LOCAL
GOVERNMENT
COMMISSION
FOR ENGLAND

DRAFT
RECOMMENDATIONS
ON THE FUTURE
ELECTORAL
ARRANGEMENTS FOR
BEXLEY

March 1999
This report sets out the Commission's draft recommendations on the electoral arrangements for the London borough of Bexley.

Members of the Commission are:

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

Barbara Stephens (Chief Executive)

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WHY YOUR LOCAL AUTHORITY IS UNDER REVIEW

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

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

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

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

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

The Commission began a review of the electoral arrangements for Bexley on 4 August 1998.

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

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

- in five of the 23 wards the number of electors represented by each councillor varies by more than 10 per cent from the average for the borough, and one ward varies by more than 20 per cent from the average;
- by 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 10 wards, and by more than 20 per cent in two wards.

Our main draft recommendations for future electoral arrangements (Figures 1 and 2 and paragraph 102) are that:

- Bexley Borough Council should be served by 63 councillors, one more than at present;
- there should be 21 wards: two fewer than at present, which would involve changes to the boundaries of all but one of the existing wards.

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

- In all but one of the 21 wards the number of electors per councillor would initially vary by no more than 10 per cent from the borough average.
- This electoral equality is forecast to improve further, with the number of electors per councillor in all of the wards expected to vary by no more than 1 per cent from the average for the borough in 2003.

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

- We will consult on our draft recommendations for eight weeks from 2 March 1999. Because we take this consultation very seriously, we may move away from our draft recommendations in the light of Stage Three responses. It is therefore important that all interested parties let us have their views and evidence, whether or not they agree with our draft recommendations.
- After considering local views, we will decide whether to modify our draft recommendations and then make our final recommendations to the Secretary of State for the Environment, Transport and the Regions.
- It will then be for the Secretary of State to accept, modify or reject our final recommendations.
- The Secretary of State will determine when any changes come into effect.

You should express your views by writing directly to the Commission at the address below by 26 April 1999:

Director of Reviews
Bexley Review
Local Government Commission for England
Dolphyn Court
10/11 Great Turnstile
London WC1V 7JU

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

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Ward name</th>
<th>Number of councillors</th>
<th>Constituent areas</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1 Belvedere</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>Belvedere ward (part); Bostall ward (part); Thamesmead East ward (part)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 Blackfen &amp; Lamberoy West</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>Blackfen ward (part); Lamberoy ward (part)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 Blenden &amp; Penhill</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>Blackfen ward (part); Blenden &amp; Penhill ward (part); St Mary's ward (part)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4 Brampton</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>Bostall ward (part); Brampton ward (part); Northumberland Heath ward (part)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5 Christchurch</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>Christchurch ward (part); Upton ward (part)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6 Colyers</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>Barnetwaste North ward; Erith ward (part); North End ward (part); Northumberland Heath ward (part)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7 Cray Meadows</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>Cray ward; St Mary's ward (part); Sidcup East ward (part)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8 Crayford</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>Crayford ward (part); North End ward (part); Upton ward (part)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9 Danson Park</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>Blenden &amp; Penhill ward (part); Christchurch ward (part); Danson ward (part); Upton ward (part)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10 East Wickham</td>
<td>3</td>
<td><strong>Unchanged</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11 Erith</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>Belvedere ward (part); Erith ward (part); North End ward (part); Northumberland Heath ward (part)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12 Lesnes Abbey</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>Belvedere ward (part); Bostall ward (part); Thamesmead East ward (part)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13 Longlands</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>Sidcup East ward (part); Sidcup West ward (part)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14 Mayplace</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>Barnetwaste ward; Christchurch ward (part); Crayford ward (part); Upton ward (part)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15 North End</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>North End ward (part)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16 Northumberland Heath</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>Bostall ward (part); Northumberland Heath ward (part)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17 St Mary's</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>St Mary's ward (part); Sidcup East ward (part)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18 St Michael's</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>Brampton ward (part); St Michael's ward</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19 Sidcup Central &amp; Lamberoy</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>Lamberoy ward (part); Sidcup East ward (part); Sidcup West ward (part)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20 South Welling</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>Blackfen ward (part); Blenden &amp; Penhill ward (part); Danson ward (part); Falconwood ward</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21 Thamesmead East</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>Thamesmead East ward (part)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Note: Map 2 and the large map in the back of the report illustrate the proposed wards outlined above.*
Figure 2:
The Commission's Draft Recommendations for Bexley

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Ward name</th>
<th>Number of councillors</th>
<th>Electorate (1998)</th>
<th>Number of electors per councillor</th>
<th>Variance from average %</th>
<th>Electorate (2003)</th>
<th>Number of electors per councillor</th>
<th>Variance from average %</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1 Belvedere</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>8,090</td>
<td>2,697</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>8,168</td>
<td>2,723</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 Blackfen &amp; Lamorbey West</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>8,028</td>
<td>2,679</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>8,129</td>
<td>2,710</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 Blendon &amp; Penthil</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>8,186</td>
<td>2,729</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>8,054</td>
<td>2,685</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4 Brampton</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>8,349</td>
<td>2,783</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>8,181</td>
<td>2,727</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5 Christchurch</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>8,246</td>
<td>2,749</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>8,020</td>
<td>2,673</td>
<td>-1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6 Colyers</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>8,212</td>
<td>2,737</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>8,036</td>
<td>2,679</td>
<td>-1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7 Cray Meadows</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>8,257</td>
<td>2,752</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>8,068</td>
<td>2,689</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8 Crayford</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>7,912</td>
<td>2,637</td>
<td>-1</td>
<td>8,028</td>
<td>2,676</td>
<td>-1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9 Danson Park</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>8,266</td>
<td>2,755</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>8,068</td>
<td>2,689</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10 East Wickham</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>8,249</td>
<td>2,750</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>8,065</td>
<td>2,688</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11 Erith</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>7,221</td>
<td>2,407</td>
<td>-10</td>
<td>8,152</td>
<td>2,717</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12 Lesnes Abbey</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>8,207</td>
<td>2,736</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>8,109</td>
<td>2,703</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13 Longlands</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>8,001</td>
<td>2,667</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>8,109</td>
<td>2,703</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14 Mayplace</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>7,998</td>
<td>2,666</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>8,095</td>
<td>2,698</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15 North End</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>7,207</td>
<td>2,402</td>
<td>-10</td>
<td>8,110</td>
<td>2,703</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16 Northumberland Heath</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>7,744</td>
<td>2,581</td>
<td>-3</td>
<td>8,116</td>
<td>2,705</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17 St Mary's</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>8,384</td>
<td>2,795</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>8,052</td>
<td>2,684</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18 St Michael's</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>8,041</td>
<td>2,680</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>7,984</td>
<td>2,661</td>
<td>-1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19 Sidcup Central &amp; Lamorbey</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>8,194</td>
<td>2,731</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>8,086</td>
<td>2,695</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20 South Welling</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>8,135</td>
<td>2,712</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>8,085</td>
<td>2,695</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Figure 2 (continued):
The Commission's Draft Recommendations for Bexley

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Ward name</th>
<th>Number of councillors</th>
<th>Electorate (1998)</th>
<th>Number of electors per councillor</th>
<th>Variance from average %</th>
<th>Electorate (2003)</th>
<th>Number of electors per councillor</th>
<th>Variance from average %</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>21 Thamesmead East</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>6,929</td>
<td>2,310</td>
<td>-13</td>
<td>8,196</td>
<td>2,732</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Totals</strong></td>
<td><strong>63</strong></td>
<td><strong>167,866</strong></td>
<td><strong>-</strong></td>
<td><strong>-</strong></td>
<td><strong>169,911</strong></td>
<td><strong>-</strong></td>
<td><strong>-</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Averages</strong></td>
<td><strong>-</strong></td>
<td><strong>2,665</strong></td>
<td><strong>-</strong></td>
<td><strong>-</strong></td>
<td><strong>2,697</strong></td>
<td><strong>-</strong></td>
<td><strong>-</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Electorate figures are based on Bexley Labour Party & Bexley Council Labour Group'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. Figures have been rounded to the nearest whole number.
1. INTRODUCTION

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

2 In undertaking periodic electoral reviews, we must have regard to:

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

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

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

The London Boroughs

5 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.)

