

LOCAL
GOVERNMENT
COMMISSION
FOR ENGLAND

FINAL
RECOMMENDATIONS
ON THE FUTURE
ELECTORAL
ARRANGEMENTS FOR
THE ROYAL
BOROUGH OF
KENSINGTON &
CHELSEA

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

September 1999

LOCAL GOVERNMENT COMMISSION FOR ENGLAND

This report sets out the Commission's final recommendations on the electoral arrangements for the Royal Borough of Kensington & Chelsea.

Members of the Commission are:

Professor Malcolm Grant (Chairman)

Professor Michael Clarke (Deputy Chairman)

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Barbara Stephens (Chief Executive)

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A large map illustrating the proposed ward boundaries for Kensington & Chelsea borough is inserted in the back cover of the report.

SUMMARY

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

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

We found that the existing electoral arrangements provide unequal representation of electors in the Royal Borough of Kensington & Chelsea:

- **in 10 of the 21 wards the number of electors represented by each councillor varies by more than 10 per cent from the average for the borough, and in four wards varies by more than 20 per cent from the average;**
- **by 2003 electoral equality is not expected to improve, with the number of electors per councillor forecast to vary by more than 10 per cent from the average in 11 wards, and by more than 20 per cent in four wards.**

Our main final recommendations for future electoral arrangements (Figures 1 and 2 and paragraphs 101-102) are that:

- **the Royal Borough of Kensington & Chelsea should be served by 54 councillors, as at present;**
- **there should be 18 wards, three fewer than at present, which would involve changes to the boundaries of 16 of the existing wards.**

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

- **In all of the 18 wards the number of electors per councillor would vary by no more than 10 per cent from the borough average.**

- **The electoral equality is forecast to improve further, with the number of electors per councillor in all wards expected to vary by no more than 7 per cent from the average for the borough in 2003.**

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

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

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

Ward name	Number of councillors	Constituent areas (existing wards)
1 Abingdon	3	<i>Unchanged</i>
2 Brompton	3	Brompton ward; Church ward (part); Courtfield ward (part); Hans Town ward (part)
3 Campden	3	<i>Unchanged</i>
4 Colville	3	Avondale ward (part); Colville ward
5 Courtfield	3	Courtfield ward (part); Earl's Court ward (part)
6 Cremorne	3	Cheyne ward (part); South Stanley ward
7 Earl's Court	3	Earl's Court ward (part)
8 Golborne	3	Golborne ward; St Charles ward (part)
9 Holland	3	<i>Unchanged</i>
10 Norland	3	Avondale ward (part); Norland ward
11 Notting Barns	3	Avondale ward (part); Kelfield ward (part)
12 Pembridge	3	<i>Unchanged</i>
13 Queen's Gate	3	<i>Unchanged</i>
14 Redcliffe	3	Earl's Court ward (part); Redcliffe ward
15 Royal Hospital	3	Cheyne ward (part); Royal Hospital ward (part)
16 Hans Town	3	Church ward (part); Hans Town ward (part); Royal Hospital ward (part)
17 St Charles	3	Kelfield ward (part); St Charles ward (part)
18 Stanley	3	Church ward (part); North Stanley ward

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 the Royal Borough of Kensington & Chelsea

Ward name	Number of councillors	Electorate (1998)	Number of electors per councillor	Variance from average %	Electorate (2003)	Number of electors per councillor	Variance from average %
1 Abingdon	3	5,454	1,818	-3	6,104	2,035	4
2 Brompton	3	5,768	1,923	2	6,119	2,040	4
3 Campden	3	5,202	1,734	-8	5,623	1,874	-4
4 Colville	3	5,604	1,868	0	5,715	1,905	-3
5 Courtfield	3	6,003	2,001	7	6,061	2,020	3
6 Cremorne	3	5,433	1,811	-4	5,744	1,915	-2
7 Earl's Court	3	5,969	1,990	6	6,089	2,030	4
8 Golborne	3	5,271	1,757	-6	5,594	1,865	-5
9 Hans Town	3	5,852	1,951	4	5,963	1,988	2
10 Holland	3	5,529	1,843	-2	5,890	1,963	0
11 Norland	3	5,970	1,990	6	6,081	2,027	4
12 Notting Barns	3	5,809	1,936	3	5,920	1,973	1
13 Pembridge	3	5,558	1,853	-1	5,669	1,890	-3
14 Queen's Gate	3	5,295	1,765	-6	5,500	1,833	-6
15 Redcliffe	3	6,150	2,050	9	6,270	2,090	7
16 Royal Hospital	3	5,608	1,869	0	5,789	1,930	-1
17 St Charles	3	5,648	1,883	0	5,759	1,920	-2
18 Stanley	3	5,260	1,753	-7	5,851	1,950	0
Totals	54	101,383	—	—	105,741	—	—
Averages	—	—	1,877	—	—	1,958	—

Source: Electorate figures are based on the Royal Borough of Kensington & Chelsea's Council's submission.

Notes: 1 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.

2 The total electorate figure in 2003 differs marginally from Figure 3; however we consider that this has a negligible effect on electoral variances.

1. INTRODUCTION

1 This report contains our final recommendations on the electoral arrangements for the Royal Borough of Kensington & Chelsea.

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

3 In undertaking these reviews, we have had regard to:

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

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

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

6 We are not prescriptive on council size but, as indicated in our *Guidance*, would expect the overall

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

The London Boroughs

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

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

9 We have sought to ensure that all concerned were aware of our approach to the reviews. Copies of our *Guidance* were sent to all London boroughs, along with other major interests. In March 1998 we briefed chief executives at a meeting of the London branch of the Society of Local Authority Chief Executives, and we also met with the Association of London Government. Since then we

welcomed the opportunity to meet with chief officers and, on an all-party basis, members in the great majority of individual authorities. This has enabled us to brief authorities about our policies and procedures, our objective of electoral equality having regard to local circumstances, and the approach taken by the Commission in previous reviews.

