green by the A21 and from the Beechwood Estate. Beechwood Residents' Association argued that it would be

more logical for the area to be linked with either Farnborough or the rural communities in Darwin ward.

103 Having carefully considered the representations received, we are proposing a number of changes to our draft recommendations for this area, which are largely based on the Conservative Group's alternative proposals. We propose modifying our proposed Petts Wood ward to include a larger part of the existing ward, as put to us by several respondents, including the Borough Council and the Conservative Group. Under our final recommendations, the area around Station Road and the Orpington High Street in the south of the current Petts Wood & Knoll ward would be transferred to a revised Orpington ward. In addition, we propose retaining the name of Petts Wood & Knoll ward, to reflect the totality of the area cover by the revised ward. To compensate for the electoral imbalances resulting from our proposed amendments in Petts Wood & Knoll ward, we propose extending Orpington ward southwards to include most of the area to the north of the Orpington to Chelsfield railway line which currently forms part of Chelsfield & Goddington ward. We consider that the revised Petts Wood and Orpington wards provide a good balance between community interests and identities and electoral equality.

104 We have received differing opinions on our draft recommendations to combine Farnborough and Crofton wards. Several respondents opposed changing the existing electoral arrangements, while others considered that the areas share some affinity. Having considered the evidence received, we are not persuaded that the communities in the existing Farnborough and Crofton wards are so fundamentally distinct as to preclude combining these areas in one ward for electoral purposes. Nor have we been persuaded by the submissions received to retain a two-member Crofton ward, as we do not consider that such a pattern would better reflect the statutory criteria than the alternative arrangements proposed. To reflect concerns put to us by Councillor Michael, we propose a further minor change in the west of Farnborough & Crofton ward in order to retain Wolds Drive and The Birches within this ward, rather than transferring them to Bromley Common & Keston ward as initially proposed. We consider that these revised warding arrangements will reflect local concerns regarding the inappropriateness of using Crofton Road as a boundary between wards,

in addition to providing a reasonable level of electoral equality.

105 We have been convinced, however, by the evidence received and upon inspection to modify our draft recommendations. We note in particular the views expressed that Crofton Road does not act as a barrier between communities and concur with the Conservative Group's view that the area to the south-east of Tubbenden Lane is distinct from the northern part of Crofton ward and shares an affinity with the adjoining area of Chelsfield. In particular, as noted by Councillor Ross, "the Stapleton Road Estate only has one entrance on to the Sevenoaks Road opposite Orpington Hospital [and] it is not connected by road to the rest of Crofton ward in any way." We therefore propose transferring the area to the south-east of Tubbenden Lane (currently in Crofton ward) to Chelsfield & Pratt's Bottom ward.

106 We note that there was a lack of consensus among the submissions received regarding our proposals for the Pratt's Bottom area, but we have not been persuaded to modify our draft recommendations, which enjoyed some local support. We remain of the view that the proposed warding arrangements in this area provide a good balance between electoral equality and the statutory criteria. We have reconsidered, however, our draft recommendations to include the Old Hill and Beechwood Estate areas in Chelsfield & Pratt's Bottom ward, based on evidence received from Beechwood Estate Residents' Association, Old Hill Residents' Association and two local residents. We propose instead that these areas should form part of Darwin ward. We consider that this arrangement will ensure that communities of similar interests are not isolated from each other and will also provide for improved electoral equality in each of our proposed Chelsfield & Pratt's Bottom and Darwin wards.

107 Under our final recommendations for Chelsfield & Pratt's Bottom, Farnborough & Crofton, Orpington and Petts Wood & Knoll wards, the number of electors per councillor would vary by no more than 4 per cent above or below the borough average in each ward (5 per cent by 2004).

Biggin Hill and Darwin wards

108 Darwin ward covers the green belt area in the south of the borough. Currently, Darwin ward is a wholly rural single-member ward with a small and

scattered electorate of around 3,500. Biggin Hill ward covers the largely self-contained community of Biggin Hill and is represented by two councillors. Biggin Hill is surrounded by green belt and is linked by the A233 (Main Road/Leaves Green Road) arterial road to the rest of the borough. Under the current warding arrangements, Darwin ward has 10 per cent fewer electors per councillor than the borough average, while Biggin Hill ward has 14 per cent more electors per councillor than the borough average.

109 At Stage One, the Council proposed creating a three-member Biggin Hill ward which would incorporate the current ward and the western part of Darwin ward. It proposed combining the eastern part of the Darwin ward with Farnborough ward to its north, to create a three-member Farnborough & Downe ward. The Council also proposed including the area around Layham Road within a revised West Wickham ward. The Borough Council's proposed Biggin Hill ward and Farnborough & Downe wards would have 6 per cent fewer and 2 per cent more electors per councillor than the borough average (1 per cent fewer and 3 per cent more by 2004), based on a council size of 69.

110 At Stage One the Conservative Group proposed creating a three-member Darwin & Biggin Hill ward which "would encompass the village of Biggin Hill, the adjoining civil airport and many smaller villages such as Downe ... and therefore takes in many small rural style communities". It would comprise all of the existing Biggin Hill ward and the majority of Darwin ward (excluding Pratt's Bottom). The properties on Old Hill, currently divided between wards, would be united in Green St Green & Chelsfield ward. Under these proposals, Darwin & Biggin Hill ward would have 1 per cent fewer electors per councillor than the borough average (4 per cent more by 2004). The Conservative Group's proposals were supported by Orpington Constituency Conservative Association.

111 Mr Fawthrop's scheme proposed creating three single-member wards for this area: Biggin Hill, Valley and Darwin. Valley and Biggin Hill wards would largely cover the existing Biggin Hill ward. The revised Darwin ward would include the Aperfield area of Biggin Hill ward and the whole of the existing Darwin ward, with the exception of the Pratt's Bottom area, which would form part of a single-member Chelsfield & Pratt's Bottom ward,

as described above. Mr Fawthrop's proposed warding arrangements would result in an electoral variance 6 per cent above the borough average in Biggin Hill and Valley wards, and equal to the borough average in Darwin ward.

112 During Stage One, we received a further 11 representations regarding this area. Mr John Horam MP supported the Conservative Group's proposals, arguing that it is sensible that Biggin Hill and Darwin wards should be combined to form a three-member ward since they share the same schools and public amenities. Cudham, Downe, Leave's Green & Keston Vale and Restavon Park residents' associations and three local residents expressed opposition to the Borough Council's proposal to combine urban and rural areas in a new Farnborough & Downe ward. Pratt's Bottom Residents' Association argued that Cudham, Down and Pratt's Bottom represent Bromley's green belt and strongly opposed the Borough Council's proposed changes to Darwin ward.

113 Having considered the representations received during Stage One, we noted that there was a lack of consensus regarding the most appropriate warding arrangements for the Biggin Hill and Darwin ward areas. While the Borough Council and the Conservative Group both proposed combining Biggin Hill with part of Darwin ward in a three-member ward, Mr Fawthrop proposed that the Aperfield area form part of a revised Darwin ward. In addition, many local residents and residents' groups requested the retention of the current Darwin ward. We recognised that Biggin Hill acts as a focus for shopping and leisure for an area much wider than the town itself. Nevertheless, we acknowledged that the rural communities that constitute the current Darwin ward are distinctive in their own right and considered that they would best be represented by a single-member ward. We were not persuaded to divide further Biggin Hill ward between two wards, as proposed by Mr Fawthrop, as we considered that this would not better reflect community ties. We also were not persuaded by the Borough Council's proposal to combine Farnborough with the rural area to its south, which we considered would combine distinct and separate communities both rural and urban in nature.

114 In the light of the geographical distinctiveness of the area, the size of the current electorate and the statutory criteria, we put forward as part of our draft recommendations a revised two-member

Biggin Hill ward and a revised single-member Darwin ward, in order to maintain separate representation for these areas and provide an improved level of electoral equality in each ward. We considered that the boundary proposed by Mr Fawthrop (between Valley and Darwin wards) would provide for a reasonable level of electoral equality for a revised Biggin Hill ward and put it forward for consultation, subject to minor amendments. While we noted that this revised boundary would combine the more urban area of Aperfield with Darwin ward, we considered such a change was necessary in order to address electoral inequality in Biggin Hill ward.

115 In order to provide for an improved level of electoral equality in Darwin ward, we proposed transferring the Pratt's Bottom and Cudham Lane North areas (currently in Darwin ward) to a new three-member Chelsfield & Pratt's Bottom ward, as described above. The northern boundary of the revised single-member Darwin ward would remain unchanged, subject to the inclusion of properties on Shire Lane from Farnborough ward. Our proposed warding arrangements for Darwin and Biggin Hill wards would result in 6 per cent and 1 per cent fewer electors per councillor than the borough average respectively (4 per cent fewer and 1 per cent more by 2004). We recognised that these proposals were significantly different from those proposed locally and that there were a number of possible alternatives in this area. However, we considered that our recommendations provided a satisfactory balance between electoral equality and the statutory criteria, and would preserve the integrity of the current rural Darwin ward and urban Biggin Hill ward. We particularly invited further views from residents and interested parties at Stage Three in this area.