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

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

![Figure 3:
Stages of the Review](image)

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

18 The borough of Bexley lies in south-east London. It has a five-mile frontage onto the River Thames in the north, and is bounded to the west by the borough of Greenwich, to the south by the borough of Bromley and to the east by the county of Kent. Bexley, with a population of some 219,000 covering an area of 6,065 hectares, has a population density of just over 36 people per hectare.

19 The borough is mainly residential in character, although there is some local industry in Thamesmead, Belvedere, Erith, Crayford and on the outskirts of Sidcup. Bexley has a variety of parks and open spaces, including Danson Park, Hall Place, Foots Cray Meadows, Sidcup Place and Lesnes Abbey. The borough has good transport links, with a number of railway lines traversing it in a broadly east-west direction from north Kent to central London. Main trunk roads, including the A2 (London to Dover road), run through the middle of the borough and the A20 (London to Folkestone road) forms part of its southern boundary. The M25 motorway is also within easy reach.

20 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'.

21 The electorate of the borough (February 1998) is 167,866. The Council currently has 62 councillors who are elected from 23 wards (Map 1 and Figure 4). Eighteen wards are each represented by three councillors, three wards elect two councillors each and two wards elect one councillor. As in all London boroughs, the whole council is elected together every four years.

22 Since the last electoral review (completed in 1977), there has been an increase in electorate in the borough, with around 3 per cent more electors than at that time, mainly as a result of new housing developments in the north and north-east of the borough.

23 At present, each councillor represents an average of 2,708 electors, which the Borough Council forecasts would increase to 2,741 by the year 2005 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 five of the 23 wards varies by more than 10 per cent from the borough average, and in one ward by more than 20 per cent. The worst imbalance is in Cray ward where each of the two councillors represents on average 24 per cent fewer electors than the borough average.

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1 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, Bexley is in the second phase of reviews.

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

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

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

12 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 Bexley

13 This is our first review of the electoral arrangements for Bexley. The last such review was undertaken by our predecessor, the Local Government Boundary Commission (LGBCC), which reported to the Secretary of State in July 1977 (Report No. 241).

14 Stage One began on 4 August 1998, when we wrote to Bexley Borough Council inviting proposals for future electoral arrangements. We also notified the local authority associations, the Metropolitan Police, Members of Parliament and the Member of the European Parliament with constituency interests in the borough, and the headquarters of the main political parties. We placed a notice in the local press, issued a press release and other publicity, and invited the Borough Council to publicise the review further. The closing date for receipt of representations, the end of Stage One, was 9 November 1998.

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

16 Stage Three began on 2 March 1999 and will end on 26 April 1999. This stage involves publication of the draft recommendations in this report and public consultation on them. We take this consultation very seriously and it is therefore important that all those interested in the review should let us have their views and evidence, whether or not they agree with our draft recommendations.

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

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Ward name</th>
<th>Number of councillors (1998)</th>
<th>Number of electors per councillor</th>
<th>Variance from average</th>
<th>Electorate (2003)</th>
<th>Number of electors per councillor</th>
<th>Variance from average</th>
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**Source:** Electorate figures are based on the 1998 Local Government Boundary Commission's submission.

**Note:** The 'variance from average' column shows how far, in percentage terms, the number of electors per councillor varies from the average for the borough. The minus symbol (-) denotes a lower than average number of electors. For example, in 1998, electors in Cray ward were relatively non-represented by 24 per cent, while electors in Barnehurst North ward were relatively under-represented by 17 per cent. Figures have been rounded to the nearest whole number.
3. REPRESENTATIONS RECEIVED

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

25. During this initial stage of the review, officers from the Commission visited the area and met with officers and members from the Borough Council. We are most grateful to all concerned for their co-operation and assistance. We received several representations during Stage One. The Borough Council, Bexley Labour Party & Bexley Council Labour Group, Bexley Borough Liberal Democrat Party and two local resident all submitted borough-wide schemes. We also received representations from one other local resident and the Bexley Civic Society. These submissions, with accompanying mapping, may be inspected at the offices of the Borough Council and the Commission by appointment.

Bexley Borough Council

26. The Borough Council submitted a borough-wide scheme based on 21 three-member wards. It proposed increasing council size from 62 to 63 members in order to facilitate the creation of an all three-member ward scheme. It did not consider there to be "any justification for further increasing or indeed reducing the size of the Council as the present arrangements have proved wholly satisfactory".

27. The Council proposed modifications to the boundaries of all but two of the existing wards in order to achieve better levels of electoral equality, although it stated that due regard had been given to community identity and natural boundaries wherever possible. The most significant boundary modifications that it proposed were in the Thamesmead East, Belvedere, Northumberland Heath, Erith and North End wards in the north and north-east of the borough; in the Danson, Christchurch and Upton wards in the centre of the borough; and in the Blendon & Penhill, St Mary's and Cray wards in the south and south-east of the borough. The Council also proposed new names for seven wards and suggested retaining 14 existing ward names. The Council's proposals are summarised in Appendix A.

Bexley Labour Party & Bexley Council Labour Group

28. The Bexley Labour Party & Bexley Council Labour Group (the Labour Group) also put forward a borough-wide scheme based on 21 three-member wards. Like the Council it proposed increasing council size from 62 to 63, to provide for an all three-member ward scheme. In its submission the Labour Group listed the members of the working group responsible for devising its proposals, comprising eight borough councillors and four other local residents. It also stated that "considerable consultation took place within the community to ensure that the proposals would be drawn up as locally derived from local residents."

29. The Labour Group proposed modifications to the boundaries of all but one of the existing wards in order to achieve better levels of electoral equality. It proposed amendments to the boundaries of the Thamesmead East, Belvedere, Northumberland Heath, Erith and North End wards in the north and north-east of the borough; and put forward even more significant boundary modifications to the Danson, Christchurch and Upton wards in the centre of the borough; and to the Blackfen, Lamorby, Sidcup West and Sidcup East wards in the south-western part of the borough. The Labour Group proposed new names for 15 wards and suggested retaining nine existing ward names.

Bexley Borough Liberal Democrat Party

30. Bexley Borough Liberal Democrat Party submitted a borough-wide scheme based on 20 three-member wards. It proposed decreasing council size from 62 to 60 members in order to create an all three-member ward scheme. It also stated that it recognised the need to ensure the...
maintenance of community links and that it had observed "hard" identifiable boundaries, notably the A2 trunk road.

