

Final recommendations on the
future electoral arrangements
for Crawley in West Sussex

Report to The Electoral Commission

July 2002

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

WHAT IS THE BOUNDARY COMMITTEE FOR ENGLAND?

The Boundary Committee for England is a committee of The Electoral Commission, an independent body set up by Parliament under the Political Parties, Elections and Referendums Act 2000. The functions of the Local Government Commission for England were transferred to The Electoral Commission and its Boundary Committee on 1 April 2002 by the Local Government Commission for England (Transfer of Functions) Order 2001 (SI 2001 No 3692). The Order also transferred to The Electoral Commission the functions of the Secretary of State in relation to taking decisions on recommendations for changes to local authority electoral arrangements and implementing them.

Members of the Committee are:

Pamela Gordon (Chair)
Professor Michael Clarke CBE
Kru Desai
Robin Gray
Joan Jones
Ann M Kelly
Professor Colin Mellors

Archie Gall (Director)

We are required by law to review the electoral arrangements of every principal local authority in England. Our aim is to ensure that the number of electors represented by each councillor in an area 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.

This report sets out our final recommendations on the electoral arrangements for the borough of Crawley in West Sussex.

SUMMARY

The Local Government Commission for England (LGCE) began a review of Crawley's electoral arrangements on 10 July 2001. It published its draft recommendations for electoral arrangements on 26 February 2002, after which it undertook an eight-week period of consultation. As a consequence of the transfer of functions referred to earlier, it falls to us, The Boundary Committee for England, to complete the work of the LGCE and submit final recommendations to The Electoral Commission.

- **This report summarises the representations received by the LGCE during consultation on its draft recommendations, and contains our final recommendations to The Electoral Commission.**

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

- **in 11 of the 13 wards the number of electors represented by each councillor varies by more than 10 per cent from the average for the borough and eight wards vary by more than 20 per cent;**
- **by 2006 this situation is not expected to significantly 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 (see Tables 1 and 2 and paragraphs 53-54) are that:

- **Crawley Borough Council should have 37 councillors, five more than at present;**
- **there should be 15 wards, instead of 13 as at present;**
- **the boundaries of six of the existing wards should be modified, resulting in a net increase of two, and seven wards should retain their existing boundaries;**
- **elections should continue to take place by thirds.**

The purpose of these proposals is to ensure that, in future, each borough councillor represents approximately the same number of electors, bearing in mind local circumstances.

- **In 10 of the proposed 15 wards the number of electors per councillor would vary by no more than 10 per cent from the borough average.**
- **This improved level of electoral equality is forecast to continue, with the number of electors per councillor in all of the proposed wards expected to vary by no more than 10 per cent from the average for the borough in 2006.**

All further correspondence on these final recommendations and the matters discussed in this report should be sent to The Electoral Commission, which will not make an Order implementing them before 20 August 2002:

**The Secretary
The Electoral Commission
Trevelyan House
Great Peter Street
London SW1P 2HW**

Table 1: Final Recommendations: Summary

| | Ward name | Number of councillors | Constituent areas | Map reference |
|----|--------------------------|------------------------------|---|----------------------|
| 1 | Bewbush | 3 | <i>Unchanged</i> (Bewbush ward) | Large map |
| 2 | Broadfield North | 2 | part of Broadfield ward | Large map |
| 3 | Broadfield South | 2 | part of Broadfield ward | Large map |
| 4 | Furnace Green | 2 | part of Furnace Green ward; part of Tilgate ward | Large map |
| 5 | Gossops Green | 2 | <i>Unchanged</i> (Gossops Green ward) | Large map |
| 6 | Ifield | 3 | part of Ifield ward | Large map |
| 7 | Langley Green | 3 | part of Ifield ward; Langley ward | Large map |
| 8 | Maidenbower | 3 | part of Furnace Green ward | Large map |
| 9 | Northgate | 2 | <i>Unchanged</i> (Northgate ward) | Large map |
| 10 | Pound Hill North | 3 | <i>Unchanged</i> (Pound Hill North ward) | Large map |
| 11 | Pound Hill South & Worth | 3 | part of Furnace Green ward; Pound Hill South ward | Large map |
| 12 | Southgate | 3 | <i>Unchanged</i> (Southgate ward) | Large map |
| 13 | Three Bridges | 2 | <i>Unchanged</i> (Three Bridges ward) | Large map |
| 14 | Tilgate | 2 | part of Tilgate ward | Large map |
| 15 | West Green | 2 | <i>Unchanged</i> (West Green ward) | Large map |

Notes: 1 The whole borough is unparished.