116 At Stage Three, the Borough Council proposed the retention of a two-member Biggin Hill ward. However, it opposed the transfer of the Aperfield area from Biggin Hill ward to Darwin ward. It preferred transferring the residential area near Biggin Hill airfield (the former RAF married quarters) and a self-contained area to the west of Main Road to Darwin ward, rather than the Aperfield area as proposed in our draft recommendations. It also proposed transferring a small part of Darwin ward, containing Charles Darwin Secondary School and the properties on the north side of Jail Lane to Biggin Hill ward. In relation to Darwin ward, the Council proposed

changing the eastern ward boundary to follow the A21/Sevenoaks Way, such that the majority of Pratt's Bottom would remain in Darwin ward with only a small area of Pratt's Bottom being transferred to its proposed Chelsfield & Goddington ward. Under the Borough Council's new scheme, Biggin Hill and Darwin wards would have 3 per cent and 7 per cent more electors per councillor than the borough average respectively (9 per cent and 10 per cent more by 2004).

117 The Conservative Group's alternative scheme also proposed a two-member Biggin Hill ward and a single-member Darwin ward. However, they also opposed our draft recommendations to transfer the Aperfield area from Biggin Hill ward to Darwin ward. They considered that it would be more appropriate to transfer the area near Biggin Hill airfield, as well as an area containing 1,000 electors near the Biggin Hill town centre to a revised single-member Darwin ward. The Conservatives strongly supported the views of local residents that Cudham Lane North and Old Hill area should remain part of a revised Darwin ward. Under the Conservative Group's scheme, the number of electors per councillor in Biggin Hill and Darwin wards would be 1 per cent below the borough average in both wards (1 per cent above and 5 per cent above by 2004 respectively).

118 Mr Fawthrop strongly supported the retention of a single-member ward for Darwin and, while maintaining his preference for single-member wards, considered that our proposed Biggin Hill ward reflected natural communities reasonably well. Biggin Hill Airport Ltd requested that the airport and its environs remain part of Biggin Hill ward, arguing that it shares historical, practical and employment links with Biggin Hill. Biggin Hill & District Residents' Association and Biggin Hill Community Care opposed the transfer of the Aperfield area to Darwin ward. Councillor Shekyls, Councillor Gostt and 43 local residents, the majority of which submitted proforma letters, opposed the proposed transfer of the Aperfield area to Darwin ward and supported the Borough Council's proposals for the area.

119 As described above, Pratt's Bottom Residents' Association, Councillor Maine (Orpington Central ward) and two local residents favoured retaining Pratt's Bottom within Darwin ward. Cudham, Downe and Leaves Green & Keston Vale residents' associations and three local residents expressed

general support for the proposed Darwin ward. Old Hill & Cudham Lane North Residents' Association and two local residents argued that their community of 180 residents should form part of Darwin ward rather than the proposed Chelsfield & Pratt's Bottom ward, arguing that the area is physically divided from Green Street Green by the A21 and from Beechwood Estate. Beechwood Residents' Association requested that the Beechwood estate be linked to either Farnborough or the rural Darwin ward, arguing that they have greater affinity with these areas than Chelsfield.

¹²⁰ We have given careful consideration to the views expressed to us during Stage Three. We note that there was overwhelming support at Stage Three for retaining a single-member Darwin ward and a two-member Biggin Hill ward in the south of the borough. We also note, however, that there was significant opposition to our proposal to transfer the Aperfield area to Darwin ward. In the light of this opposition and the large number of submissions proposing that the residential area around Biggin Hill Airport should be transferred to Darwin ward, we have decided to modify our draft recommendations. Our revised ward boundaries in Biggin Hill would be largely based on the Borough Council's proposals to transfer around 1,000 electors in the residential areas around Biggin Hill Airport and to the west of Main Road in the south of the existing ward. We consider that our revised proposals reflect community concerns expressed to us by the Borough Council, the Conservative Group and local residents, and would provide an improved level of electoral equality than at present.

¹²¹ In the light of the general support received for the proposed Darwin ward, we propose to retain a single-member ward for this area. We propose, however, a number of minor changes to our draft recommendations for this area. As described above, in the light of comments made to us by Beechwood Estate Residents' Association, Old Hill Residents' Association and two local residents, arguing in favour of retaining their area within Darwin ward, we propose to amend the ward boundary for this area. The revised ward boundary between Darwin and Chelsfield & Pratt's Bottom wards would run southwards on the A21 (Farnborough Way and Sevenoaks Way) and Norstead Lane to the borough boundary. Under our final recommendations the number of electors per councillor in Darwin and

Biggin Hill wards would be 3 per cent below and 2 per cent above the borough average respectively (equal to the average and 8 per cent above in 2004).

Bromley Common & Keston, Hayes, West Wickham North and West Wickham South wards

¹²² The wards of Bromley Common & Keston, Hayes, West Wickham North and West Wickham South are situated in the west of the borough, in an area distinguished by the large number of commons and green spaces separating the different communities. Bromley Common & Keston and Hayes wards are currently represented by three councillors each, while West Wickham North and West Wickham South are each represented by two councillors. Under the existing arrangements, Bromley Common & Keston and West Wickham South wards have 9 per cent and 7 per cent more electors per councillor than the borough average respectively, and West Wickham North ward has 6 per cent fewer than average. In Hayes ward, the number of electors per councillor is equal to the borough average. These levels of electoral equality are not expected to change significantly by 2004.

¹²³ At Stage One, the Borough Council proposed creating four new three-member wards: West Wickham, Hayes & Keston Commons, Bromley Common and Bromley South & Hayes wards. Under its proposals, West Wickham ward would comprise most of the existing West Wickham North ward and the western part of West Wickham South ward. Hayes & Keston Commons ward would contain the remainder of West Wickham South ward, part of Hayes ward, part of Bromley Common & Keston ward and the western fringe of Darwin ward around Layhams Road. The Borough Council stated that its proposal would unite Hayes and Keston villages and their associated commons within one ward. Its proposed Bromley Common ward would comprise the northern part of the existing Bromley Common & Keston ward. Under its scheme, the north-western part of Hayes ward would be combined with part of Shortlands ward to create a new three-member Bromley South & Hayes ward. The Borough Council's Stage One proposals would result in the proposed West Wickham, Hayes & Keston Commons, Bromley Common and Bromley South & Hayes wards having variances of no more than 4 per cent from the average based on a council size of 69.

124 The Conservative Group also proposed significant changes for this area. They proposed combining the existing West Wickham South ward with the southern part of West Wickham North ward to create a new three-member West Wickham ward, arguing that the proposed ward “has an ideal coherence historically, geographically and in community terms”. They also put forward a new three-member Langley ward, combining the northern part of West Wickham North ward with parts of the existing Eden Park, Kelsey Park and Shortlands wards around Langley Park and Langley Court. The Conservative Group put forward a new Hayes & Keston ward comprising most of the existing Hayes ward and the Keston Village area of Bromley Common & Keston ward, as well as a new three-member Bromley Common ward for the part of Bromley Common & Keston ward to the north of Croydon Road. The Conservative Group’s proposed warding arrangements would result in an electoral variances of no more than 4 per cent from the borough average based on a council size of 60. Bromley & Chislehurst and Beckenham Constituency Conservative Associations supported the Conservative Group’s proposals for their areas.

125 Mr Fawthrop’s scheme proposed 10 single-member wards in this area: Bromley Common, Coney Hall, Hayes, Homesdale, Keston, Norman Park, Pickhurst, Westmoreland, West Wickham and West Wickham South. West Wickham South and Coney Hall wards would be formed from the existing two-member West Wickham South ward. The proposed Pickhurst and West Wickham wards would cover the existing West Wickham North ward, together with part of Eden Park ward. Mr Fawthrop’s proposed Hayes, Norman Park and Westmoreland wards would broadly cover the existing three-member Hayes ward, while Bromley Common, Homesdale and Keston wards would largely cover the existing Bromley Common & Keston ward. The warding arrangements put forward by Mr Fawthrop would result in an electoral variances of no more than 5 per cent from the borough average in each of the 10 proposed single-member wards.

126 At Stage One, West Wickham Residents’ Association asserted that the Borough Council’s proposed West Wickham ward would “separate key areas of West Wickham from the focal point of the community” by transferring part of West Wickham North ward to a new Eden Park ward. Councillor Manning, who represents Hayes ward, opposed the

Borough Council’s proposal to include the area around the village of Hayes within a new Bromley South & Hayes ward, arguing that it would divide the Hayes community. A local resident argued that the part of West Wickham North ward to the north of the Elmers End to Hayes railway line is geographically closer to West Wickham and Hayes and should remain linked with those areas for warding purposes.