31 The Liberal Democrat Party proposed significant modifications to the boundaries of all of the existing wards in order to achieve better levels of electoral equality. The most notable change it proposed was the Thamesmead East, Belvedere, Northumberland Heath, Erith and North End wards in the north and north-east of the borough; to the Cannons, Christchurch and Upnor wards in the centre of the borough; and to all the wards situated to the south of the A2 trunk road in the south of the borough. It proposed new names for seven wards and suggested retaining 13 existing ward names.

Other Representations

32 We received four further representations regarding the electoral arrangements for Bexley borough during Stage One. A local resident submitted a borough-wide scheme, proposing to reduce the number of councillors from 62 to 57, representing 19 three-member wards. He was of the view that as a result of the reduction in services currently provided by the council, fewer councillors would be needed. In addition, he highlighted that under the existing arrangements, wards in the northern part of the borough are generally under-represented, while those in the southern part are generally over-represented.

33 Another local resident also submitted a borough-wide scheme which would reduce council size by 11 members, from 62 to 51, representing 17 three-member wards. He was of the view that a reduction in the Council's activities and responsibilities meant that its workload had diminished and that this suggested there should be a decrease in the number of councillors. His scheme proposed maintaining the current "hard" boundaries of the A2 trunk road and the Bexleyheath railway line.

34 One other resident suggested some general amendments to the current electoral arrangements, proposing that the number of councillors be reduced from 62 to 54. He proposed that the current parliamentary constituency boundaries should be maintained as boundaries to form the starting point of any scheme, and that the current Old Bexley & Sidcup constituency area should be represented by 21 members, the Bexleyheath & Crayford constituency area represented by 21 members and the Erith & Thamesmead constituency area represented by 12 members. He also highlighted the current imbalance of representation between the northern and southern parts of the borough and put forward some modifications to the boundaries of the Thamesmead East, Belvedere, Erith and Northumberland Heath wards.

35 The Bexley Civic Society proposed that the ward containing Leones Abbey Woods should be named Leones ward, as this is the historic name for the area.

4. ANALYSIS AND DRAFT RECOMMENDATIONS

36 As indicated previously, our prime objective in preparing the most appropriate electoral arrangements for Bexley is to achieve electoral equality, having regard to the statutory criteria set out in the Local Government Act 1992 and Schedule 11 to the Local Government Act 1972, which refers to the ratio of electors to councillors being "as nearly as may be, the same in every ward of the district or borough".

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

38 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.

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

Electorate Forecasts

40 Since the last review was completed in 1977, the borough has experienced a 3 per cent growth in electorate. The Borough Council submitted electorate forecasts for the year 2003, projecting an increase in the electorate of just over 1 per cent, from 167,866 to 169,911 over the five-year period from 1998 to 2003. It is expected that most of the growth will be in the northern and north-eastern parts of the borough, in the Thamesmead East, Erith and North End wards, with a slight decrease in electorate in the southern part of the borough. The Council estimated rates and locations of housing development with regard to the unitary development plan for the borough, the expected rate of building over the five-year period and assumed occupancy rates. Advice from the Borough Council on the likely effect on electorates of changes to ward boundaries has been obtained.

41 We accept that this is an inexact science and, having given consideration to the Council's forecast electorates, are content that they represent the best estimates that can reasonably be made at this time.

Council Size

42 Bexley Borough Council currently has 62 members. During Stage One we received proposals based on a number of different council sizes. The Borough Council and the Labour Group proposed increasing council size by one member to 63. However, all of the other borough-wide schemes we received proposed reducing council size. The most radical reduction was put forward by a local resident who proposed that the borough should be represented by 51 councillors, a reduction of 11 members.

43 Our Guidance sets out our position on council size. We have a number of choices: we can recommend a reduction or increase in council size; we could seek some measure of equality of council
size between authorities of similar types and populations; or we could maintain current levels. Following consultation in 1995, the view of the majority of respondents was that the current diversity in council size by and large reflected the diverse nature of the local authorities themselves. The local authority associations were clear that equality of representation within an area was more important than between areas, and that diversity was to be welcomed.

44. We agree with that view. Local government should be as diverse as the communities it serves, providing services, leadership and representation tailored to the characteristics and needs of individual areas. We have therefore adopted a 'broad range band' approach to council size which provides sufficient flexibility to take account of the particular circumstances and characteristics of individual local authority areas and the communities within them. In a London borough such as Bexley, this range is between 40 and 50 councillors. Such a range is not prescriptive and there will be occasions when an authority's council size will fall outside the range.

45. In reaching conclusions on council size, we look to build on local consensus. We will not generally seek a substantial increase or decrease but will be prepared to consider the case for change where there is persuasive evidence. However, we believe that proposals for increases in council size should be fully justified. In particular, we do not accept that increases in an authority's electorate should automatically lead to increases in the number of councillors, nor that changes should be made to the size of an authority simply to make it more consistent with that of a neighbouring area.

46. We expect that diversity within local government is likely to increase rather than decrease. As mentioned earlier in this report, the Government's White Paper Modern Local Government — In Touch with the People sets out legislative proposals for the reappraisal of local authority internal political management structures, based on a variety of models which could involve directly elected mayors and cabinet-style systems. These proposals also envisage enhanced roles for councillors in both their scrutiny and representative roles.

47. In its submission for a 63-member council size, the Council stated that "the present arrangement has proved wholly satisfactory in terms of the circumstances and characteristics of this Authority and enables services, leadership and representation to meet the needs of all parts of the area. There is no evidence that any significant diminutions in the number of councillors would enhance the effectiveness and convenience of the way the Authority conducts its business." Under the Council's proposals, electoral equality would improve, with only two of the proposed wards varying by more than 10 per cent from the average number of electors per councillor for the borough. This level of electoral equality would improve further by 2003, when no ward was projected to vary by more than 5 per cent from the borough average.

48. The Labour Group's submission was based "as closely as possible on the current number of councillors" and proposed a marginal increase in council size in order to accommodate three-member wards throughout the borough. Under its proposals, electoral equality would improve with only one proposed ward varying by more than 10 per cent from the borough average. By 2003, the Labour Group's scheme would provide for an excellent level of electoral equality with none of the proposed wards projected to vary by more than 1 per cent from the average.

49. In order to create an all three-member ward scheme, the Bexley Liberal Democrat Party proposed a slight reduction in council size from 62 to 60 members. Under its proposals, electoral equality would improve with only one of the proposed wards varying from the borough average by more than 10 per cent. By 2003 no ward was projected to vary by more than 4 per cent.

50. A local resident submitted an all three-member ward scheme and proposed to reduce the number of councillors by five members, to 57. He stated that this number of councillors "is not divisible by two, so there should always be one Group or coalition [in a] majority". Under his proposals, all wards vary by more than 10 per cent from the borough average, although by 2003 no ward was projected to vary by more than 5 per cent from the average.

51. As mentioned earlier, another local resident proposed a decrease in council size from 62 to 51 members, again based on an all three-member ward scheme. He stated that "in recent years local government has experienced a number of changes in its duties and responsibilities and this has been demonstrated by the recent transfer of housing stock to housing associations [and] changes in the provision and funding of education ... and there have been reductions in other areas of Council activities. All this has meant a diminution of the workload of the Council. Further changes to the way in which local authorities organise their activities and decision-taking ... would suggest that a reduction rather than an increase in council size is what can be expected in the future." Under the resident's scheme, no ward would vary by more than 10 per cent from the borough average, and by 2003 no ward was projected to vary by more than 5 per cent from the borough average.