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, the Royal Borough of Kensington & Chelsea was in the third phase of reviews.

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

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

13 Finally, it should be noted that there are no parishes in London, and in fact there is no legislative provision for the establishment of parishes in London. This differentiates the reviews

of London boroughs from the majority of the other electoral reviews we are carrying out elsewhere in the country, where parishes feature highly and provide the building blocks for district or borough wards.

The Review of the Royal Borough of Kensington & Chelsea

14 This is our first review of the electoral arrangements for the Royal Borough of Kensington & Chelsea. The last such review was undertaken by our predecessor, the Local Government Boundary Commission (LGBC), which reported to the Secretary of State in May 1977 (Report No. 207).

15 This review was in four stages. Stage One began on 22 September 1998, when we wrote to the Royal Borough of Kensington & Chelsea 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

2. CURRENT ELECTORAL ARRANGEMENTS

¹⁷ The Royal Borough of Kensington & Chelsea has a population of 164,044 (mid-year estimate, 1997) and covers 1,238 hectares. The borough is highly residential, with one of the highest population densities in London. It contains the areas of Chelsea, Brompton, Kensington and Notting Hill and is bounded by the River Thames in the south. The borough includes Kensington Palace and over 70 embassies.

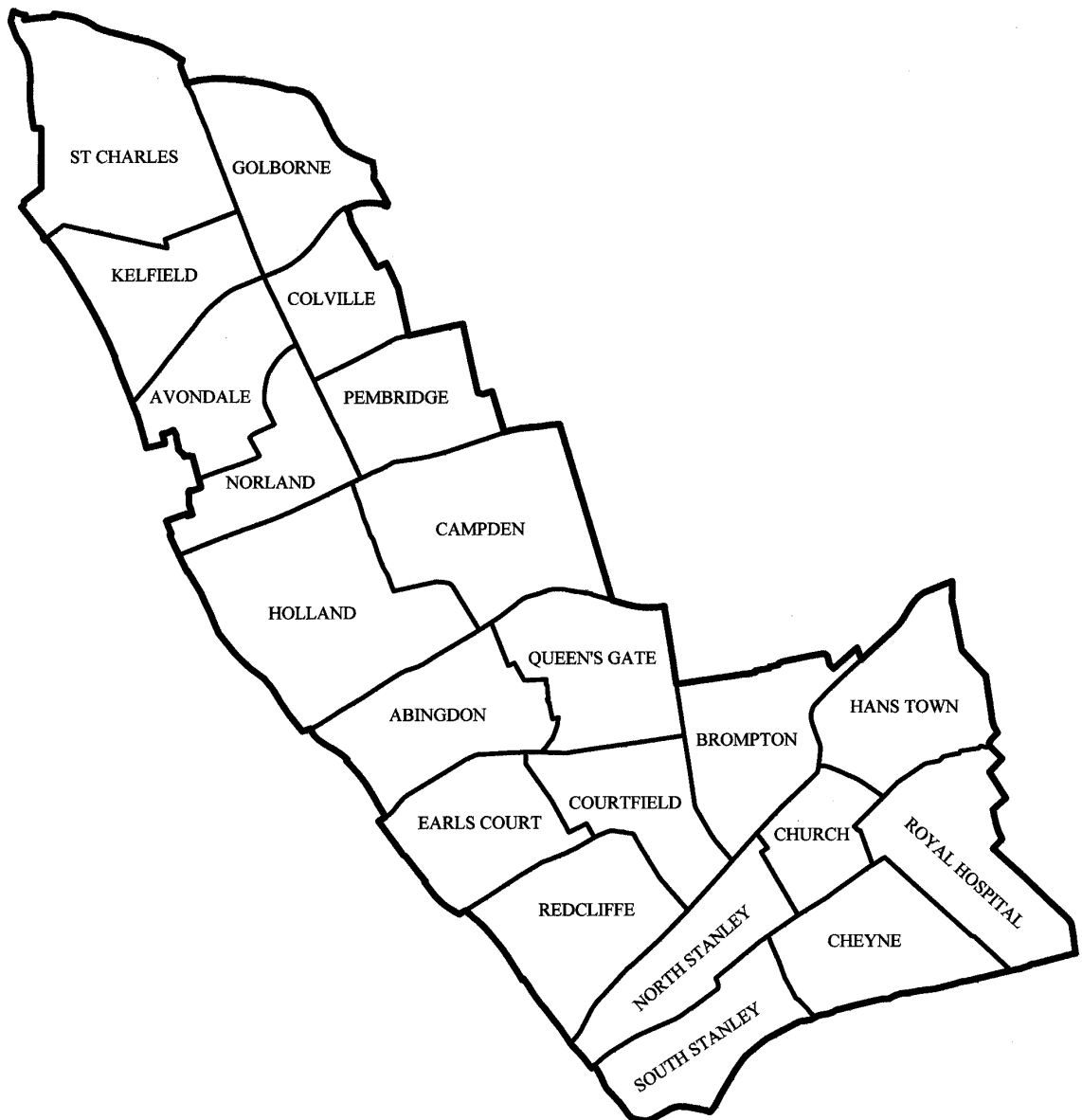
¹⁸ To compare levels of electoral inequality between wards, we calculated the extent to which the number of electors per councillor in each ward (the councillor:elector ratio) varies from the borough average in percentage terms. In the text which follows, this calculation may also be described using the shorthand term 'electoral variance'.