127 Having considered the views expressed for this area during Stage One, we noted that both the Borough Council and Conservative Group proposed creating a three-member ward for West Wickham. However, there was no agreement as to the most appropriate boundaries for the ward. In view of our recommendations in the neighbouring areas to the south, and our proposed council size of 60, we based our draft recommendations on the Conservative Group’s proposals for this ward. The new West Wickham ward would comprise the existing West Wickham South ward and the part of West Wickham North ward to the south of the Elmers End to Hayes railway line. As proposed by West Wickham Residents’ Association, we included the area to the east of High Broom Wood within our proposed ward.

128 We were not persuaded by the Borough Council’s proposals to combine the Keston Village area with Hayes, as we considered that such a change would lead to either dividing the Hayes community or combining the part of West Wickham North ward to the north of the Elmers End to Hayes railway line with the Park Langley area. We therefore decided to largely retain the existing three-member Bromley Common & Keston ward, with only minor amendments to provide an improved level of electoral equality. We proposed transferring the area to the north of Southlands Road to a new three-member Bromley Town ward, as described below, together with 77 electors on the north side of Southborough Lane near the Jubilee Country Park (currently in Bickley ward) to Bromley Common & Keston ward, so that electors on both sides of Southborough Lane would be located within one ward. We also proposed transferring 250 electors from Farnborough ward.

129 Having considered the representations received with respect to the Hayes area, we recognised that several submissions expressed support for maintaining the Hayes community within one

ward. We also noted the suggestion by one resident that the northern part of the existing West Wickham North ward has more in common with West Wickham and Hayes, than with areas to its north. In the light of the submissions received, we proposed modifying the current Hayes ward to include the area to the north of the Elmers End to Hayes railway line, currently in West Wickham North ward. We also proposed transferring the area to the east of Hayes Road to a new Bromley Town ward (as discussed below) and for the area accessed from Westmoreland Road to be transferred to a revised Shortlands ward. We considered that these proposals would ensure that areas around Hayes village centre would remain within one ward.

¹³⁰ Under our draft recommendations, West Wickham, Bromley Common & Keston and Hayes wards would have electoral variances of 3 per cent, 4 per cent and 6 per cent from the borough average respectively. The level of electoral equality was not expected to change significantly over the next five years. We recognised that these proposals differed from those proposed locally, and particularly welcomed views from local residents and interested parties regarding this area at Stage Three.

¹³¹ At Stage Three the Borough Council proposed only minor changes to the existing three-member Bromley Common & Keston and two-member Hayes, West Wickham North and West Wickham South wards. Most notably, it proposed transferring the area to the west of Coney Hill Road and north of Croydon Road, currently in West Wickham North and West Wickham South wards, to Hayes ward. The Council also proposed transferring 800 electors from the north of Bromley Common & Keston ward to Hayes ward, and 1,000 electors from the north-east of Hayes ward to Shortlands ward, similar to our draft recommendations for that area. The Borough Council opposed our draft recommendations for West Wickham and Hayes ward, arguing that “the core of the West Wickham community is centred on the High Street and railway station” and as such, the areas to the “north-east of the railway line ... relate strongly to West Wickham”, rather than to Hayes.

¹³² The Conservative Group, in their alternative scheme, argued that the area to the north-east of the Elmers End to Hayes railway line, currently part of West Wickham North ward, relates primarily to West Wickham and proposed that it should form part of a West Wickham ward, rather

than being transferred a Hayes ward as put forward in our draft report. They proposed that the Coney Hall area in the south of West Wickham South ward should be transferred to Hayes ward instead and that the ward should be renamed Hayes & Coney Hall ward. To further improve electoral equality in this ward, they proposed transferring an area containing 2700 electors in the north of Hayes ward to Bromley Town ward, broadly reflecting our draft recommendations for this area. They also proposed the transfer of 850 electors from Hayes ward to Shortlands ward as put forward in our draft recommendations. The Conservatives suggested one minor boundary change affecting no electors in the proposed Bromley Common & Keston ward, in order to “bring the whole of Hayes Common into one ward”.

¹³³ In relation to our draft proposals for West Wickham ward, Mr Fawthrop stated that “whilst these are an improvement on those put forward by the Council, the proposals fail to take into account the nature of the Coney Hall area”. He suggested that Addington Road is a natural boundary between Coney Hall and the remainder of West Wickham and should be considered seriously for a single member ward, as outlined in his Stage One proposal for 60 single-member wards in Bromley. He also suggested that his proposed single-member Bromley Common and Blackbrook wards could be combined to make a two member Bromley Common or Southborough ward. Mr Fawthrop provided no further specific comments on our draft recommendations for this area.

¹³⁴ West Wickham Residents’ Association submitted comments similar to the Borough Council and the Conservative Group. It argued that the proposal to transfer the area to the north-east of the Elmers End to Hayes railway line is inappropriate because it is a natural continuation of West Wickham, comprises part of the area covered by West Wickham Residents’ Association and has little connection with Hayes. Instead, they proposed transferring the Coney Hall area of West Wickham South ward to Hayes ward as this area is close to Hayes and has a distinct and largely self-contained centre. Councillor Arthur (Hayes ward) supported the Borough Council’s Stage Three proposal, but stated that if these were deemed too radical by the Commission, he would support the Conservative Group’s comments on our draft recommendations. Submissions were received from three local residents opposing the proposal to

transfer the north-east part of West Wickham North ward to Hayes ward and favouring the retention of a two-member West Wickham ward. Another local resident generally supported the draft proposal to incorporate part of West Wickham North ward into Hayes ward, but expressed a preference for the Borough Council's minimal change option for the area.

¹³⁵ Councillor Manning supported that Borough Council's and Conservative Group's proposals for West Wickham and Hayes wards. She stated that she was pleased to see that the Commission took serious note of the concerns expressed by Hayes residents at Stage One, and discarded the Borough Council's initial proposals. However, she considered that the part of West Wickham to the north of the railway line had little affinity with Hayes. Hayes Village Association expressed general support for the draft recommendations in the Hayes area, noting that the inclusion of the Westland Drive to The Warren area, currently in West Wickham South ward, would be sensible as these roads "have always been part of the Hayes Village Association remit". They also observed that the Masons Hill area, in the north of the current ward, is rather remote from the centre of Hayes and considered that this area has more in common with wards to its north. Councillor Michael (Bromley Common & Keston ward) expressed concern regarding the proposal to move the area to the north of Southlands Road to an enlarged Bromley Town ward, as this area "is the heart of Bromley Common and would never see itself as being part of the town centre". She also opposed the proposal to transfer 250 electors from Farnborough ward to Bromley Common & Keston ward and proposed instead that the Keston area to the south of Croydon Road should form part of a new Keston & Hayes ward, thereby uniting two areas of similar appearance, historical interest, socio-economic background and sense of community. In order to compensate for this change, Councillor Michael suggested transferring the northern part of Hayes ward into a revised Bromley Common ward.

¹³⁶ Having considered the representations received for the West Wickham area, we recognise that there is significant opposition to our proposal to transfer the area to the north-east of the Elmers End to Hayes railway line to a revised Hayes ward. We also note that several submissions argued in favour of retaining the West Wickham community within

one ward and for combining the Coney Hall area with Hayes. We propose, therefore, to modify our draft recommendations for West Wickham ward, such that it contains all of the existing West Wickham North ward and the area to the north of Addington Road, currently in West Wickham South ward. We agree with Mr Fawthrop's and the Conservative Group's assessment that Addington Road serves as a good boundary between West Wickham and the Coney Hall area. Consequently, we propose to include the Coney Hall area of West Wickham South ward in Hayes ward, renaming it Hayes & Coney Hall ward to reflect this change. We have not been persuaded to extend Hayes ward northwards, as proposed by the Borough Council, as we consider that these areas share little affinity with the village of Hayes. We propose transferring Stone Road, Beadon Road and the northern parts of Cameron Road, Hayes Road and Hayes Lane, containing a total of 450 electors, to Bromley Town ward. We also consider that these roads share a strong affinity with the adjoining roads in our proposed Bromley Town ward, largely reflecting the Conservatives proposals for this area. Under our final recommendations the number of electors per councillor in Hayes & Coney Hall and West Wickham wards would be 6 per cent above and 1 per cent below the borough average respectively (5 per cent above and equal to the average by 2004).

¹³⁷ In the light of the general support received for our proposed Bromley Common & Keston ward, which was largely based on the existing ward boundaries, we have decided to confirm our draft recommendations in this area as final, subject to two minor boundary changes. First, as described above, we propose modifying the ward boundary with Farnborough & Crofton ward in the east to include only Holwood Park Avenue and Ninhams Wood within Bromley Common & Keston ward, thereby reflecting concerns raised by Councillor Michael. The proposed boundary would run to the rear of the properties on the east side of Ninhams Wood. Second, we propose that the boundary with Bromley Town ward in the north should run to the north side of Southlands Road, rather than the south side as initially proposed, thereby including all the residents on Southlands Road within Bromley Common & Keston ward and providing an improved level of electoral equality. Under our final recommendations, Bromley Common & Keston ward would have 1 per cent fewer electors per councillor than the borough average (3 per cent fewer by 2004).