52. We have carefully considered all the representations received and have noted that there is a disparity of opinion regarding the appropriate council size for Bexley. Notwithstanding the reasonable levels of electoral equality achieved, the three submissions which proposed a significant reduction in council size (from between 51 and 57 members) have been submitted by local individuals and have not been subject to scrutiny or consultation on a wider scale within the borough. In contrast, there is broad agreement between the Council, the Labour Group and the Liberal Democrat Party that a change in council size is necessary, in order to facilitate the creation of a three-member per ward scheme, but that any change should be kept to a minimum; hence the Liberal Democrat Party proposed a reduction of two councillors, while both the Council and the Labour Group proposed an increase of one councillor. While all three of these proposals would improve electoral equality, we believe there to be wider support for a 63-member, 21 three-member per ward scheme for Bexley, in the light of the local consultation carried out by both the Council and the Labour Group on their respective proposals. Having also considered the size of the electorate, the geography and other characteristics of the area, we have concluded that the statutory criteria and the achievement of electoral equality would be best met by a council size of 65 members.

Electoral Arrangements

53. The current electoral arrangements provide for a majority of three-member wards in Bexley, although there are presently three two-member wards and two single-member wards. Under the 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 reduce from five to two and under the Labour Group's proposals to one. By 2003, both schemes would achieve good levels of electoral equality with no ward under either scheme projected to vary by more than 5 per cent.

54. We were faced with a difficult choice in choosing between the two submissions. In its submission, the Labour Group provided substantial evidence that it had undertaken widespread local consultation, including eight local meetings throughout the borough and discussions with two of the Members of Parliament and the Member of the European Parliament with constituency interests in the borough, which enabled it to provide detailed argumentation with regard to community interests and identifiable boundaries in support of its proposals. Furthermore, its proposals also provided for better overall levels of electoral equality than the Council's proposals, particularly on the five-year forecast, whereby no ward would be expected to vary by more than 1 per cent from the average for the borough. While the Council's scheme would also secure good levels of electoral equality, it would not quite achieve the same very high levels at the Labour Group's submission. Although we commend the Council for submitting a good scheme which generally meets our requirements, we are not putting the scheme forward for consultation at this stage, although some of its proposed wards are similar to those put forward by the Labour Group.

55. In light of the excellent level of electoral equality that would be achieved under the Labour Group's scheme and the detailed argumentation submitted in respect of its proposed ward boundaries, we wish to put it forward in its entirety as our draft recommendations. We consider that this scheme would provide a better balance between the need for electoral equality and the statutory criteria than the current arrangements or the other schemes submitted at Stage One. The following areas, based on existing wards, are considered in turn:

10. Thamesmead East, Rostill and Belvedere wards;
11. Erith, North End, Northumberland Heath and Barnehurst North wards;
councilor in the revised three-member Thamesmead East ward would be 13 per cent below the borough average initially. However, due to a projected increase in the number of electors to the north of Woolwich, the borough was forecast to improve by 2003, when the number of electors per councilor would be 1 per cent above the average for the borough.

59 The Labour Group also proposed creating a new three-member Lesnes Abbey ward, which would contain most of the old Lesnes Abbey Park and Woolwich and the north and eastern part of the Woolwich and Woolwich district. The number of electors per councilor would be 10 per cent above the average for the council.

60 The Labour Group also proposed creating a revised three-member Thamesmead East ward, the Labour Group's proposals for the borough average initially (13 per cent below the average) are based on the recent estimates of the number of electors and councilors in the borough. It is forecast that the number of electors per councilor would increase by 1 per cent above the average for the borough.

61 The Council, in its submission, also acknowledged the under-representation that exists in Thamesmead East ward and the fact that in order to address this, the number of electors to the north of Woolwich, this new Thamesmead East ward would need to be modified. It proposed that an area to the south of Yantons Way (containing 1,997 electors) be transferred out of the existing ward, concurring with the Labour Group that the properties in this area were similar to those immediately to the south of the rail line. The Council's proposal, however, would retain properties immediately on the eastern side of Yantons Way in the revised Thamesmead East ward. The number of electors per councilor in the Council's revised three-member Thamesmead East ward would be 9 per cent below the average initially (5 per cent above in 2003). Although the Liberal Democrat Party's and one local resident's schemes were based on different council sizes (thus making it difficult to compare these schemes accurately to the submissions submitted by the Labour Group and the Council), both schemes proposed similar modifications to the Thamesmead East ward in order to address the under-representation in the ward, supporting the transfer of the area to the south of Yantons Way out of the existing ward.

62 The Council proposed a new three-member Lesnes ward centred around the old Lesnes Abbey Woods. In addition to the electors transferred from the existing ward, the Council's proposals would include a large part of the existing Belvedere ward, to the east of the old Lesnes Abbey Woods, comprising 5,090 electors. The proposed southern boundary of the new ward would follow the centre of Woolwich, then including 679 electors from the current Bostall ward. The number of electors per councilor in the Council's new Lesnes ward would be 3 per cent below the borough average both initially and in 2003.

63 The Council proposed a new ward which would include 1,953 electors from the existing Erith ward and 2,047 electors from the existing Northumberland Heath ward, together with 247 electors from Bostall ward. However, the Council also proposed transferring the northern, Riverside area of Belvedere ward (containing no electors) into a new Erith Riverside ward, in addition to the mentioned transfer of 5,090 electors into the new Lesnes ward. The Council acknowledged that its proposals would separate Belvedere Village from other parts of the Belvedere area included in the new Lesnes ward, but stated that it had "sought to bring within the ward other areas that relate to Belvedere Village", such as the area to the north of Woolwich Leaderway and those roads to the south of Lowerwood Road currently in Erith ward. The number of electors per councilor in the Council's revised three-member Belvedere ward would be 1 per cent below the borough average initially (2 per cent below in 2003).

64 The Council also proposed revising the current Bostall ward by transferring 679 electors to the north of Woolwich Way into the new Lesnes ward, transferring 247 electors to the west of Osborn Road into a revised Belvedere ward and moving the south-eastern boundary of the ward eastwards to include 1,615 electors to the east of Bedfords Road, currently in Northumberland Heath ward. It argued that, in light of the electoral imbalance in the northern wards, such changes were inevitable in order to achieve improved electoral equality. The number of electors per councilor in the revised three-member Bostall ward would be 2 per cent above the borough average initially (2 per cent below in 2003).

65 As outlined earlier in this chapter, we have noted that the Council's proposals for the area would provide for improved levels of electoral equality. However, the Labour Group's scheme would provide for even better levels of electoral equality. We are also of the view that the Labour Group's submission contains more detailed argumentation in support of its proposals, formulated in consultation with local interested parties. We believe this has resulted in a higher regard for community identity and interests, whilst also achieving excellent levels of electoral equality and providing for convenient and identifiable boundaries.

66 We have decided, therefore, to endorse the Labour Group's proposals for revised Thamesmead East and Belvedere wards and a new Lesnes Abbey ward, as shown on the large map inserted at the back of this report, as our draft recommendations. We would welcome views on our proposals during Stage Three.