2 The wards in the above table are illustrated on the large map at the back of the report.

We have made a number of minor boundary amendments to ensure that existing ward boundaries adhere to ground detail. These changes do not affect any electors.

Table 2: Final Recommendations for Crawley

| Ward name | Number of councillors | Electorate (2001) | Number of electors per councillor | Variance from average % | Electorate (2006) | Number of electors per councillor | Variance from average % |
|-----------------------------|-----------------------|-------------------|-----------------------------------|-------------------------|-------------------|-----------------------------------|-------------------------|
| 1 Bewbush | 3 | 5,967 | 1,989 | 1 | 6,062 | 2,021 | -3 |
| 2 Broadfield North | 2 | 4,200 | 2,100 | 6 | 4,265 | 2,133 | 3 |
| 3 Broadfield South | 2 | 4,326 | 2,163 | 9 | 4,351 | 2,176 | 5 |
| 4 Furnace Green | 2 | 4,463 | 2,232 | 13 | 4,370 | 2,185 | 5 |
| 5 Gossops Green | 2 | 3,946 | 1,973 | 0 | 3,907 | 1,954 | -6 |
| 6 Ifield | 3 | 6,494 | 2,165 | 10 | 6,722 | 2,241 | 8 |
| 7 Langley Green | 3 | 5,430 | 1,810 | -8 | 5,776 | 1,925 | -7 |
| 8 Maidenbower | 3 | 5,725 | 1,908 | -3 | 6,358 | 2,119 | 2 |
| 9 Northgate | 2 | 3,515 | 1,758 | -11 | 3,918 | 1,959 | -6 |
| 10 Pound Hill North | 3 | 4,999 | 1,666 | -16 | 6,030 | 2,010 | -3 |
| 11 Pound Hill South & Worth | 3 | 5,839 | 1,946 | -2 | 5,921 | 1,974 | -5 |
| 12 Southgate | 3 | 6,015 | 2,005 | 1 | 6,315 | 2,105 | 1 |
| 13 Three Bridges | 2 | 4,166 | 2,083 | 5 | 4,403 | 2,202 | 6 |
| 14 Tilgate | 2 | 4,588 | 2,294 | 16 | 4,472 | 2,236 | 8 |
| 15 West Green | 2 | 3,450 | 1,725 | -13 | 3,932 | 1,966 | -5 |
| Totals | 37 | 73,123 | - | - | 76,802 | - | - |
| Averages | - | - | 1,976 | - | - | 2,076 | - |

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

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

1 INTRODUCTION

1 This report contains our final recommendations on the electoral arrangements for the borough of Crawley in West Sussex. The seven districts in West Sussex have now been reviewed as part of the programme of periodic electoral reviews (PERs) of all 386 principal local authority areas in England started by the LGCE in 1996. We have inherited that programme, which we currently expect to complete in 2004.

2 Crawley's last review was undertaken by the Local Government Boundary Commission for England, which reported to the Secretary of State in February 1977 (Report no. 183). The electoral arrangements of West Sussex County Council were last reviewed in June 1984 (Report no. 473). We expect to begin reviewing the County Council's electoral arrangements towards the end of the year.

3 In making final recommendations to The Electoral Commission, we have had regard to:

- the statutory criteria contained in section 13(5) of the Local Government Act 1992 (as amended by SI 2001 No 3692), i.e. the need to:
 - a) reflect the identities and interests of local communities;
 - b) secure effective and convenient local government; and
 - c) achieve equality of representation.
- Schedule 11 to the Local Government Act 1972.

4 Details of the legislation under which the review of Crawley was conducted are set out in a document entitled *Guidance and Procedural Advice for Local Authorities and Other Interested Parties* (LGCE, fourth edition, published in October 2001). This *Guidance* sets out the approach to the review.

5 Our task is to make recommendations on the number of councillors who should serve on a council, and the number, boundaries and names of wards.

6 The broad objective of PERs is to achieve, so far as possible, equal representation across the district as a whole. Schemes which would result in, or retain, an electoral imbalance of over 10 per cent in any ward will have to be fully justified. Any imbalances of 20 per cent or more should only arise in the most exceptional circumstances, and will require the strongest justification.

7 The LGCE were not prescriptive on council size. Insofar as Crawley is concerned, it started from the assumption that the size of the existing council already secures effective and convenient local government, but were willing to look carefully at arguments why this might not be so. However, the LGCE found it necessary to safeguard against upward drift in the number of councillors, and that any proposal for an increase in council size would need to be fully justified. In particular, it did not accept that an increase in electorate should automatically result in an increase in the number of councillors, nor that changes should be made to the size of a council simply to make it more consistent with the size of other similar councils.