Bickley, Martin's Hill & Town and Plaistow & Sundridge wards

138 The wards of Bickley, Martin's Hill & Town and Plaistow & Sundridge are located in the north of the borough, to the west of the Charing Cross to Sevenoaks railway lines. Martin's Hill & Town ward covers the commercial centre of Bromley, is represented by two councillors and has 1 per cent more electors per councillor than the borough average. Plaistow & Sundridge and Bickley wards are each represented by three councillors and have 2 per cent more and 5 per cent fewer electors per councillor than the borough average respectively. The level of electoral equality is not expected to change significantly over the next five years.

139 In its Stage One submission the Borough Council proposed broadly maintaining the existing wards of Martin's Hill & Town, Plaistow & Sundridge and Bickley, but put forward several boundary changes to provide for improved electoral equality. In relation to Martin's Hill & Town ward, it proposed extending the eastern ward boundary to include the parts of Plaistow & Sundridge and Bickley wards and renaming the ward Bromley Town. Its proposed Plaistow & Sundridge and Bickley wards would remain unchanged, with the exception of those areas transferred to Bromley Town ward as described above. The Borough Council's proposed warding arrangements would result in electoral variances of no more than 4 per cent from the borough average, based on a council size of 69 members.

140 The Conservative Group's proposals differed significantly from those put forward by the Borough Council. They proposed combining the western part of Martin's Hill & Town ward with the eastern part of Shortlands ward and the northern part of Hayes ward to create a three-member Bromley Town & Shortlands ward. They proposed creating a three-member Plaistow ward and a three-member Sundridge & Mottingham ward. Plaistow ward would include part of Martin's Hill & Town ward and the Plaistow area of Plaistow & Sundridge ward. Their proposed Sundridge & Mottingham ward would combine the remainder of Plaistow & Sundridge ward with all of Mottingham ward and a small part of Chislehurst ward. The Conservative Group proposed enlarging the current Bickley ward to include the area to the north of Sundridge Avenue from Plaistow & Sundridge ward. Under the

Conservative Group's proposals, the number of electors per councillor in Bromley Town & Shortlands, Bickley and Plaistow wards would be no more than 1 per cent from the borough average, based on a council size of 60. Bromley & Chislehurst Conservative Association supported the Conservative Group's proposals for this area.

141 Mr Fawthrop proposed eight single-member wards for this area: Bickley, Blackbrook, Burnt Ash, Caves, Plaistow, Ravensbourne, Sundridge and Widmore wards. Ravensbourne ward would comprise the area around Bromley Park, and Widmore ward would largely cover Bromley town centre. Plaistow, Burnt Ash and Sundridge Park would broadly cover the existing Plaistow & Sundridge ward. Bickley ward would be replaced by three single-member wards: Blackbrook, Bickley and Caves wards, with the latter also including part of the current Chislehurst ward. Mr Fawthrop's proposals for this area would result in an electoral variance of not more than 5 per cent from the borough average in each of the proposed wards.

142 Shortlands Residents' Association, as part of the Borough Council's own consultation exercise, expressed opposition to the Borough Council's warding arrangements, noting that Shortlands ward would cease to exist under its scheme. It considered that the current ward could be expanded to include areas from Kelsey Park.

143 Having considered the representations received during Stage One, we noted that both the Borough Council and the Conservative Group proposed building on the existing arrangements for Bickley ward. We concurred with this view, but in order to utilise the strong physical boundary of Sundridge Park Golf Course in the north, proposed that the ward be expanded northwards to Sundridge Park and to the east of Homefield Road. This area is similar in nature to residential areas to the south of Park Farm Road and would build upon the proposals put to us by the Conservative Group. Based upon proposals put to us by Mr Fawthrop and the Borough Council, we proposed that the Widmore area be transferred from Bickley ward and be combined with Bromley Town Centre in a ward.

144 We also noted that the Borough Council and the Conservative Group both proposed uniting the Bromley town centre within one ward, although they proposed alternative ward boundaries for their respective Bromley Town and Bromley Town &

Shortlands wards. In the light of the opposition from local residents to combining the Shortlands community with distinct areas in Bromley or Hayes, we proposed a three-member Bromley Town ward which reflected elements of the Borough Council's and Conservative Group's schemes, but which would not contain part of Shortlands ward. Our proposed Bromley Town ward combined most of the existing Martin Hill & Town ward, excluding the area to the east of the A21 and Tweedy Road, together with the part of Bickley ward to the west of Tylney Road and Widmore Playing Field, the part of Hayes ward to the east of Hayes Road and the part of Bromley Common & Keston ward to the north of Southlands Road. We were content that the proposed Bromley Town ward provided a reasonable level of electoral equality and adequately reflected community interests.

¹⁴⁵ The Conservative Group's proposals for a Sundridge & Mottingham ward were overtaken by our proposed warding arrangements for Mottingham, as discussed above. Instead, we proposed broadly maintaining the existing three-member Plaistow & Sundridge ward, as put forward by the Borough Council, with minor boundary changes. We proposed that the area to the south of Sundridge Park and east of Homefield Road should form part of a revised Bickley ward. In order to compensate for the consequent decreased electorate in Plaistow & Sundridge ward, we proposed realigning the western boundary of the ward to the A21 and Tweedy Road. We considered that our proposed changes would provide a reasonable level of electoral equality for the revised three-member Plaistow & Sundridge ward, and additionally would provide more clearly identifiable ward boundaries between wards.

¹⁴⁶ At Stage Three, it was brought to our attention by the Conservative Group that there were some anomalies regarding the electorate figures in several of our proposed wards. The most significant of these related to Plaistow & Sundridge and Bickley wards where, on the basis of our proposed boundaries, the number of electors for each ward would vary by some 1,200 electors from those published. We decided that it would assist consultation if local people were informed of these changes at the earliest opportunity. A letter was sent on 22 July to all Stage One respondents and all those who attended the public meeting which was held on 29 April 1999, and the Borough Council was requested to take the appropriate steps to bring

this matter to the attention of those concerned. We also stated that we would give further consideration to the most appropriate warding arrangements for these areas taking into account any representations received by the end of Stage Three.

¹⁴⁷ At Stage Three the Borough Council proposed retaining the existing two-member Martin's Hill & Town and making only one minor change to the boundary between Plaistow & Sundridge and Bickley wards in order to improve the level of electoral equality in each ward. Under its proposals, the area to the south of Sundridge Avenue and east of Hill Brow would be transferred to Bickley ward. Under the Borough Council's new scheme Martin's Hill & Town, Plaistow & Sundridge and Bickley wards would have electoral variances of no more than 2 per cent from the borough average currently (4 per cent by 2004).

¹⁴⁸ Commenting on our draft recommendations, the Borough Council argued that the proposed Bromley Town ward was not truly representative of the community interests around the town centre and that, in particular, the transfer of part of Martin's Hill & Town ward to Plaistow & Sundridge ward was unsatisfactory since "this area contains a car park, the site of the weekly market and streets which are integral to the Town Centre". It also questioned whether the part of Bromley Common & Keston ward to the north of Southlands Roads shared an affinity with the town centre. They argued that a possible alternative may be to transfer the Old Bromley area of Plaistow & Sundridge ward and a small part of Bickley ward, near the Council offices, to Bromley Town ward.

¹⁴⁹ The Conservative Group, in their alternative proposals, proposed a three-member Bromley Town ward. Their proposed ward was identical to our proposed Bromley Town ward except they suggested only minor boundary changes around the town centre and transferring a larger part of Hayes ward, containing around 700 electors, to improve electoral equality in both Bromley Town and Hayes & Coney Hall wards. They proposed that the western boundary between Bickley and the two wards of Plaistow & Sundridge and Bromley Town should follow the west side of Homefield Road and Wanstead Road and the east side of Bishops Avenue to the Bromley South to Bickley railway line. Their submission stated that these proposed changes did not "appear to change the aim of the LGC's proposal" for the area. Under the Conservative Group's proposals, the number of

electors per councillor in Bickley, Bromley Town and Plaistow & Sundridge wards would be 3 per cent below, 6 per cent above and 1 per cent below the borough average respectively.