Erith, North End, Northumberland Heath and Bexleyheath North wards

67 These four wards are situated in the north-eastern part of the borough. The three-member wards of Erith and North End are both currently under-represented, with the number of electors per
councillor varying from the borough average by 2 per cent and 7 per cent respectively (expected to be 11 per cent and 17 per cent in 2003 due to projected increase in electorate). The number of electors per councillor in the three-member ward of Northumberland Heath is currently 1 per cent below the borough average (3 per cent above in 2003). The number of electors is currently under-represented with the number of electors per councillor varying from the borough average by 17 per cent (5 per cent in 2003).

68. The Labour Group put forward modifications which would create four revised wards, proposing that each be represented by three councillors. It proposed modifying the boundaries of the Erith ward to include 328 electors from Belvedere ward (as detailed earlier) and 1,863 electors currently in Northumberland Heath ward (from an area to the east of Brook Street). It also proposed transferring 3,267 electors from the more southern part of the current ward, into a new Colyers ward, and including the new shopping area on the Deep Wharf site (in an area containing no electors currently in North End ward) in the revised Erith ward. The Labour Group argued that its proposal would “unite the older, traditional parts of Erith, such as Lower Road, Battle Road, Pembroke Road, Holly Hill and Platan Road” and that it would also retain the integrity of the town centre and the major amenities important to the community of Erith within the ward, including Erith Hospital, Erith Sports Centre, Erith Stadium, Erith Recreation Ground, Erith Cemetery and Erith College of Technology. It also stated that the southern boundary of its proposed ward “follows the current boundary of the town centre keeping together the integrity of the Erith Conservation Area”. The number of electors per councillor in the Labour Group’s revised Erith ward would be 10 per cent below the borough average initially (improved to 11 per cent above in 2003 due to a projected increase in electorate).

69. The Labour Group put forward a revised North End ward, which would take into account the forecast increase in electorate in the ward, containing that its proposal would also retain “the integrity of the existing North End community, including the North End Primary School and its catchment area”. It proposed transferring 1,512 electors in the south-western part of the existing ward (around Hurstwood Avenue) into a new Colyers ward. While it proposed maintaining the majority of the ward’s southern boundary to follow the Beckley Heath railway line, the Labour Group put forward a new boundary as it recognised that it would transfer two voters in Willow Walk (on the Crayford Marshes) into Crayford ward with which it was argued, “they share more natural links. The number of electors per councillor in the proposed new three-member Colyers ward would be 8 per cent above the borough average initially (1 per cent below in 2003).

70. Notwithstanding the good level of electoral equality that presently exists in the Northumberland Heath ward, the Labour Group proposed modifications to its boundaries in order to accommodate the knock-on effects of its proposals for the other wards in the northern part of the borough. As detailed earlier, it proposed moving the ward’s western boundary further westwards to include 1,872 electors currently in Bostall ward, in addition to transferring 1,863 into the revised Erith ward and 255 electors into a new Colyers ward. The Labour Group also proposed a minor modification to the southern boundary of the Northumberland Heath ward to correct a boundary anomaly affecting 85 electors in Richmond Close, which it argued should be included in Bostall ward. It contended that its proposed ward would retain the community surrounding the traditional Northumberland Heath shopping area along the Beckley Road (known as Spike Island). It would also reflect the community known as Upper Belvedere in the centre of the ward, whilst keeping together the area known as “The Pantiles”. The number of electors per councillor in the revised three-member Northumberland Heath ward would be 3 per cent below the borough average initially (almost equal to the average in 2003).

71. The Labour Group also proposed a new single-member Colyers ward, based on the existing single-member ward of Barnehurst North, together with 3,267 electors from Erith ward, 1,512 electors from North End ward and 255 electors from Northumberland Heath ward (as detailed earlier). It argued that the new ward would reflect the dominance of Colyers Lane, which runs through the centre of the ward, and broadly encompassed the catchment area of Colyers Primary School. The Labour Group also stated that as the Lesney Farm Estate and Lamer Road Estate had long been associated with one another, both communities had been kept together in the proposed new ward. It proposed maintaining the Beckley Heath railway line as the northern boundary of the ward, as it was considered being as strong and identifiable boundary. The number of electors per councillor in the proposed new three-member Colyers ward would be 8 per cent above the borough average initially (1 per cent below in 2003).

72. As a knock-on effect of its proposals in the northern part of the borough, the Council put forward significant proposals for wards in this north-eastern part of the borough. The Council proposed creating a revised three-member Barnehurst ward, comprising the existing two-member Barnehurst and one-member Barnehurst North wards, in addition to 256 electors from the current Crayford ward. It also proposed a revised North End ward which would include 1,697 electors to the south of the Beckley Heath railway line, currently in Crayford ward, while transferring 3,856 electors (to the north of Bridge Road and in the Manor Road area) into a new Erith Riverside ward, and 19 electors from Colyers Lane into a revised Northumberland Heath ward. The Council noted that the revised boundaries would be 4 per cent above and 12 per cent below the borough average initially (1 per cent above and 3 per cent below in 2003).

73. The Council proposed creating a new Erith Riverside ward by transferring (from the present Erith ward) 1,353 electors into a revised Belvedere ward (as detailed earlier) and 3,208 electors, in the Lesney Farm Estate area, into a revised Northumberland Heath ward. It also proposed amending the north-western boundary of the existing Erith ward to include a riverside area currently in Belvedere ward and a small part of the current Thamesmead East ward; however, this modification would not affect any electors. The Council also put forward a revised Northumberland Heath ward, proposing to transfer from the current ward 2,047 electors into Belvedere ward and 1,615 electors into Bostall ward, in addition to including 3,205 electors from the existing Erith ward and 19 electors from North End ward. The number of electors per councillor in the Council’s proposed Erith Riverside and Northumberland Heath wards would be 11 per cent and 6 per cent below the borough average initially (almost equal to the average and 2 per cent below the average in 2003).

74. We have noted that the Council and the Labour Group put forward quite different proposals for this area of the borough. In order to maintain the Beckley Heath railway line as a ward boundary, a proposal which was also put forward by the Liberal Democrat Party and two local residents. Furthermore, the Labour Group proposed maintaining almost the whole length of the Beckley Heath railway line as a boundary right across the borough. We have considered Belvedere Borough as a whole, and have noted that under a council size of 62, the part of the borough to the north of the Beckley Heath railway line is forecast to merit almost exactly 80 councillors by 2003. The Labour Group’s scheme overall would provide for 30 councillors in the northern area, in addition to achieving an excellent level of electoral equality throughout the borough by 2003.

75. The Labour Group submitted detailed evidence that had regard to community interests in the area, particularly its consideration of the Erith Conservation Area and its proposal to maintain the Erith amenities within the Erith ward. In light of the excellent level of electoral equality and recognisable boundaries that would result from the Labour Group’s proposals for revised Erith, North End and Northumberland Heath wards, and a new three-member Colyers ward, as our draft recommendations. Our proposed boundaries are shown on the large map inserted at the back of this report and we would welcome views from all interested parties during Stage Three, particularly regarding ward names.

East Wickham, St Michael’s and Brampton wards

76. The number of electors per councillor in the three-member wards of East Wickham, St Michael’s and Brampton, situated in the north-western part of the borough, is 2 per cent above, 5 per cent below and 2 per cent below the borough average respectively (2 per cent below, 6 per cent below and 6 per cent below respectively in 2003).
average in 2003). In light of this, and as the ward would retain the historic community of East Wicham, the Labour Group proposed retaining the existing three-member East Wicham ward unchanged.