8 This review was in four stages. Stage One began on 10 July 2001, when the LGCE wrote to Crawley Borough Council inviting proposals for future electoral arrangements. It also notified West Sussex County Council, Sussex Police Authority, the Local Government Association, the Member of Parliament with a constituency in the district, the Members of the European Parliament for the South East region, and the headquarters of the main political parties. It placed a notice in the local press, issued a press release and invited the Borough Council to publicise the review further. The closing date for receipt of representations, the end of Stage

One, was 15 October 2001. At Stage Two it considered all the representations received during Stage One and prepared its draft recommendations.

9 Stage Three began on 26 February 2002 with the publication of the LGCE's report, *Draft recommendations on the future electoral arrangements for Crawley in West Sussex*, and ended on 22 April 2002. During this period it sought comments from the public and any other interested parties on its preliminary conclusions. Finally, during Stage Four it reconsidered its draft recommendations in the light of the Stage Three consultation and we now publish the final recommendations agreed by the LGCE. We are content to adopt these final recommendations as our own.

2 CURRENT ELECTORAL ARRANGEMENTS

10 The borough of Crawley is bounded by Surrey to the north, Horsham to the south-west and Mid Sussex to the south-east. The area covers the new town of Crawley and includes Gatwick Airport. Crawley was one of the original eight new towns around London aimed at enticing people away from the capital, which had become overcrowded. The original idea for the town was to merge the villages of Three Bridges and Ifield with the small market town of Crawley by developing the areas between them. Nine residential neighbourhoods were envisaged, each based on a village concept, grouped around a town centre with an industrial estate in the north of the area. The borough is now home to 13 neighbourhood areas and has been growing since Crawley was designated a new town in 1947. In 1983 its boundaries were extended.

11 The electorate of the borough is 73,123 (February 2001). The Council presently has 32 members who are elected from 13 wards. Six of the wards are each represented by three councillors, while the remaining seven wards are each represented by two councillors. The Council is elected by thirds.

12 At present, each councillor represents an average of 2,285 electors, which the Borough Council forecasts will increase to 2,400 by the year 2006 if the present number of councillors is maintained. However, due to demographic change and migration since the last review, the number of electors per councillor in 11 of the 13 wards varies by more than 10 per cent from the borough average, eight wards by more than 20 per cent and three wards by more than 30 per cent. The worst imbalance is in Furnace Green ward where the councillor represents 133 per cent more electors than the borough average.

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

Map 1: Existing Wards in Crawley

Table 3: Existing Electoral Arrangements

| Ward name | Number of councillors | Electorate (2001) | Number of electors per councillor | Variance from average % | Electorate (2006) | Number of electors per councillor | Variance from average % |
|--------------------|-----------------------|-------------------|-----------------------------------|-------------------------|-------------------|-----------------------------------|-------------------------|
| 1 Bewbush | 2 | 5,967 | 2,984 | 31 | 6,062 | 3,031 | 26 |
| 2 Broadfield | 3 | 8,526 | 2,842 | 24 | 8,616 | 2,872 | 20 |
| 3 Furnace Green | 2 | 10,665 | 5,333 | 133 | 11,216 | 5,608 | 134 |
| 4 Gossops Green | 2 | 3,946 | 1,973 | -14 | 3,907 | 1,954 | -19 |
| 5 Ifield | 3 | 6,496 | 2,165 | -5 | 7,063 | 2,354 | -2 |
| 6 Langley Green | 3 | 5,428 | 1,809 | -21 | 5,434 | 1,811 | -25 |
| 7 Northgate | 2 | 3,518 | 1,759 | -23 | 3,918 | 1,959 | -18 |
| 8 Pound Hill North | 3 | 4,999 | 1,666 | -27 | 6,030 | 2,010 | -16 |
| 9 Pound Hill South | 2 | 5,338 | 2,669 | 17 | 5,403 | 2,702 | 13 |
| 10 Southgate | 3 | 6,015 | 2,005 | -12 | 6,315 | 2,105 | -12 |
| 11 Three Bridges | 2 | 4,166 | 2,083 | -9 | 4,403 | 2,202 | -8 |
| 12 Tilgate | 3 | 4,609 | 1,536 | -33 | 4,503 | 1,501 | -37 |
| 13 West Green | 2 | 3,450 | 1,725 | -25 | 3,932 | 1,966 | -18 |
| Totals | 32 | 73,123 | - | - | 76,802 | - | - |
| Averages | - | - | 2,285 | - | - | 2,400 | - |

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

Note: *The 'variance from average' column shows by how far, in percentage terms, the number of electors per councillor varies from the average for the borough. The minus symbol (-) denotes a lower than average number of electors. For example, in 2001, electors in Tilgate ward were relatively over-represented by 33 per cent, while electors in Furnace Green ward were relatively under-represented by 133 per cent. Figures have been rounded to the nearest whole number.*

3 DRAFT RECOMMENDATIONS

14 During Stage One the LGCE received three representations, including a borough-wide scheme from Crawley Borough Council, and representations from West Sussex County Council and a local resident. In the light of these representations and evidence available to it, the LGCE reached preliminary conclusions which were set out in its report, *Draft recommendations on the future electoral arrangements for Crawley in West Sussex*.