¹⁹ The electorate of the borough (February 1998) is 101,383. The Council currently has 54 councillors who are elected from 21 wards (Map 1 and Figure 3). Twelve wards are each represented by three councillors and nine wards elect two councillors each. As in all London boroughs, the whole council is elected together every four years.

²⁰ Since the last electoral review, there has been a decrease in electorate in the borough, with around 15 per cent fewer electors than two decades ago.

²¹ At present, each councillor represents an average of 1,877 electors, which the Borough Council forecasts will increase to 1,960 by the year 2003 if the present number of councillors is maintained. However, due to demographic and other changes over the past two decades, the number of electors per councillor in 10 of the 21 wards varies by more than 10 per cent from the borough average, and in four wards by more than 20 per cent. The worst imbalance is in Earl's Court ward, where each of the three councillors represents on average 26 per cent more electors than the borough average.

Map 1:
Existing Wards in the Royal Borough of Kensington & Chelsea



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Figure 3:
Existing Electoral Arrangements

Ward name	Number of councillors	Electorate (1998)	Number of electors per councillor	Variance from average %	Electorate (2003)	Number of electors per councillor	Variance from average %
1 Abingdon	3	5,454	1,818	-3	6,104	2,035	4
2 Avondale	3	5,384	1,795	-4	5,479	1,826	-7
3 Brompton	2	2,818	1,409	-25	3,153	1,577	-20
4 Campden	3	5,202	1,734	-8	5,607	1,869	-5
5 Cheyne	2	4,456	2,228	19	4,551	2,276	16
6 Church	2	3,206	1,603	-15	3,301	1,651	-16
7 Colville	3	5,429	1,810	-4	5,527	1,842	-6
8 Courtfield	3	5,630	1,878	0	5,728	1,909	-3
9 Earl's Court	3	7,110	2,370	26	7,205	2,402	23
10 Golborne	3	5,136	1,711	-9	5,231	1,744	-11
11 Hans Town	3	5,019	1,673	-11	5,114	1,705	-13
12 Holland	3	5,529	1,843	-2	5,874	1,958	0
13 Kelfield	2	4,686	2,343	25	4,781	2,391	22
14 Norland	2	3,344	1,672	-11	3,439	1,720	-12
15 North Stanley	2	4,204	2,102	12	4,779	2,390	22
16 Pembridge	3	5,558	1,853	-1	5,653	1,884	-4
17 Queen's Gate	3	5,295	1,765	-6	5,500	1,833	-6
18 Redcliffe	3	5,548	1,849	-1	5,643	1,881	-4
19 Royal Hospital	2	3,507	1,754	-7	3,672	1,836	-6
20 St Charles	2	4,326	2,163	15	4,646	2,323	19

continued overleaf

Figure 3 (continued):
Existing Electoral Arrangements

Ward name	Number of councillors	Electorate (1998)	Number of electors per councillor	Variance from average %	Electorate (2003)	Number of electors per councillor	Variance from average %
21 South Stanley	2	4,542	2,271	21	4,837	2,419	23
Totals	54	101,383	—	—	105,824	—	—
Averages	—	—	1,877	—	—	1,960	—

Source: Electorate figures are based on the Stage One submission from the Royal Borough of Kensington & Chelsea.

Notes: 1 The 'variance from average' column shows by how far, in percentage terms, the number of electors per councillor varies from the average for the borough. The minus symbol (-) denotes a lower than average number of electors. For example, in 1998, electors in Brompton ward were relatively over-represented by 25 per cent, while electors in Earl's Court ward were relatively under-represented by 26 per cent. Figures have been rounded to the nearest whole number.

2 The total electorate figure differs marginally from Figure 2 in 2003, although we consider that this has a negligible effect on electoral variances.

3. DRAFT RECOMMENDATIONS

²² During Stage One we received six representations. These were from the Borough Council and the Kensington & Chelsea Liberal Democrats, which both submitted borough-wide schemes, together with the Labour Group on the Council, the Kensington & Chelsea Conservative Association, the Kensington & Chelsea Constituency Labour Party and a borough councillor. 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 the Royal Borough of Kensington & Chelsea*.

²³ Our draft recommendations were based on the Borough Council's scheme, which achieved improved electoral equality, provided good boundaries while having regard to the statutory criteria and proposed a pattern of entirely three-member wards. However, we moved away from the Borough Council's scheme in six areas, affecting nine wards. We proposed that:

- (a) the Royal Borough of Kensington & Chelsea should be served by 54 councillors; as at present;
- (b) there should be 18 wards, three less than at present, which would involve changes to 16 of the existing wards.

Draft Recommendation

The Royal Borough of Kensington & Chelsea should comprise 54 councillors serving 18 wards.

²⁴ Our proposals would have resulted in significant improvements in electoral equality, with the number of electors per councillor in all of the 18 wards varying by no more than 8 per cent from the borough average. This level of electoral equality was forecast to improve further, with all wards expected to vary by no more than 6 per cent from the borough average in 2003.

4. RESPONSES TO CONSULTATION

²⁵ During the consultation on our draft recommendations report, 12 representations were received. A list of respondents is available on request from the Commission. All representations may be inspected at the offices of the Royal Borough of Kensington & Chelsea and the Commission.