150 Mr Fawthrop made no specific comments about the proposed warding arrangements for this area. In its submission, Hayes Village Association favoured including the Masons Hill area in the north of Hayes ward within Martin's Hill & Town ward (our proposed Bromley Town ward) or Bickley ward. We received only one other representation proposing alternative warding arrangements in the light of our revised electorate figures for Bickley and Plaistow & Sundridge wards. A local resident proposed that Bickley ward should be revised to include part of the Elmhurst area of Chislehurst ward, which he argued is a similar residential area, and suggested renaming the ward as Bickley & Elmstead Woods. Councillors Gallop and Jenkins (Petts Wood & Knoll ward) and Councillor Bustard (Plaistow & Sundridge ward) supported the Borough Council's Stage Three proposal, but stated that if these were deemed too radical by the Commission, they would support the Conservative Group's comments on our draft recommendations.

151 We have considered the representations received at Stage Three regarding our proposed Bickley, Bromley Town and Plaistow & Sundridge wards, in the light of anomalies in our draft recommendations' electorate figures. We note that the level of electoral equality in each of the wards concerned could be significantly improved with only minor boundary amendments, as demonstrated by the Borough Council's and Conservative Group's proposals.

152 With respect to Bromley Town ward, we recognise that both the Borough Council and the Conservative Group proposed amending the proposed eastern boundary with Plaistow & Sundridge ward to include an area to the north-east of Tweedy Road. However, while the Borough Council proposed that the existing ward boundary be retained, the Conservative Group proposed that an area containing 520 electors to the north-east of Tweedy Road, bounded by Longfield Road, Glebe Road and Place Grove, should form part of Bromley Town ward. We consider that the areas adjacent to Tweedy Road share some affinity with Bromley Town Centre, and consider that we should adopt the Conservative Group's alternative

proposals as the basis of our final recommendations for Bromley Town ward in this area. We remain of the view that Sundridge Park Golf Course should form the northern boundary for Bickley ward, and propose modifications to the wards western boundary in order to improve electoral equality. Consequently, we propose that the western boundary of Bickley ward should follow the west side of Homefield Road, Wanstead Road and Bishops Avenue, as broadly proposed by the Conservative Group.

153 We propose a further amendment to the southern boundary with Hayes ward, as described above. In order to further improve the level of electoral equality in our proposed Bromley Town and Hayes & Coney Hall wards, we propose transferring Stone Road, Beadon Road and the northern parts of Cameron Road, Hayes Road and Hayes Lane, containing a total of 450 electors, to Bromley Town ward and to transfer all properties on Southlands Road from Bromley Town ward to Bromley Common & Keston ward. We consider that these roads have an affinity with the adjoining roads in our proposed Bromley Town ward.

154 Under our final recommendations the number of electors per councillor in Bickley, Bromley Town and Plaistow & Sundridge would be 2 per cent, 1 per cent and 1 per cent below the borough average respectively (3 per cent, 3 per cent and 2 per cent below by 2004).

Copers Cope, Eden Park, Kelsey Park and Shortlands wards

155 The four wards of Copers Cope, Kelsey Park, Eden Park and Shortlands contain residential communities around the Beckenham area. Under the existing electoral arrangements, each ward is represented by two councillors. Currently, Copers Cope ward is significantly over-represented, with 16 per cent fewer electors per councillor than the borough average, increasing to 17 per cent by 2004. Kelsey Park, Eden Park and Shortlands wards have an electoral variance of 3 per cent, 2 per cent and 3 per cent from the borough average respectively (2 per cent, 6 per cent and 8 per cent by 2004).

156 In its Stage One submission the Borough Council proposed creating three wards for the area, each represented by three councillors. Its proposed Cator ward would contain the Cator Estate area in

Lawrie Park & Kent House ward, all of the existing Copers Cope ward and the area around Beckenham High Street, currently located in Kelsey Park ward. The Council's scheme provided for a revised Kelsey Park ward, renamed Kelsey ward, which would include the majority of the existing Kelsey Park and Shortlands wards. It put forward a revised three-member Eden Park ward combining the existing Eden Park ward together with the Glaxo Wellcome site at Langley Court, currently in Shortlands ward, and part of West Wickham North ward to the north of Manor Park road and west of Red Lodge Road. The Borough Council considered that "since the new [Langley Court] development will be accessed only from South Eden Park Road, and will naturally face to the west and north in community terms, it is ... appropriate to include the site within the Eden Park ward." The Borough Council's proposed Cator, Kelsey and Eden Park wards would result in electoral variances of no more than 8 per cent from the average based on a council size of 69.

157 The Conservative Group also proposed creating a three-member Cator ward in the north of the borough. Under their proposal the ward would contain the existing Copers Cope ward, less the area to the east of Downs Hill, together with the area to the north of Lennard Road and the London Victoria to Beckenham Junction railway line, currently in Lawrie Park & Kent House ward, and the area to the north of the Beckenham High Street and Bromley Road, currently in Kelsey Park ward. Their proposed Kelsey ward would contain the western part of the existing ward and the area to the east of the New Beckenham to Elmers End railway line, currently in Lawrie Park & Kent House and Clock House wards. It would also contain the area to the west of Stanhope Grove and Altyre Way, currently in Eden Park ward. The Conservative Group proposed creating a three-member Langley ward, combining the remainder of Kelsey Park ward with the areas around Langley Park and Eden Park, currently in Shortlands, West Wickham North and Eden Park wards. The Conservative Group's proposed Cator, Kelsey and Langley wards would have electoral variances of no more than 5 per cent from the borough average based on a council size of 60. Beckenham Constituency Conservative Association supported the Conservative Group's proposals.

158 Mr Fawthrop proposed creating nine single-member wards in this area: Copers Cope, Eden Park, Elmers End, Foxgrove, Kelsey Park,

Oakwood, Park Langley, Shortlands and West Wickham. Copers Cope and Foxgrove wards would largely cover the existing Copers Cope ward, while the proposed Kelsey Park and Oakwood wards would broadly cover the existing Kelsey Park ward. Park Langley and Shortlands would be broadly located within the existing Shortlands ward. Elmers End and Eden Park wards would cover the northern part of the existing Eden Park ward. The Monks Orchard area in the south of the existing Eden Park ward, including Bethlem Royal Hospital, would form part of a single-member West Wickham ward. Mr Fawthrop's proposals would result in an electoral variance of not more than 6 per cent in each of the proposed wards.

159 Copers Cope Area Residents' Association expressed its opposition to the Borough Council's proposals for the Beckenham area, which "seem to run directly counter to the principles ... of recognising natural communities and maintaining the integrity of the town centre". Eden Park Residents' Association stated that so far as Eden Park is concerned, it was "perfectly happy with all of [the Borough Council's] proposals". As part of the Borough Council's own consultation process, Shortlands Residents' Association stated it was "very annoyed that Shortlands is to be divided and dispensed with" and suggested that Shortlands ward could be retained if it was expanded to include the east side of Kelsey Park ward. Canon Redman, the Vicar of Shortlands, asserted that "the loss of part of ... Shortlands ward on the eastern side is disappointing from the Constituency, Parish and Beckenham deanery point of view". He also regretted that Beckenham did not appear as a ward name in the Borough Council's proposal.

160 Having considered the representations received during Stage One, we noted that there was broad agreement that the existing Copers Cope ward should be enlarged to include the Beckenham High Street area. In particular, we noted the views of the Copers Cope Area Residents' Association who opposed dividing the town centre. We concurred with this view and put forward a revised three-member Copers Cope ward, combining the existing ward with areas around Manor Road and Bromley Road, currently in Kelsey Park and Shortlands wards. The eastern boundary of the proposed ward would follow the Catford Loop railway line to Shortlands and run to the rear of Shortlands Road (excluding The Glen, Charing Court, Foxes Dale and Waldron Gardens). We

considered that our proposed Copers Cope ward provided a reasonable balance between electoral equality and the statutory criteria guiding our work.

¹⁶¹ We also noted that there was a lack of consensus regarding proposed electoral arrangements in the Kelsey Park, Eden Park and Shortlands wards. The Borough Council and the Conservative Group both proposed creating a new Kelsey ward, but differed over the precise ward boundaries. We considered that the Kelsey Park area shares some affinity with the Eden Park area, as indicated in the Conservative Group's submission, and proposed creating a three-member Kelsey & Eden Park ward, combining the existing Eden Park ward with the area to the south of Manor Road and the High Street and west of Oakhill Road and Stanley Avenue, currently in Kelsey Park ward. We concurred with the Borough Council's assessment that since the planned Langley Court residential development "will be accessed only from South Eden Park Road, and will naturally face to the west and north in community terms, it is considered appropriate to include the site within the Eden Park ward" and put this forward as part of our proposal for a three-member Kelsey & Eden Park ward.