The Labour Group put forward relatively minor modifications to St. Michael's ward, in order to achieve a better level of electoral equality. It proposed including 292 electors from the eastern side of Gypsy Road (currently in Brampton ward) in the revised ward, to unite the road's residents in one ward. This would result in more than 2,000 electors in the revised ward, and in order to achieve a better level of electoral equality, the Labour Group proposed modifications to the northern boundary of the existing Brampton ward. This would result in the inclusion of 636 electors from Bostall ward, in addition to 85 electors in Birchington Close from Northumberland Heath ward (as detailed earlier). The Labour Group proposed maintaining the Bexleyheath railway line as the boundary for all three of the wards in this area. The number of electors per councillor in this revised St Michael's and Brampton wards would be 1 per cent above and 4 per cent above the borough average initially (1 per cent below and 1 per cent above in 2003).

The Council also proposed no change to the existing East Wicham ward, but put forward slightly different modifications to St Michael's ward. It proposed that the southern boundary of the ward should follow the centre of Welling High Street, thus transferring 770 electors from south of the railway line into the revised ward. While the Council acknowledged that "traversing the railway line was not ideal", it put forward this in order to achieve better electoral equality. It also proposed that the eastern boundary of the existing St Michael's ward should be moved westwards to include the whole of Gypsy Road in a revised Brampton ward, affecting 362 electors. The Council's revised Brampton ward would also include 85 electors from Birchington Close in order to connect to St Michael's ward, but would otherwise have no alteration to its southern, eastern and northern boundaries. Under the Council's scheme the number of electors per councillor would be 3 per cent above the borough average in each of the East Wicham, St Michael's and Brampton wards almost equal to, 2 per cent above and almost equal to the borough average respectively in 2003.

We have noted that the Labour Group's and the Council's proposals submitted for this area are broadly similar. Both schemes propose maintaining the existing East Wicham ward unchanged, and both contend that the whole of Gypsy Road should be situated within one ward, a proposal which was also put forward by the Liberal Democrat Party and one local resident. However, we agree with the Labour Group that the Bexleyheath railway line is a strong and identifiable boundary, and as the Labour Group's scheme would provide for better levels of electoral equality throughout the borough overall, we have concluded that we should put forward the Labour Group's proposals for these three wards, as shown on the large map inserted at the back of the report, as our draft recommendations. We would welcome views on these proposals during Stage Three.

Falconwood, Danson, Christchurch and Upton wards

These four wards are situated in the centre and west of the borough, to the south of the Bexleyheath railway line and to the north of the A2 trunk road. The single-member ward of Falconwood is currently under-represented with the number of electors per councillor varying from the borough average by 9 per cent (8 per cent in 2003). The three-member wards of Danson, Christchurch and Upton are all over-represented, with the number of electors per councillor varying from the borough average by 10 per cent, 2 per cent and 4 per cent respectively (12 per cent, 7 per cent and 3 per cent in 2003).

The Labour Group put forward modifications which would create three revised wards, each represented by three councillors. It proposed creating a new South Welling ward, comprising the whole of the existing single-member Falconwood ward, in addition to 4,548 electors from the western part of Danson ward, 609 electors from the north-eastern part of Blackfen ward and 15 electors from the western part of Woolwich North ward, currently in Welling & Penhill ward. The latter two constituent parts of the proposed new ward (624 electors) would be from the southern side of the A2 trunk road. The Labour Group contended that it had been necessary to breach the A2 trunk road in order to achieve greater electoral equality, but stated that the areas to the north and south of the A2 were linked in this vicinity by Woolwich Lane underpass, a subway at Leechcroft Avenue and a footbridge at Buckingham Avenue. It argued that "many residents to the south of the A2 use the footbridge and subway to access Woolwich Infants' and Secondary schools." Furthermore, it added that residents living on both sides of the A2 had already come together to form the 'A2 Residents' Group' which campaigns for improvements for residents living adjacent to both the A2. The number of residents per councillor in the Labour Group's proposed South Welling ward would be 2 per cent above the borough average initially (almost equal to the average in 2003).

As a knock-on effect of its proposal for a new South Welling ward, the Labour Group also proposed significant modifications to the remaining three wards in this area. It proposed a new Danson Park ward comprising the "residential roads surrounding and sharing a community interest in Danson Park," which would include 3,747 electors from the western part of Christchurch ward, 1,621 electors from part of Upton ward and 490 electors from Welling & Penhill ward, in addition to 2,778 electors from the eastern part of the existing Danson ward. The Labour Group reiterated its argument regarding breaching the A2 (as mentioned in paragraph 82). It also argued that in order for residents living off Park Mead to gain access to the A212 road, it was necessary for them to travel through the Danson underpass in a northerly direction to the opposite side of the A2, which indicates that they already share links with the Danson Park community. The Labour Group also stated that the eastern boundary of Upton ward should reflect the historic boundary of the Upton community. The number of electors per councillor in the Labour Group's proposed Danson Park ward would be 3 per cent above the borough average initially (almost equal to the average in 2003).

The Labour Group also proposed a modified Christchurch ward comprising 2,900 electors from the central area of the existing Christchurch ward and 3,346 from the central area of the existing Upton ward. It proposed transferring the remaining 1,286 electors from the eastern part of Christchurch ward (around the Pelham Road area) and 782 electors from an area to the east of Gravel Hill in Upton ward, into a new Mayplace ward (see paragraph 88). A further part of Upton ward, containing 414 electors, would be transferred into a revised Crayford ward.

The Labour Group's modified Christchurch ward would unite the whole of Bexleyheath town centre, including the market square, civic offices and major shopping precincts, in one ward, whilst retaining Christchurch parish church as the ward's focus. The number of electors per councillor in the Labour Group's revised Christchurch ward would be 3 per cent above the borough average initially (1 per cent below in 2003).

The Council's proposals for this area had some similarities to the Labour Group's scheme in that it also put forward three new three-member wards and also proposed breaching the A2 trunk road in some parts. It proposed a new Welling ward, which would comprise all of the Falconwood ward, in addition to 4,378 electors from Danson ward, 652 electors from Blackfen ward and 15 electors from Welling & Penhill ward. However, the Council's proposal was different to the Labour Group's in that it would include electors to the east of Merlin Road North in the new ward, as opposed to including electors to the west of Upton ward. The Council also put forward a new Danson Park ward, involving a modification to the eastern boundary of the present Danson ward, which would include electors from the existing Upton ward. The Council proposed a revised Christchurch ward, based around the central area of Bexleyheath, which would maintain the northern and eastern boundaries of the existing ward. The number of electors per councillor in the Council's proposed Welling, Danson Park and Christchurch wards would respectively be almost equal to, 5 per cent above and 4 per cent above the borough average initially (2 per cent below and almost equal to the average in 2003).

We have noted that both the Labour Group and the Council proposed moving away from using the A2 as a boundary for its one member wards within Bexley.

We are also aware that the Liberal Democrat Party argued that the A2 should not be breached as it is a natural boundary and "physical barrier". We were initially surprised by the proposal to breach the A2 trunk road, as we recognise that it is a very distinct topographical feature. However, in light of the local consensus between the Labour Group and the Council in favour of placing the ward's boundary from both sides of the A2 within the same ward, and having considered the evidence submitted (stating that there
is a community that focuses on the A2) to support this, we have decided to put forward such a proposal for consultation. In light of the better overall levels of electoral equality that would be achieved under the Labour Group's scheme we wish to put forward for consultation its proposals, as shown on the large map inserted at the back of the report. We would welcome views on these proposals. The Group's scheme, Stage Three, particularly with regard to the breaches of the A2 trunk road and the proposed ward names.