The Royal Borough of Kensington & Chelsea

²⁶ The Borough Council supported the majority of our draft recommendations, with minor amendments proposed in Earl's Court, Courtfield and Redcliffe wards, and submitted a number of minor adjustments to electorate figures. Additionally, it reconsidered its proposals for St Charles and Golborne wards, following consultation with the respective ward councillors, objecting to our draft recommendation to transfer the Treverton and Balfour-Burleigh estates, proposing instead that the boundary follow the railway line to include the area around the gas works, north of the railway line in Golborne ward. It also repeated its original proposal that Ladbrooke Grove should not be crossed between Notting Barns and Colville wards, as proposed in the draft recommendations.

The Royal Borough of Kensington & Chelsea Labour Group

²⁷ The Labour Group on the Borough Council generally supported the draft recommendations, and commented in detail on only one boundary. It proposed that the boundary between the wards of Notting Barns and Norland follow the boundary between polling districts D and DA. The Labour Group also proposed transferring all of that part of St Charles ward north of the railway line to Golborne ward, as proposed by the Borough Council.

Regent's Park & Kensington North and Kensington & Chelsea Constituency Labour parties

²⁸ Regent's Park & Kensington North Labour Party also opposed transferring both the Treverton and Balfour-Burleigh estates from St Charles to Golborne ward, and supported the Labour Group's proposals for the Notting Barns and Norland ward boundary.

²⁹ Kensington & Chelsea Constituency Labour Party generally supported the draft recommendations, but objected to the proposed Cremorne ward name, reiterating its original proposal to name the ward World's End.

Members of Parliament

³⁰ Karen Buck MP, member for Regent's Park & Kensington North, objected to the proposed boundaries between Golborne and St Charles and between Norland and Notting Barns wards, supporting the Labour Group's alternative proposals for these wards.

Other Representations

³¹ We received seven further representations from Councillor Blanchflower, member for Avondale ward, the headmaster of Thomas Jones Primary School and four residents, all of whom proposed that the boundary between Norland and Notting Barns wards follow the polling district boundary. One of the residents also objected to our draft recommendation for St Charles and Golborne wards, supporting the retention of Ladbrooke Grove as the boundary between the wards. Another resident supported our draft recommendation to retain the northern boundary of Earl's Court ward.

5. ANALYSIS AND FINAL RECOMMENDATIONS

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

33 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.

34 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.

35 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

36 At Stage One the Borough Council submitted electorate forecasts for the year 2003, projecting an increase in the electorate of 4 per cent from 101,383 to 105,824 over the five-year period from 1998 to 2003. 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.

37 In its Stage One submission, the Liberal Democrats considered that there were some discrepancies between the number of units allocated to each of the development sites in the local plan and those estimated by the Borough Council to be completed by 2003. In response to the Liberal Democrats’ submission, the Borough Council generally reiterated its initial projections but revised its electorate figures in Abingdon ward increasing its estimate for the development site at Warwick Road. As a consequence it also revised its pro-rata allocation of electorate due to natural population change in each of the wards. These changes would not materially affect the Borough Council’s proposals for warding arrangements. The Borough Council stated that it had ensured that its revised electorate projections were placed on deposit at its offices.

38 In our draft recommendations report we accepted that forecasting electorate is an inexact science and having given consideration to the Council’s forecast electorates, together with its revisions, we were satisfied that they represented the best estimates that could reasonably be made at the time.

39 We received no comments on the Council’s

electorate forecasts or its revisions during Stage Three, and remain satisfied that they represent the best estimates presently available.

Council Size

40 We indicated in our *Guidance* that we would normally expect the number of councillors serving a London borough to be in the range of 40 to 80. As already explained, the Commission's starting point is to assume that the current council size facilitates convenient and effective local government.

41 The Royal Borough of Kensington & Chelsea Council currently has 54 members. Over the past 20 years the borough has experienced a 15 per cent decrease in electorate, but is forecast to grow over the next five years. The Borough Council, the Labour Group on the Council and the Kensington & Chelsea Liberal Democrats all proposed retaining the current council size.

42 In our draft recommendations report we considered the size and distribution of the electorate, the geography and other characteristics of the area, together with the representations received. We concluded that the statutory criteria and the achievement of electoral equality would best be met by a council of 54 members.

43 At Stage Three we received no further specific comments on our draft recommendation for a council size of 54 and therefore confirm it as final.

Electoral Arrangements

44 As set out in our draft recommendations report, we carefully considered the representations received at Stage One from the Borough Council, the Kensington & Chelsea Liberal Democrats, the Labour Group on the Council, the Kensington & Chelsea Conservative Association, the Kensington & Chelsea Constituency Labour Party and a borough councillor. From these representations, a number of considerations emerged which informed us when preparing our draft recommendations.

45 First, there was consensus on retaining a council of 54 members. The current electoral arrangements provided for a majority of three-member wards in the borough, although there are also nine two-member wards. The Borough Council submitted proposals for future electoral arrangements based on a pattern of 18 three-member wards for the borough, noting the Government's White Paper

proposals for annual elections in London. The Liberal Democrats also put forward a borough-wide pattern of three-member wards (without details for the north-west of the borough) although their preferred scheme would provide for a mixture of two- and three-member wards.

46 Second, there was consensus on ward configuration in much of the borough, together with a recognition that main roads, such as Ladbroke Grove, the West Cromwell Road, the King's Road and the Fulham Road generally provide good boundaries. While we concur with this view, this factor must be weighed against our objective of seeking electoral equality, while having regard to the statutory criteria.

47 We also 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 electoral equality, although we note that there is no consensus locally on the precise boundaries of such communities.

48 The two borough-wide schemes (from the Borough Council and the Liberal Democrats) provided improved electoral equality, although to varying degrees. Under the Borough Council's proposals, the number of wards where the number of electors per councillor varies by more than 10 per cent from the average for the borough would be reduced from 10 to one, and under the Liberal Democrats' scheme to zero (although without detailed proposals for the north-west of the borough). This level of improvement would be maintained in 2003. The Labour Group's alternative proposals for wards covering only the south-west of the borough would, however, result in high levels of electoral inequality in that area.