¹⁶² We gave serious consideration to the various proposals submitted for the Shortlands area, and in particular noted the Shortlands Residents' Association's opposition to dividing the Shortlands community. We were persuaded by the evidence submitted that Shortlands constitutes a distinct community within Bromley and considered that a two-member Shortlands ward would best enable the Commission to fulfil the statutory criteria in this area. As part of our draft recommendations, we proposed broadly maintaining the existing Shortlands ward, excluding the Langley Park area and the area to the rear of Shortlands Road, as described above. In order to achieve a better level of electoral equality, we proposed transferring 900 electors from the north of Hayes ward, by including all the roads accessed from Westmoreland Road into our revised Shortlands ward. We also proposed a minor change to the existing boundary along Barnfield Wood Road, such that it would follow the rear of the properties on the north side of Barnfield Wood Road, including Fairway Gardens and Flaxmore Place, thereby uniting all the electors in that road within one ward. We considered that our proposed two-member Shortlands ward would provide a reasonable balance between electoral equality and the

statutory criteria. Under our proposed warding arrangements, Copers Cope, Kelsey & Eden Park and Shortlands wards would have 1 per cent fewer, 4 per cent fewer and 5 per cent more electors per councillor than the borough average respectively (4 per cent fewer, 2 per cent fewer and 6 per cent more by 2004).

¹⁶³ At Stage Three, the Borough Council proposed retaining the four two-member wards of Copers Cope, Kelsey Park, Eden Park and Shortlands. It proposed including the whole of the Beckenham High Street area, part of which is currently in Kelsey Park ward, within Copers Cope ward. To improve the level of electoral equality in Kelsey Park ward, it proposed including the area to the north of Shortlands Road, currently in Shortlands ward, in the revised ward. The Borough Council's proposals for Shortlands ward reflected our draft recommendations for the area. It supported the transfer of the former Glaxo Wellcome site to Eden Park ward, and also proposed transferring 1000 electors from the north-east of Hayes ward to a revised two-member Shortlands ward. Eden Park ward would remain unchanged, with the exception of the Glaxo Wellcome site. In relation to our draft recommendations, the Council argued that consideration should be given to dividing the current Eden Park ward with the western area (polling district EP2) being combined with the Elmers End area.

¹⁶⁴ In its alternative Stage Three proposal, the Conservative Group favoured a number of amendments to ward boundaries which they argued would "more logically equate to the local communities". They broadly reiterated their Stage One submission regarding the creation of a three-member Cator ward, containing all of the existing Copers Cope ward, part of Lawrie Park & Kent House ward to the north of the London Victoria to Beckenham Junction railway line, and part of Kelsey Park ward to the north of the Beckenham High Street, Manor Road and Bromley Road. The Conservatives proposed creating a three-member Kelsey & Eden Park ward containing the remainder of Kelsey Park ward, the existing Eden Park (excluding the area to the west of Stanhope Grove and Uppers Elmers End), as well as the former Glaxo Wellcome site and the area to the north of Shortlands Road, both currently in Shortlands ward. They argued that their proposed Kelsey Park ward "better reflects the natural communities in this area" than our draft recommendations. The

Conservatives' proposed Shortlands ward broadly reflected our draft proposals for that area, with minor boundary amendments to include the whole of Barnfield Wood Road and a smaller area of Hayes ward in the ward. Under the Conservative Group's alternative scheme, Cator, Kelsey & Eden Park and Shortlands wards would have electoral variances of no more than 5 per cent from the borough average currently and 3 per cent by 2004. Beckenham Constituency Conservative Association supported the alternative proposals by the Conservative Group. It stated that it wished to make no comment on the Council's revised proposals.

¹⁶⁵ At Stage Three, Mr Fawthrop reiterated his preference for single-member wards for the area. He argued that the Commission's draft recommendation for a new Kelsey & Eden Park ward would not reflect natural communities in the area.

¹⁶⁶ Copers Cope Area Residents' Association proposed a small amendment to the boundary between our proposed Copers Cope and Kelsey & Eden Park wards, in order to bring all of Beckenham High Street into a revised Copers Cope ward. They argued that it would be better to move the "boundary line back to the lanes behind ... the High Street, thus incorporating the businesses which run uninterruptedly from the High Street into the beginnings of Croydon Road and Village Way", affecting only a minimal number of electors. They also stated that while they did not object to the Council's revised proposals in their area, they were surprised that a two-member ward had been proposed for their area. The Gardens Residents' Association and a local resident expressed their wish to remain part of Kelsey Park ward. They argued that the issues affecting their community are aligned with Kelsey Park ward than that the Copers Cope area and that the sole means of access to their area is from Bromley Road, an integral part of Kelsey ward. Councillor Elgar (Hayes ward), Councillor Taylor (Shortlands ward) and Councillor Wilkinson (Copers Cope ward) supported the Borough Council's Stage Three proposal, but stated that if these were deemed too radical by the Commission, they would support the Conservative Group's comments on our draft recommendations.

¹⁶⁷ Beckenham Constituency Labour Party stated that the argument that Shortlands has a strong local identity has validity, but that our proposed ward would perpetuate the longstanding split in the community "with the heart of the Shortlands area

... around the Beckenham Lane shopping area, Shortlands Golf Course and the Queen's Mead Recreation Ground outside Shortlands ward". One respondent also noted that all of the historic Shortlands community has not been united within one ward under our draft proposals. He proposed creating a Beckenham Town ward, but provided no specific ward boundaries, and suggested that Park Langley and Elmers End should be specifically recognised as areas.

¹⁶⁸ Beckenham South Branch of the Beckenham Liberal Democrats favoured retaining a separate Eden Park ward and combining Kelsey Park with Shortlands instead of with Eden Park. It argued that Kelsey Park is a distinct community from Eden Park and that the new Langley Court development "will certainly have a stronger community affinity with Park Langley than Eden Park". These views were echoed by Councillor Green and three local residents, who proposed combining Shortlands ward with Kelsey Park ward and retaining a separate Eden Park ward. Councillor Green also suggested that Stone Park Avenue should be included in Kelsey Park ward and that all of Barnfield Wood Road would be included in Shortlands ward, which he argued would provide better boundaries in these areas. Canon Redman, the Vicar of Shortlands, welcomed the draft recommendations for a two-member Shortlands ward and stated it was a very practical response to the wishes of the community.

¹⁶⁹ We have given careful consideration to the submissions received in respect of our draft recommendations for this area. We note that there was general support for including all of the properties in the Beckenham town centre within one ward, although the Conservative Group put forward alternative warding boundaries for its proposed Cator ward. We have not been persuaded by the submissions received to change fundamentally our draft recommendations for Copers Cope ward, and remain of the view that our proposed three-member Copers Cope ward represents community interests and provides a reasonable level of electoral equality. We consider, however, that there is some merit in the amendments proposed for the southern boundary of Copers Cope ward, to include all the properties along the Beckenham High Street, as well as the roads leading directly from it, including Faversham Road, Fairfield Road and Stanmore Terrace. We consider that this change would provide a better boundary between Copers Cope and Kelsey &

Eden Park wards and would better reflect community ties. This change would involve only a minimal number of electors and would not have a significant effect on electoral equality, and we are therefore content to put it forward as part of our final recommendations.

¹⁷⁰ There was a lack of consensus about the most appropriate warding arrangements for the existing Shortlands, Eden Park and Kelsey Park wards. While the Borough Council, the Conservative Group and one local resident supported retaining a two-member Shortlands ward, Councillor Green, Beckenham South Branch of the Beckenham Liberal Democrats and a local resident proposed combining the Shortlands area (including the Langley Court development) with Kelsey Park in order to maintain separate representation for Eden Park ward. Beckenham Constituency Labour Party also considered that the boundaries of the ward could be extended eastwards which it argued would unite the Shortlands community. The Borough Council also proposed retaining two-member wards for Kelsey Park and Eden Park, whereas the Conservative Group's alternative scheme broadly supported our draft recommendations for a three-member Kelsey Park. We recognise that there is some disagreement about the precise boundaries of communities in this area and, in particular, about the community orientation of the Langley Court residential development and Shortlands areas. In view of this lack of consensus, we have not been minded to change fundamentally our draft recommendations in this area, which we continue to consider would provide a reasonable balance between electoral equality and the statutory criteria.

¹⁷¹ Under our final recommendations, the number of electors per councillor in Copers Cope, Kelsey & Eden Park and Shortlands wards would be 1 per cent, 4 per cent and 1 per cent below the borough average (3 per cent, 2 per cent and 2 per cent below the average by 2004).

Anerley, Clock House, Lawrie Park & Kent House and Penge wards

¹⁷² The wards of Anerley, Clock House, Lawrie Park & Kent House and Penge are located in the north-west of the borough, adjoining the London boroughs of Croydon, Lambeth and Southwark in the west, and Lewisham in the north. The Crystal Palace and Penge community areas are located in this part of the borough. All four wards are

currently represented by two councillors each. Under the existing arrangements, Anerley has an electoral variance equal to the borough average, increasing to 1 per cent above the average by 2004. Lawrie Park & Kent House and Penge wards have 5 per cent and 9 per cent fewer electors per councillor than the borough average respectively (6 per cent and 9 per cent fewer by 2004). Clock House ward has 7 per cent more electors per councillor than the borough average, increasing to 9 per cent more than average by 2004.