**Crayford and Barnehurst wards**

77 Situated in the east of the borough, the three-member ward of Crayford is under-represented by 6 per cent (4 per cent in 2003), while the two-member Barnehurst ward is currently over-represented by 11 per cent (13 per cent in 2003).

78 The Labour Group proposed creating two three-member wards in this area. It put forward a new Mayplace ward, which would comprise the whole of the existing Barnehurst ward, 1,286 electors from the eastern part of the existing Christchurch ward, 782 electors from an area to the east of Crayford Hill currently in Upton ward, and 1,066 electors from the north and north-western part of the current Crayford ward. It stated that the area around St Paulinus church, Shenstone Park and the corner of Bourne Road which contains properties that are part of the Crayford community, would remain in the Crayford ward. The Labour Group contended that the new ward would focus on the historic area of Mayplace, as represented by the site of the former Mayplace Manor, which was located at the current Mayplace golf course. It added that Mayplace Road West and Mayplace Road East run through the centre of the ward, which also contains Mayplace primary school. It therefore proposed that the new ward should be named 'Mayplace'. The number of electors per councillor in the Labour Group's proposed ward would be almost equal to the borough average both initially and in 2003.

79 The Labour Group put forward a modified Crayford ward and proposed that it should remain represented by three members. The revised ward would comprise the majority of the existing Crayford ward, less the 1,086 electors transferred into the new Mayplace ward, but with 414 electors from the eastern part of the current Upton ward and 2 electors transferred from the existing North End ward. The Labour Group's proposal put forward the area of Mayplace in its revised ward would comprise the whole of Crayford town centre together with the Crayford communities along the Thames Road. It also stated that the revised ward would incorporate more of the River Cray valley, which runs through open space to the south of Crayford Road. The Bedseyeath railway line would form the majority of the northern boundary, and the A2 would form the southern boundary of the ward, whilst the western boundary would ensure that all of the Crayford community was retained within the ward.

80 The number of electors per councillor in the revised three-member Crayford ward would be 1 per cent below the borough average both initially and in 2003.

81 As outlined earlier in this chapter, the Council put forward significantly different proposals for the wards in this part of the borough. It proposed that the existing Barnehurst ward should be joined with the Barnehurst North ward to create a modified three-member Barnehurst ward. It also proposed that the northern part of the existing Crayford ward should be included in a revised North End ward. As a knock-on effect of these proposals, the Council proposed a revised Crayford Town ward which would include an area to the east of East Hill, currently in Upton ward. The number of electors per councillor in the Council's proposed Barnehurst and Crayford Town wards would be 4 per cent above 2 per cent below the borough average initially (1 per cent above in both wards in 2003).

82 We are of the view that in this area the Labour Group has provided more evidence on community identity to support its scheme, in addition to achieving an excellent level of electoral equality for the borough overall, as discussed earlier. We conclude therefore, that we should put forward its proposals, as shown on the large map inserted at the back of this report, as our draft recommendations. We would welcome views on these proposals during Stage Three.

**Blendon & Penhill, St Mary's, Sidcup East and Cray wards**

83 These four wards are situated to the south of the A2 trunk road, in the most southern part of the borough. The number of electors per councillor in the three-member wards of Blendon & Penhill, St Mary's and Sidcup East is currently 9 per cent below, 8 per cent above and 6 per cent above the borough average respectively (12 per cent below, 2 per cent above and 6 per cent above in 2003). The two-member Cray ward is currently the most over-represented ward in the borough with the number of electors per councillor varying from the borough average by 24 per cent. This level of electoral inequity is forecast to women still to 26 per cent below the average in 2003.

84 As a knock-on effect of its proposed Danson Park ward, the Labour Group put forward a revised Blendon & Penhill ward, in order to achieve an improved level of electoral equality. In addition to transferring 605 electors from the area north out of the ward, it also proposed modifying its western boundary to include 952 electors from an area around the southern part of Burnt Oak Lane, currently in the Blendon ward, and modifying its eastern boundary to include 364 electors from an area to the north of Riverdale Road (to the north of the River Shute) currently in St Mary's ward. The Labour Group argued that both the Blendon Road and the Penhill Road would run through the ward and that it would retain the Blendon & Penhill roundabout as a landmark within the ward. In addition to transferring 364 electors into Blendon & Penhill ward, the Labour Group proposed three minor modifications to St Mary's ward (affecting no electors) in order to provide for a slightly clearer southern boundary. The Labour Group argued that the revised ward would be based around the centre of the 'Village', which they state as the centre of which is St Mary's church which is still a dominant feature of the ward. The ward would incorporate the whole of the residential community associated with the 'Village'. The number of electors per councillor in the Labour Group's revised Blendon & Penhill and St Mary's wards would be 2 per cent above and 5 per cent above the borough average initially (almost equal to the average in both wards in 2003).

85 The Labour Group proposed creating a new three-member Cray Meadows ward, in order to "bring together the three communities with a shared and common heritage in the Cray valley - Foots Cray, North Cray and Royal Park". It argued that these three communities shared an interest in the Cray Meadows (a site of special environmental interest), that Foots Cray High Street was a shared shopping area for residents of both Foots Cray and North Cray, and that Royal Park primary school was used by many residents from North Cray. It also contended that the industrial and commercial businesses centred in Cray, which, the Group stated, is identified as a location for regeneration in government planning guidance, would be retained within one ward which could assist in the co-ordination of Cray business community. The Labour Group's proposal would modify the existing Sidcup East ward's eastern and north-eastern boundaries, thus transferring a net total of 4,167 electors into the new Cray Meadows ward together with the western part of the Foots Cray ward. It also proposed three minor modifications to the existing Cray ward's northern boundary which would not affect any electors. The number of electors per councillor in the new three-member Cray Meadows ward would also alter the borough average initially (almost equal to the average in 2003).

86 The Council put forward significantly different proposals for this area of the borough. It proposed incorporating the western half of the current Blendon & Penhill ward into an enlarged Blackfen ward. It also proposed that the eastern half of the current Cray Meadows ward should comprise part of a new Blendon & Hurst ward, together with an area around Hurst Road from the western part of the existing St Mary's ward, and an area to the south of the railway line and to the east of Beley Lane from the north-eastern part of the existing Sidcup East ward. The Council also proposed creating a new Blackfen & North Cray ward which would be formed by combining the majority of the existing Blackfen ward with part of the current Cray ward situated to the east of the river Cray. It also proposed that the area to the west of the river Cray in the existing Cray ward should be incorporated into the new East Sidcup ward, as it was of the view that this area has a close affinity with the shopping area, primary schools and commercial area of Sidcup. The number of electors per councillor in the Council's proposed Blendon & Hurst, Blackfen & North Cray and Sidcup East wards would respectively be 7 per cent above, 5 per cent above and 2 per cent below the borough average initially (3 per cent above, almost equal to 1 per cent below the average in 2003).

87 While the Council's proposals would achieve a good level of electoral equality for this area, the Labour Group's proposals would provide an even better level of electoral equality, the number of electors per councillor in all three of its proposed wards would be almost equal to the borough average in 2003. We also concur with the Labour Group's proposal to include Foots Cray and North Cray within the same ward, a suggestion also put forward by the Liberal Democrat Party. We have considered the evidence put forward in all submissions and have concluded that the Labour Group's scheme would provide for the best balance between the achievement of electoral equality and
the statutory criteria. We are therefore putting forward its proposals, as shown on the large map inserted at the back of this report, as our draft recommendations. We would welcome views on these proposals during Stage Three.