49 We built on these proposals in order to put forward electoral arrangements which would achieve even further improvements in electoral equality, while also seeking to reflect the statutory criteria. Where it existed, we sought to reflect the consensus among representations for warding arrangements in particular parts of the borough. Inevitably, we could not reflect the preferences of all of the respondents in our draft recommendations.

50 At Stage Three, the Council and the Labour Group supported the majority of the draft recommendations. In particular, there was consensus on the ward pattern in the south of the

borough, together with retaining the West Cromwell Road as the northern boundary of Earl's Court ward. The Council, however, proposed minor amendments to the boundaries of Earl's Court, Redcliffe and Courtfield wards to provide clearer boundaries and correct minor errors in its previously submitted electorate figures. Additionally, the Council, supported by the Labour Group, objected to our draft recommendations for St Charles and Golborne wards, proposing an alternative transfer which would retain Ladbroke Grove as boundary between the wards south of the railway line. The Labour Group also proposed an alternative boundary between the Norland and Notting Barns wards to follow the boundary between polling districts D and DA.

51 We have reviewed our draft recommendations in the light of further evidence and the representations received during Stage Three. We note that there is considerable support for the majority of our proposals, but judge that modifications should be made to a number of our proposed boundaries. The following areas, based on existing wards, are considered in turn:

- (a) Avondale, Colville, Golborne, Kelfield and St Charles wards;
- (b) Norland and Pembridge wards;
- (c) Campden and Holland wards;
- (d) Abingdon, Courtfield, Earl's Court, Queen's Gate and Redcliffe wards;
- (e) Brompton, Church, Hans Town and North Stanley wards;
- (f) Cheyne, Royal Hospital and South Stanley wards.

52 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.

Avondale, Colville, Golborne, Kelfield and St Charles wards

53 The number of electors per councillor in the two-member St Charles and Kelfield wards is 15 per cent above and 25 per cent above the borough average respectively (19 per cent above and 22 per cent above in 2003). In the three-member Golborne, Avondale and Colville wards the number of electors per councillor is 9 per cent below, 4 per cent below and 4 per cent below the borough average respectively (11 per cent below, 7

per cent below and 6 per cent below in 2003).

54 At Stage One, the Borough Council proposed that part of Kelfield ward should be included in an expanded St Charles ward, with the boundary aligned along Oxford Gardens in order to provide good electoral equality in a three-member ward pattern. For the same reason, it also proposed a new Notting Barns ward, combining the remainder of Kelfield ward with part of Avondale ward. While acknowledging that there is "no natural boundary" between the proposed Notting Barns ward and Norland ward to the south, the Council stated that it had "preserved the integrity of two notable communities - Nottingwood House and the Henry Dickens Estate". The Council, however, proposed no change to Golborne and Colville wards, arguing that they are currently defined by clear boundaries, although a relatively high level of electoral inequality would continue to exist in Golborne ward. Under its proposals, the number of electors per councillor in St Charles, Golborne, Colville and Notting Barns wards would be 3 per cent above, 9 per cent below, 4 per cent below and 6 per cent above the borough average respectively (4 per cent above, 11 per cent below, 6 per cent below and 4 per cent above the average respectively in 2003).

55 The Labour Group objected to the boundary between the Borough Council's proposed Notting Barns and Norland wards, proposing instead that the boundary should reflect current polling district boundaries in the area by including polling district DA in Norland ward and polling district D in Notting Barns ward. Additionally, it considered that Norland ward should be renamed Notting Dale to reflect community identity.

56 The Liberal Democrats proposed transferring the area south of Golborne Road and west of the Portobello Road from Golborne ward to Colville ward, together with the area bounded by St Charles Square, Exmoor Street and Barlby Road from the current St Charles ward to Golborne ward. The Liberal Democrats did not provide detailed proposals for the remainder of the wards in this area, considering that ideally there should be four wards, represented by nine councillors, covering the north-west part of the borough, extending as far south as Holland Park Avenue, but acknowledged that this would not fit with a pattern of three-member wards.

57 We considered that the Borough Council's scheme provided a good pattern of representation in this area, however, to improve electoral equality

further we proposed two additional changes to the Borough Council's scheme. We proposed transferring the area bounded by St Charles Square, Exmoor Street and Barlby Road, covering the Treverton and Balfour-Burleigh estates, from St Charles ward to Golborne ward, which partly reflected the Liberal Democrats' proposal for this area. We noted that the proposed ward would cross Ladbroke Grove, but given the improvement to electoral equality achieved, particularly in Golborne ward, we concluded that such a proposal would provide for the most appropriate balance

member Pembridge ward, the number of electors per councillor is 1 per cent below the average (4 per cent below in 2003).

64 The Borough Council proposed combining the current Norland ward with part of Avondale ward to form a new three-member Norland ward, with the remainder of Avondale ward included in a new Notting Barns ward, described above. It also proposed no change to Pembridge ward, stating that the ward, currently bounded by Westbourne Grove, Ladbrooke Grove and Notting Hill Gate, has an electoral variance of under 10 per cent. Under the Borough Council's scheme the number of electors per councillor for Pembridge ward would remain unchanged. In the enlarged Norland ward, the number of electors per councillor would be 6 per cent above the average (3 per cent above in 2003).

65 The Liberal Democrats proposed a minor change to Pembridge ward, transferring the area bounded by Colville Terrace and Portobello Road from Colville ward to Pembridge ward, but did not provide details for the area west of Ladbrooke Grove. Under its proposals for Pembridge ward, the number of electors per councillor would be 10 per cent above the borough average (5 per cent above in 2003).