¹⁷³ At Stage One, the Borough Council proposed that Lawrie Park & Kent House ward be divided between a new Crystal Palace ward, a revised Penge ward and a new Cator ward. Their proposed three-member Crystal Palace ward would comprise the area to the north of Crystal Palace Park, all of the existing Anerley ward and the area of Clock House ward to the south of Elmers End Road. In Penge, the Borough Council proposed shifting the northern boundary of the existing ward to the external borough boundary, to include the area between the Sydenham to Penge West railway line, Cator Road and Kent House Road (to the south of Lennard Road). The revised Penge ward would be represented by three councillors. The Borough Council proposed changing the eastern boundary of the existing Clock House ward and enlarging it to include part of Kelsey Park ward, in order to create a three-member ward in this area. The remaining section of Lawrie Park & Kent House ward, to the west of the railway line at New Beckenham, would form part of a new Cator ward, as described above. The Borough Council's proposed Crystal Palace, Penge and Clock House wards would have electoral variances of no more than 4 per cent from the average currently and 5 per cent by 2004, based on a council size of 69.

¹⁷⁴ The Conservative Group proposed creating four wards in this area. As with the Borough Council, they put forward a new Crystal Palace ward built on most of the existing Anerley ward, together with the part of Lawrie Park & Kent House ward to the north of Crystal Palace Park and the west part of the existing Penge ward. The Conservative Group's revised Penge ward would incorporate the area between Croydon Road and the Clock House to Elmers End railway line, currently in Anerley and Clock House wards, and the area around Parish Lane and south of the Victoria to Beckenham Junction railway line, currently in Lawrie Park & Kent House ward. They

proposed that the area of Clock House ward to the east of the Clock House to Elmers End railway line form part of a new Kelsey ward, and that the eastern part of Lawrie Park & Kent House ward form part of a new Cator ward, as described above. Under the Conservative Group's proposals, the number of electors per councillor in Crystal Palace and Penge wards would be 4 per cent and 2 per cent below the borough average respectively (4 per cent and 1 per cent below by 2004), based on a council size of 60. Beckenham Constituency Conservative Association expressed its support for the Conservative Group's proposals in the northern end of the borough. They stated that the proposal for three member wards ensured that natural communities are not divided and gave their full support to these proposals.

¹⁷⁵ Mr Fawthrop proposed eight single-member wards for this area: Crystal Palace, Anerley, Anerley North & Penge West, Penge, East Penge, Kent House, Clock House and Birkbeck. Crystal Palace and Anerley wards would broadly cover the existing Anerley ward. His proposed Anerley North & Penge West and Penge wards would cover the existing Penge ward, and the proposed Birkbeck and Clock House wards would broadly cover the current Clock House ward. The existing Lawrie Park & Kent House ward would be replaced by two single-member East Penge and Kent House wards. Under Mr Fawthrop's proposal, the number of electors per councillor in each ward would vary by no more than 5 per cent from the borough average.

¹⁷⁶ Having considered the representations received at Stage One, we noted that there were similarities between the proposals submitted, particularly in the Crystal Palace area and with respect to the division of Lawrie Park & Kent House ward. In view of this broad agreement, we sought to reflect elements from all submissions received. In the Crystal Palace area, we proposed the creation of a new Crystal Palace ward. We agreed with the Borough Council's assertion that the area of Lawrie Park & Kent House ward to the north of the Park "has a natural affinity with the Park and is contemporaneous with residential areas to the south and west of the Park". We concurred with the Conservative Group that the Crystal Palace Park "is the most significant landmark and focal point in the area." We also noted that Mr Fawthrop put forward the creation of a single-member ward to represent the Crystal Palace area. We considered that the Sydenham to Anerley railway line provided a significant barrier in this area, particularly in the

north, and proposed that the ward boundary should largely follow the railway line, although we propose that the new ward contain all of Anerley Road and the area to the south of it, currently in Penge and Anerley wards, in order to maintain this arterial road within a single ward.

¹⁷⁷ Given the prominent boundary provided by the railway line, we sought to create a Crystal Palace ward which would be most representative of its community and which therefore would facilitate convenient and effective local government in the area. Crystal Palace is also located at the most western extreme of Bromley borough, and as an area extends into the neighbouring boroughs of Croydon, Lambeth, Southwark and Lewisham, sharing more in common with these than other parts of Bromley. Given these exceptional circumstances, we considered that Crystal Palace ward should be represented by two councillors rather than three, as proposed by the Borough Council and the Conservative Group, or by a single councillor as proposed by Mr Fawthrop. Under our draft recommendations, Crystal Palace ward would have an electoral variance of 5 per cent below the borough average currently and by 2004.

¹⁷⁸ In the Penge area, we considered that there was some merit in the Borough Council's proposals to combine the existing Penge ward with part of Lawrie Park & Kent House ward to its north. However, since the Borough Council's submission was based on a council size of 69 members, the electorate of its proposed Penge ward would have been too small for a three-member ward within a 60-member council. We considered that the revised Penge ward should also contain the Cator Estate area of Lawrie Park & Kent House ward to the west of the railway line at New Beckenham. This would improve electoral equality, while at the same time providing a clear identifiable boundary in the north-east section of the ward. To account for the inclusion of the Cator area, we proposed that the ward be named Penge & Cator ward.

¹⁷⁹ In the Clock House area, we proposed broadly maintaining the current Clock House ward, albeit with minor boundary modifications in order to create a three-member ward. Our proposed ward would reflect elements of the Borough Council's proposal, by incorporating the part of Lawrie Park & Kent House ward to the south of the Penge East to Beckenham railway line, although we considered that the current eastern ward boundary along the A222 Croydon Road should be maintained. In the south,

our proposed Clock House ward would include part of the existing Anerley ward, containing 1,700 electors, and Ravenscroft Road from Penge ward, which would provide for improved electoral equality. Our proposed warding arrangements for Penge & Cator and Clock House wards would result in electoral variances of equal to the borough average in both wards currently and a variance of 1 per cent by 2004. We considered that the proposed two-member Crystal Palace ward and three-member Penge & Cator and Clock House wards would provide a reasonable level of electoral equality and reflect the community interests and identities in the area.

180 At Stage Three, the Borough Council proposed retaining the existing two-member Anerley, Penge, Clock House and Lawrie Park & Kent House wards, proposing only two minor boundary changes to improve electoral equality. The Council stated that our proposed Crystal Palace ward “would incorporate into Clock House electors in [the east of the current] Anerley ward which look to Penge and Anerley for services and facilities”. It also opposed our draft recommendation to combine part of Lawrie Park & Kent House ward with Penge, stating that although it achieves an electoral variance of 1 per cent, “it does not logically equate to local communities.”

181 The Conservative Group’s alternative proposal supported our draft recommendations for Crystal Palace ward. They proposed a revised Penge ward combining the existing Penge ward with the area bounded by the A213 Croydon Road and the Beckenham Junction to Birkbeck railway line (currently in Clock House and Anerley wards) which “would make a more coherent ward with the respective communities.” The Conservative Group put forward a revised Clock House ward combining part of the existing ward with part of Lawrie Park & Kent House ward to its north and the Elmers End area of Eden Park ward. They argued that their revised Clock House ward “generally reflects the LGC’s proposal but ... more correctly reflects the communities in this area.” As described above, the Conservatives also proposed combining the majority of Lawrie Park & Kent House ward with Copers Cope ward to create a new three-member Cator ward.

182 At Stage Three, Mr Fawthrop proposed no specific comments about the wards in this area, but reiterated his preference for single-member wards throughout the borough. Beckenham Constituency Labour Party noted that “Crystal Palace Park is a

major physical divider of the local communities, despite the regeneration proposals currently under way.” They argued in favour of creating a three-member Palace ward which would include the part of Lawrie park & Kent House ward to the north of Crystal Palace Park and the parts of Anerley and Clock House wards to the south of Elmers End Road. Regarding the proposed Penge & Cator ward, they suggested that the ward should contain the part of Lawrie Park & Kent House ward to the west of Kent House Road together with an area to its east towards the Clock House to Elmers End railway line. They opposed including Cator as part of the ward name, arguing that it has never been used locally.

183 A local resident expressed support for the Borough Council’s Stage Three proposals in the Beckenham area. Another local resident opposed our draft recommendations for Penge & Cator ward on the basis that “two areas have been joined together with no historical connection” and considered that the proposed ward name was inappropriate given the “unhappy memories” associated with the Cator Estate. He favoured retaining the Kent House ward name. Councillor Maines noted that the proposed boundaries of Penge & Cator ward were confusing and favoured retaining the existing boundaries which are easily followed and understood. Councillor Jones (Lawrie Park & Kent House) supported the Borough Council’s Stage Three proposal, but stated that if these were deemed too radical by the Commission, he would support the Conservative Group’s comments on our draft recommendations.