**Blackfen, Lamorbey, and Sidcup West wards**

97 These three wards are situated to the south of the A2 trunk road, in the south-western part of the borough. The number of electors per councillor in the two-member Blackfen ward is 4 per cent below the borough average (4 per cent below in 2003). The number of electors per councillor in the three-member wards of Lamorbey and Sidcup West is 1 per cent above the borough average and 3 per cent below the average respectively (almost equal to and 7 per cent below the average in 2003).

98 The Labour Group proposed three new three-member wards for this part of the borough. As a knock-on effect of its proposal to transfer 609 electors from Blackfen ward into a new South Welling ward and 952 electors into a revised Blendon & Penhill ward, it proposed creating a new Blackfen & Lamorbey ward by including 4,395 electors from the western half of the existing Lamorbey ward. It stated that Days Lane would run through the centre of the ward, linking the northern and southern parts of it. The number of electors per councillor in this new ward would be 1 per cent above the borough average initially (almost equal to the average in 2003).

99 The Labour Group also put forward a new Sidcup Central & Lamorbey ward which would comprise 3,828 electors from the central and eastern parts of the current Lamorbey ward, 4,216 electors from the north-western part of the current Sidcup East ward and 150 electors from Sidcup West ward, from the western side of Station Road. It argued that this ward would unite Sidcup town centre, in that it would incorporate Sidcup station and the office developments along both sides of Station Road within one ward. The Labour Group also proposed a new Longlands ward which would comprise all of the existing Sidcup West ward (less the 150 electors transferred into the proposed Sidcup Central & Lamorbey ward) and 284 electors from around Sidcup Place and Queen Mary's Hospital in the southern part of the existing Sidcup East ward. The Labour Group contended that Longlands was the historic name for the former Manor House in the area and that a large part of the western end of the present Sidcup West ward is still known as Longlands. It also stated that the name continued to exist in the name of Longlands Road, which runs through the centre of the ward, Longlands primary school and Longlands recreation ground. The number of electors per councillor in the Labour Group's proposed Sidcup Central & Lamorbey and Longlands wards would be 3 per cent above and almost equal to the borough average initially (almost equal to the average in both wards in 2003).

100 Given the good level of electoral equality that would continue in the existing Lamorbey ward under a 63-member council size, the Council proposed maintaining the current ward unchanged. As a knock-on effect of its proposed Welling ward, it also proposed a revised Blackfen ward, in order to achieve an improved level of electoral equality, which would include 3,776 electors from the existing Blendon & Penhill ward. The Council proposed a slight modification to the boundary of the existing Sidcup West ward, in order to improve electoral equality, which would involve transferring 283 electors from the eastern side of Station Road, currently in Sidcup East ward, into the revised ward. The number of electors per councillor in the Council's proposed Lamorbey, Blackfen and Sidcup West wards would respectively be 3 per cent above, 4 per cent above and 3 per cent above the borough average initially (2 per cent above, 3 per cent above and 2 per cent below in 2003).

101 We have noted that the Council and the Labour Group put forward quite different proposals for much of this area of the borough. The Labour Group's scheme would secure an acceptable level of electoral equality; the number of electors per councillor in all three of its proposed wards would be almost equal to the borough average in 2003. We are therefore putting forward the Labour Group's proposed Blackfen & Lamorbey West, Sidcup Central & Lamorbey and Longlands wards, as shown on the large map inserted at the back of this report, as our draft recommendations. We would very much welcome views on our proposals for this area, particularly in relation to ward names.

**Conclusions**

102 Having considered all the evidence and representations received during the initial stage of the review, we are putting forward the Bexley Labour Party & Beasley Council Labour Group's scheme in its entirety as our draft recommendations and therefore propose that:

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<th>Ward</th>
<th>1998 electorate</th>
<th>2003 forecast electorate</th>
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<td>Current arrangements</td>
<td>Draft recommendations</td>
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<td>Number of councillors</td>
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<td>Number of wards</td>
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<td>Number of wards with a variance more than 20 per cent from the average</td>
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104 As shown in Figure 5, our draft recommendations for Bexley 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 five to one. This improved balance of representation is expected to continue in 2003, with no ward expected to vary by more than 1 per cent from the average number of electors per councillor at that time. Our draft recommendations are set out in more detail in Figures 1 and 2, and illustrated on Map 2 and the large map inserted in the back of this report.

Draft Recommendation

Bexley Borough Council should comprise 63 councillors serving 21 wards, as detailed and named in Figures 1 and 2, and illustrated on Map 2, and the large map inserted in the back of the report.

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

The Commission is putting forward draft recommendations on the future electoral arrangements for Bexley. Now it is up to the people of the area. We will take fully into account all representations received by 26 April 1999. Representations received after this date may not be taken into account. All representations will be available for public inspection by appointment at the offices of the Borough Council and the Commission, and a list of respondents will be available on request from the Commission after the end of the consultation period.

Views may be expressed by writing directly to:

Director of Reviews
Bexley Review
Local Government Commission for England
Dolphins Court
10/11 Great Turnstile
London WC1V 7JU

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

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

Proposed Electoral Arrangements

The following table illustrates the levels of electoral equality that would be achieved under the scheme submitted by Bexley Borough Council. Full details of all submissions received during Stage One, including accompanying mapping, may be inspected at the offices of the Borough Council and the Commission by appointment.

Bexley Borough Council’s Proposal

Figure A1: Number of Councillors and Electors by Ward

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Ward name</th>
<th>Number of councillors (1998)</th>
<th>Number of electors per councillor</th>
<th>Variance from average %</th>
<th>Electorate (2003)</th>
<th>Number of electors per councillor</th>
<th>Variance from average %</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1 Barnhurst</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>8,278</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>8,183</td>
<td>2,728</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 Belvedere</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>7,949</td>
<td>-1</td>
<td>7,898</td>
<td>2,633</td>
<td>-2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 Bexley &amp; North Cray</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>8,375</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>8,117</td>
<td>2,792</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4 Blackfen</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>8,328</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>8,323</td>
<td>2,776</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5 Blendon &amp; Hurst</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>8,551</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>8,295</td>
<td>2,850</td>
<td>3</td>
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<tr>
<td>6 Bostall</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>8,123</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>7,914</td>
<td>2,708</td>
<td>-2</td>
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<tr>
<td>7 Brampton</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>8,267</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>8,110</td>
<td>2,756</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8 Christchurch</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>8,331</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>8,094</td>
<td>2,777</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9 Crayford Towns</td>
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<td>7,825</td>
<td>-2</td>
<td>8,155</td>
<td>2,608</td>
<td>1</td>
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<tr>
<td>10 Danson Park</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>8,377</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>8,158</td>
<td>2,792</td>
<td>1</td>
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<tr>
<td>11 East Wickham</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>8,249</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>8,065</td>
<td>2,750</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<td>7,095</td>
<td>-11</td>
<td>8,070</td>
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<td>3</td>
<td>8,261</td>
<td>2,741</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

continued overleaf
APPENDIX B

The Statutory Provisions

Local Government Act 1992: The Commission’s Role

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

5 In relation to London boroughs:

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

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

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

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

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