66 In view of the good electoral equality achieved under the Borough Council's scheme for Norland and Pembridge wards, together with the retention of the majority of the current boundaries, we adopted the Borough Council's proposals for these wards as part of our draft recommendations.

67 At Stage Three, there was general support for our draft recommendation for no change to Pembridge ward and we therefore confirm it as final. The Council also supported our draft recommendation for Norland ward. However, the Labour Group, Karen Buck MP, the Regent's Park & Kensington North Labour Party, Councillor Blanchflower (member for Avondale ward), four local residents and the headmaster of a local school objected to our draft recommendation for Norland ward, stating that the ward's northern boundary should follow the boundary between polling districts D and DA, as described earlier.

68 We have carefully considered the representations received during the consultation period and noted the Labour Group's proposal for the northern boundary of Norland ward but, as described earlier, we do not consider that the revised ward boundary better reflects communities in the area nor that it

would provide for wards which are more locally recognisable. We therefore confirm our draft recommendations for Norland ward as final.

Campden and Holland wards

69 In the three-member wards of Campden and Holland the number of electors per councillor is 8 per cent below and 2 per cent below the borough average respectively (5 per cent below and equal to the average in 2003).

70 At Stage One, the Borough Council proposed no change to Holland and Campden wards, both of which it stated had electorates "within acceptable limits". It also considered that these wards currently have clear boundaries such as Holland Park Avenue and Notting Hill Gate to the north, and Kensington High Street to the south.

71 The Liberal Democrats proposed that both the northern and southern boundaries of these two wards should be retained but that the boundary between them should be amended.

72 In view of the current levels of electoral equality achieved, both in these two wards and in neighbouring wards, combined with the well-defined ward boundaries, we adopted the Borough Council's proposals for no change to Campden and Holland wards as part of our draft recommendations.

73 At Stage Three, the Council supported the draft recommendations and we received no further specific comments on these wards. We therefore confirm our draft recommendations for Holland and Campden wards as final.

Abingdon, Courtfield, Earl's Court, Queen's Gate and Redcliffe wards

74 The number of electors per councillor in the three-member Abingdon, Courtfield, Earl's Court, Queen's Gate and Redcliffe wards is 3 per cent below, equal to, 26 per cent above, 6 per cent below and 1 per cent below the borough average respectively (4 per cent above, 3 per cent below, 23 per cent above, 6 per cent below and 4 per cent below in 2003).

75 At Stage One, the Borough Council proposed including the south side of the West Cromwell Road in Abingdon ward, to help reduce the current high level of electoral inequality in Earl's Court ward. It also proposed a minor amendment to Queen's Gate ward, transferring the St Mary

Abbots Hospital site, together with Pennant Mews and part of Lexham Gardens, from Abingdon ward to Queen's Gate ward. Additionally, it proposed transferring Bolton Gardens and part of Bramham Gardens from Earl's Court ward to Redcliffe ward. It proposed no change to Courtfield ward. Under its proposals the number of electors per councillor in Earl's Court, Abingdon, Queen's Gate and Redcliffe wards would be 8 per cent above, 3 per cent below, 7 per cent above and 4 per cent above the average respectively (5 per cent above, 4 per cent above, 6 per cent above and 2 per cent above the average in 2003).

76 The Labour Group and the Constituency Labour Party opposed the Borough Council's proposed boundary between Abingdon and Earl's Court wards, arguing that the West Cromwell Road, a six-lane motorway at this point, provides a clear boundary, and proposed that the existing boundary should be retained between the wards. The Labour Group acknowledged that this would leave Earl's Court ward under-represented and therefore proposed transferring the area bounded by Earl's Court Road and Earl's Court Gardens from Earl's Court ward to Courtfield ward, to improve electoral equality. The Constituency Labour Party supported the Labour Group's proposals and further considered that the boundary between Abingdon and Queen's Gate wards should be retained.

77 The Liberal Democrats also proposed that the West Cromwell Road should be retained as the northern boundary of Earl's Court ward, stating that as a "6-8 lane urban motorway [it is] a clearly indisputable natural boundary". In order to improve electoral equality, it proposed amending the eastern boundary to follow Barkston Gardens and Earl's Court Road, transferring part of Barkston Gardens, Hesper Mews, Bramham Gardens and Bolton Gardens from Earl's Court ward to Courtfield ward. In addition to retaining the West Cromwell Road as a boundary, the Liberal Democrats proposed no change to the remaining boundaries of Abingdon ward for community identity reasons and proposed the current Queen's Gate ward be retained.

78 We considered that the Borough Council's proposals provided improved levels of electoral equality while generally reflecting the statutory criteria. However, we also agreed with the Labour Group, the Constituency Labour Party and the Liberal Democrats that the West Cromwell Road constitutes a clear boundary in this area and

therefore proposed retaining it as the boundary between Earl's Court and Abingdon wards. This would facilitate the retention of the existing boundary between Abingdon and Queen's Gate wards, as proposed by the Liberal Democrats, providing good electoral equality while reflecting community identity.

79 Having retained the West Cromwell Road as the boundary between Abingdon and Earl's Court wards, we proposed three further consequential changes to ensure electoral equality in this area. Having considered the alternatives, we proposed transferring Barkston Gardens, Earl's Court Gardens and Morton Mews from Earl's Court ward to Courtfield ward, with the western boundary in this area following Earl's Court Road. As a consequence of the transfer from Earl's Court ward, Courtfield ward would be slightly under-represented, and we therefore proposed transferring Onslow Gardens from Courtfield ward to Brompton ward, where the current boundary is less well defined, to ensure better electoral equality. Additionally, we proposed transferring part of Bolton Gardens, Bramham Gardens and Hesper Mews from Earl's Court ward to Redcliffe ward, partly reflecting the Borough Council's proposals.