184 Having considered the representations received at Stage Three, we remain persuaded that our draft recommendations provide for an improved level of electoral equality and reflect that the statutory criteria well. In particular, we remain persuaded by the Borough Council’s initial view that both sides of Crystal Palace Park should form part of one ward. We also consider that the communities forming part of our proposed Penge & Cator ward are not so dissimilar as to merit separate representation for electoral purposes. We are therefore content to confirm our draft recommendations for Clock House, Crystal Palace and Penge & Cator wards was final.

Conclusions

185 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 Cray Valley East and Cray Valley West wards should be altered follow the Cray River in the north;
- (b) in the Orpington area, the boundaries of our proposed Chelsfield & Pratt's Bottom, Farnborough & Crofton, Orpington and Petts Wood (renamed Petts Wood & Knoll) wards should be altered as proposed by the Conservative Group in its alternative proposals;
- (c) the boundary between Biggin Hill and Darwin wards should be amended to include the residential area around the Biggin Hill Airport within Darwin ward and the Aperfield area within Biggin Hill ward as proposed by the Borough Council;
- (d) the boundaries of West Wickham and Hayes wards should be altered to include all of the West Wickham community within one ward and to combine the Coney Hall area with Hayes. Hayes ward should be renamed Hayes & Coney Hall ward;
- (e) the ward boundaries of Bickley, Bromley Town and Plaistow & Sundridge wards should be amended to improve the level of electoral equality in each ward;
- (f) the southern boundary of Copers Cope ward should be amended to include all of the Beckenham High Street within the revised ward.

186 We conclude that, in Bromley:

- (a) there should be no change in the current council size of 60;
- (b) there should be 22 wards, four fewer than at present, which would involve changes to the boundaries of all of the existing wards.

187 Figure 4 shows the impact of our final recommendations on electoral equality, comparing them with the current arrangements, based on 1999 and 2004 electorate figures.

188 As shown in Figure 4, our final recommendations for Bromley 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 four to none. This improved balance of representation is expected to continue over the next five years. 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.

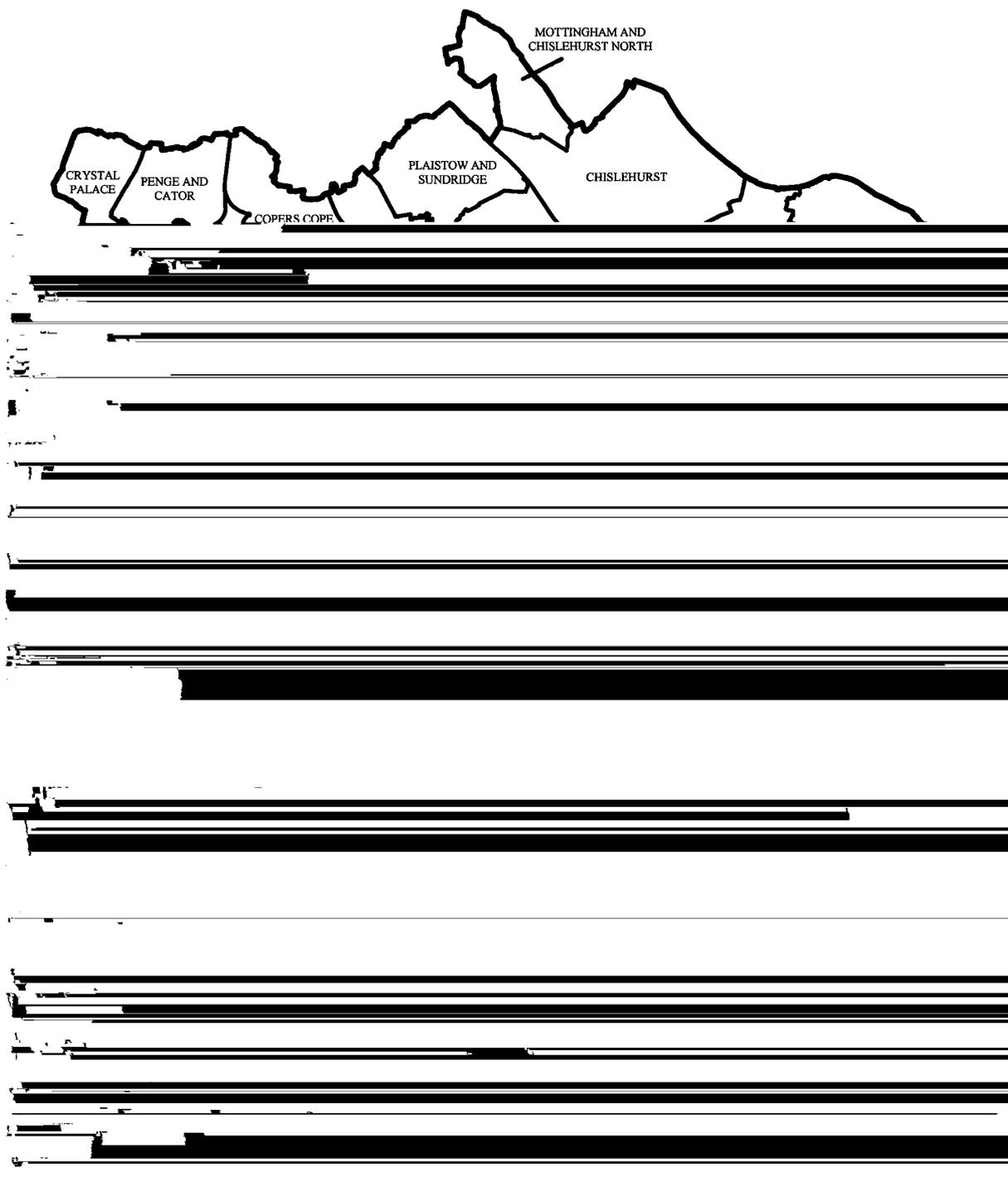
Final Recommendation

Bromley Borough Council should comprise 60 councillors serving 22 wards, as detailed and named in Figures 1 and 2, and illustrated on the large map in the back of the report.

*Figure 4 :
Comparison of Current and Recommended Electoral Arrangements*

	1999 electorate		2004 forecast electorate	
	Current arrangements	Final recommendations	Current arrangements	Final recommendations
Number of councillors	60	60	60	60
Number of wards	26	22	26	22
Average number of electors per councillor	3,732	3,732	3,772	3,772
Number of wards with a variance more than 10 per cent from the average	4	0	3	0
Number of wards with a variance more than 20 per cent from the average	0	0	1	0

Map 2:
The Commission's Final Recommendations for Bromley



6. NEXT STEPS

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

190 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.

191 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 Bromley

Our final recommendations, detailed in Figures 1 and 2, differ from those we put forward as draft recommendations in respect of a number of wards where our draft proposals are set out below. The only other change from draft to final recommendations, which is not included in Figure A1, is that we propose to rename Mottingham ward as Mottingham & Chislehurst North ward.

Figure A1:

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

Ward name	Number of councillors	Electorate (1999)	Number of electors per councillor	Variance from average %	Electorate (2004)	Number of electors per councillor	Variance from average %
1 Bickley	3	11,047	3,682	-1	10,995	3,665	-3
2 Biggin Hill	2	7,384	3,571	-1	7,879	3,940	4
3 Bromley Common & Keston	3	10,745	3,582	-4	10,727	3,576	-5
4 Bromley Town	3	10,799	3,600	-4	10,690	3,563	-6
5 Chelsfield & Pratt's Bottom	3	10,524	3,508	-6	11,250	3,750	-1
6 Copers Cope	3	11,051	3,684	-1	10,877	3,626	-4
7 Cray Valley East	3	11,130	3,710	-1	11,307	3,769	0
8 Cray Valley West	3	11,617	3,872	4	11,714	3,905	4
9 Darwin	1	3,496	3,496	-6	3,627	3,627	-4
10 Farnborough & Crofton	3	11,863	3,954	6	11,980	3,993	6
11 Hayes	3	11,869	3,956	6	11,963	3,988	6
12 Kelsey & Eden Park	3	10,800	3,600	-4	11,074	3,691	-2

continued overleaf

Figure A1 (continued):

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

Ward name	Number of councillors	Electorate (1999)	Number of electors per councillor	Variance from average %	Electorate (2004)	Number of electors per councillor	Variance from average %
13 Orpington	3	11,622	3,874	4	11,837	3,946	5
14 Penge & Cator	3	11,164	3,721	0	11,224	3,741	-1
15 Petts Wood	3	11,329	3,776	1	11,436	3,812	1
16 Plaistow & Sundridge	3	10,984	3,661	-2	10,891	3,630	-4
17 Shortlands	2	7,847	3,924	5	7,967	3,984	6
18 West Wickham	3	11,542	3,847	3	11,688	3,896	3

Source: Electorate figures are based on information provided by Bromley 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.