80 Under our draft recommendations the number of electors per councillor in the wards of Earl's Court, Courtfield, Abingdon and Queen's Gate wards would be 8 per cent above, 7 per cent above, 3 per cent below and equal to the borough average respectively (5 per cent above, 4 per cent above, 4 per cent above and 6 per cent below the borough average respectively in 2003).

81 At Stage Three, we received no objections to our draft recommendations for no change to Abingdon and Queen's Gate wards and therefore confirm them as final. The Borough Council supported our draft recommendation to retain the West Cromwell Road as the northern boundary of Earl's Court ward, but put forward slightly amended boundaries between Earl's Court, Courtfield and Redcliffe wards in order to correct

Group and one local resident supported our draft recommendations, particularly the retention of the West Cromwell Road as the northern boundary of Earl's Court ward.

82 In the light of the general support for our draft recommendations for Earl's Court ward we are confirming our draft recommendation to retain the West Cromwell Road as the northern boundary of Earl's Court ward. We are, however, adopting the majority of the Borough Council's proposed boundary amendments between Courtfield, Redcliffe and Earl's Court wards, in order to reflect the revised electorate figures, although we propose to confirm our recommendation that the boundary between Earl's Court and Redcliffe wards should follow Earl's Court Road, (thereby including numbers 1 and 2 The Mansions and the YWCA in Redcliffe ward). We also propose that the transfer of the area around Onslow Gardens from Courtfield ward to Brompton ward should be slightly amended to reflect the Council's comments. The final boundaries are shown on the large map inserted at the back of the report.

83 Under our final recommendations for Courtfield, Earl's Court and Redcliffe wards, the number of electors per councillor would be 7 per cent above, 6 per cent above and 9 per cent above the average respectively (3 per cent above, 4 per cent above and 7 per cent above in 2003).

Brompton, Church, Hans Town and North Stanley wards

84 In the two-member Brompton, Church and North Stanley wards the number of electors per councillor is 25 per cent below, 15 per cent below and 12 per cent above the borough average respectively (20 per cent below, 16 per cent below and 22 per cent above in 2003). The three-member Hans Town ward is 11 per cent below the average (13 per cent below in 2003).

85 At Stage One, the Borough Council proposed expanding Brompton ward to provide for an increase in the number of councillors from two to three. It proposed combining the current Brompton ward with part of Hans Town ward, north of Walton Street and Pont Street, together with the area bounded by Pond Street, Exworth Street and Elystan Street, currently in Church ward. Under its proposal for Brompton ward, the number of electors per councillor would be 1 per cent below the average (1 per cent above the

average in 2003).

86 The Liberal Democrats also proposed an enlarged Brompton ward, with its southern and eastern boundaries following Walton Street, Pont Street and Sloane Street and the western boundary following Stanhope Gardens, Gloucester Road and Cranley Gardens.

87 We considered that the Borough Council's proposal for an enlarged Brompton ward met the statutory criteria, while helping to provide improved electoral equality in a pattern of three-member wards, and therefore adopted its proposal for Brompton ward, together with our additional transfer of part of Onslow Gardens from Courtfield ward, as detailed above, as part of our draft recommendations. The number of electors per councillor in Brompton ward would be 2 per cent above the average (4 per cent above in 2003).

88 The Borough Council further proposed that part of Church ward, bounded by Draycott Avenue, Whiteheads Grove and Cale Street (containing the Sutton Dwellings), should be included in a revised Hans Town ward. Additionally, Hans Town ward would include part of the current Royal Hospital ward, south of Elystan Place.

89 The Council also proposed that the remainder of Church ward should be combined with North Stanley ward to form a new three-member Stanley ward, retaining the existing boundaries of the King's Road and the Fulham Road, but with the eastern boundary following Bury Walk, Cale Street and Markham Street. Consequently, Church ward would be abolished, in order to provide improved electoral equality and to facilitate a pattern of three-member wards. Under the Borough Council's proposals for Hans Town and Stanley wards, the number of electors per councillor would be 4 per cent above and 7 per cent below the borough average respectively (1 per cent above and equal to the average in 2003).

90 The Labour Group supported the Borough Council's proposal for Hans Town ward. It, however, proposed a different configuration of the wards covering the current North Stanley and South Stanley wards for community identity reasons, stating that "the community within the present South Stanley ward has little affinity with that in the area to the east of Old Street, and a far greater affinity with ... the other side of Kings

Road". Its proposal for a three-member ward bounded by the Fulham Road and Old Church Street, together with a three-member ward for the remainder of the area covered by the two current wards would, however, have resulted in high levels of electoral inequality of over 20 per cent, which we consider unacceptable in an urban area such as Kensington & Chelsea.

91 The Liberal Democrats supported the Borough Council's proposed Stanley ward, but preferred the retention of the name North Stanley. They also proposed a similar configuration for Hans Town ward, but with a slightly different boundary to the north, running along Sloane Street, to include streets between the borough boundary and Pont Street.

92 We considered that the Borough Council's scheme for the wards in this area provided good levels of electoral equality, in a pattern of three-member wards, while retaining identifiable boundaries, particularly the King's Road and the Fulham Road. Moreover, there was agreement between the Borough Council and the Labour Group on the proposed Hans Town ward, and between the Borough Council and the Liberal Democrats' proposals on the area covered by Stanley ward. We therefore adopted the Borough Council's proposals for Hans Town and Stanley wards as part of our draft recommendations.

93 At Stage Three, the Borough Council and the Labour Group supported the draft recommendations for these wards and we received no further comments. We therefore confirm our draft recommendations for Brompton (with a minor amendment described above), Hans Town and Stanley wards as final.

Cheyne, Royal Hospital and South Stanley wards

94 In the two-member Cheyne, Royal Hospital and South Stanley wards, the number of electors per councillor is 19 per cent above, 7 per cent below, and 21 per cent above the average respectively (16 per cent above, 6 per cent below and 23 per cent above the borough average in 2003).

95 At Stage One, the Borough Council proposed that there should be two three-member wards in this area, Cremorne (covering an area similar to the current South Stanley ward) and Royal Hospital, with the boundary between them following Oakley

Street. It additionally proposed amending the northern boundary of Royal Hospital ward to follow the King's Road. As a consequence, Cheyne ward would be abolished. The number of electors per councillor in Cremorne and Royal Hospital wards would be 4 per cent below and equal to the average respectively (both 2 per cent below the average in 2003).

96 The Liberal Democrats supported the Borough Council's proposals for Cremorne ward, but proposed that South Stanley should be retained as the ward name. They also proposed a Royal Hospital ward similar to that proposed by the Borough Council, but with the northern boundary following Markham Street, Elystan Place, Draycott Place, Cadogan Gardens and Sloane Square. Under the Liberal Democrats' proposals, the number of electors per councillor in South Stanley and Royal Hospital wards would be 2 per cent below and 8 per cent above the average respectively (both 1 per cent below in 2003).

97 The Labour Group proposed a different configuration of the wards covering the current North Stanley and South Stanley wards for community identity reasons, as described above. Its proposal, however, would result in high levels of electoral inequality. Councillor Boulton, member for South Stanley ward, supported the Labour Group's proposals, but included the Sutton Estate, to provide better electoral equality. This would, however, worsen electoral equality in the surrounding wards. The Constituency Labour Party put forward an alternative name for South Stanley ward, World's End, which it said would reflect community identity.

98 We considered that the Borough Council's proposals, which were generally supported by the Liberal Democrats, achieved improved electoral equality, reflected the broad community areas and provided for the retention of clear boundaries. Accordingly, we adopted the Borough Council's proposals for Cremorne and Royal Hospital wards as part of our draft recommendations.

99 At Stage Three, both the Borough Council and the Labour Group supported our draft recommendations for these wards. The Kensington & Chelsea Constituency Labour Party objected to our draft recommendation for the name Cremorne, reiterating its proposition that the name World's End would better reflect the area covered.

100 We have noted the general support for our draft

recommendations for these wards, together with the alternative ward name put forward by the Constituency Labour Party. We, however, note that there is no consensus on ward names, and consider that there is insufficient evidence to adopt the Constituency Labour Party's alternative proposal, and therefore confirm our draft recommendations for Cremorne and Royal Hospital wards as final.

Conclusions

101 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) retaining the Treverton and Balfour-Burleigh estates in St Charles ward, while retaining Labroke Grove as the boundary between these wards south of the railway line;
- (b) transferring the Kensal area north of the railway line, including the Kensal Gasworks development site, from St Charles ward to Golborne ward,;
- (c) minor boundary changes between the wards of Brompton, Courtfield, Earl's Court and Redcliffe.

102 We conclude that, in the Royal Borough of Kensington & Chelsea:

- (a) the council size should be 54 members, the

same as at present;

- (b) there should be 18 wards, three less than at present, which would involve changes to 16 of the existing wards.

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

104 As shown in Figure 4, our final recommendations for the Royal Borough of Kensington & Chelsea 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 10 to zero. This improved balance of representation is expected to improve further with all wards expected to vary by less than 10 per cent in 2003. 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

The Royal Borough of Kensington & Chelsea should comprise 54 councillors serving 18 wards, as detailed and named in Figures 1 and 2, and illustrated on Map 2 and the large map in the back of the report.

Figure 4 :
Comparison of Current and Recommended Electoral Arrangements

	1998 electorate		2003 forecast electorate	
	Current arrangements	Final recommendations	Current arrangements	Final recommendations
Number of councillors	54	54	54	54
Number of wards	21	18	21	18
Average number of electors per councillor	1,877	1,877	1,960	1,958
Number of wards with a variance more than 10 per cent from the average	10	0	11	0
Number of wards with a variance more than 20 per cent from the average	4	0	4	0

Map 2:
The Commission's Final Recommendations for the Royal Borough of Kensington & Chelsea



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6. NEXT STEPS

105 Having completed our review of electoral arrangements in the Royal Borough of Kensington & Chelsea and submitted our final recommendations to the Secretary of State, we have fulfilled our statutory obligation under the Local Government Act 1992.

106 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.

107 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 the Royal Borough of Kensington & Chelsea

Our final recommendations, detailed in Figures 1 and 2, which differ from those we put forward as draft recommendations are set out below.

Figure B1:

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

Ward name	Number of councillors	Electorate (1998)	Number of electors per councillor	Variance from average %	Electorate (2003)	Number of electors per councillor	Variance from average %
Courtfield	3	6,004	2,001	7	6,115	2,038	4
Earl's Court	3	6,087	2,029	8	6,198	2,066	5
Golborne	3	5,525	1,842	-2	5,636	1,879	-4
Redcliffe	3	6,070	2,032	8	6,146	2,055	5
St Charles	3	5,394	1,798	-4	5,730	1,910	-3

Source: Electorate figures are based on the Royal Borough of Kensington & Chelsea's Council's Stage One submission.

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