15 The LGCE's draft recommendations were based wholly on the Borough Council's proposals, which achieved some improvement in electoral equality, and provided a pattern of two- and three member wards in the borough. It proposed that:

- Crawley Borough Council should be served by 37 councillors, compared with the current 32, representing 15 wards, two more than at present;
- the boundaries of six of the existing wards should be modified, while seven wards should retain their existing boundaries.

Draft Recommendation

Crawley Borough Council should comprise 37 councillors, serving 15 wards. The Council should continue to hold elections by thirds.

16 The LGCE's proposals would have resulted in significant improvements in electoral equality, with the number of electors per councillor in 10 of the 15 wards varying by no more than 10 per cent from the borough average. This level of electoral equality was forecast to improve further, with no ward varying by more than 10 per cent from the average in 2006.

4 RESPONSES TO CONSULTATION

17 During the consultation on its draft recommendations report, the LGCE received three representations. A list of all respondents is available from us on request. All representations may be inspected at our offices and those of Crawley Borough Council.

Crawley Borough Council

18 The Borough Council stated that it had agreed unanimously to support the LGCE's draft proposals, including those for proposed ward names.

Members of Parliament

19 Laura Moffatt MP supported the draft recommendations stating that she was "very pleased that due recognition has been given to our neighbourhood principle".

Other Representations

20 We received one further submission from a local resident who commented on local government in general.

5 ANALYSIS AND FINAL RECOMMENDATIONS

21 As described earlier, our prime objective in considering the most appropriate electoral arrangements for Crawley is, so far as reasonably practicable and consistent with the statutory criteria, to achieve electoral equality. In doing so we have regard to section 13(5) of the Local Government Act 1992 (as amended) – the need to secure effective and convenient local government; reflect the identities and interests of local communities; and secure the matters referred to in paragraph 3(2)(a) of Schedule 11 to the Local Government Act 1972 (equality of representation). Schedule 11 to the Local Government Act 1972 refers to the number of electors per councillor being “as nearly as may be, the same in every ward of the district or borough”.

22 In relation to Schedule 11, our recommendations are not intended to be based solely on existing electorate figures, but also on estimated changes in the number and distribution of local government electors likely to take place over the next five years. We also must have regard to the desirability of fixing identifiable boundaries and to maintaining local ties.

23 It is therefore impractical to design an electoral scheme which results in 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.

24 We accept that the achievement of absolute electoral equality for the authority as a whole is likely to be unattainable. However, we consider that, if electoral imbalances are to be minimised, the aim 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 make electoral equality their starting point, and then make adjustments to reflect relevant factors such as community identity and interests. Five-year forecasts of changes in electorate must also be considered and we would aim to recommend a scheme which provides improved electoral equality over this five-year period.

Electorate Forecasts

25 Since 1975 there has been a 44 per cent increase in the electorate of Crawley. The Borough Council submitted electorate forecasts for the year 2006, projecting an increase in the electorate of 5 per cent from 73,123 to 76,802 over the five-year period from 2001 to 2006. It expects most of the growth to be in Pound Hill North ward, although a significant amount is also expected in Furnace Green and Ifield wards. In order to prepare these forecasts, the Council estimated rates and locations of housing development with regard to structure and local plans, the expected rate of building over the five-year period and assumed occupancy rates. Having accepted that this is an inexact science and, having considered the forecast electorates, the LGCE stated in its draft recommendations report that it was satisfied that they represented the best estimates that could reasonably be made at the time.

26 The LGCE received no comments on the Council’s electorate forecasts during Stage Three, and we remain satisfied that they represent the best estimates currently available.

Council Size

27 As already explained, the LGCE started its review by assuming that the current council size facilitates effective and convenient local government, although it was willing to look carefully at arguments why this might not be the case.

28 In its draft recommendations report the LGCE adopted the Council’s proposal for a council of 37 members. It noted that the Borough Council had investigated the effect of different council

sizes on the borough's network of neighbourhoods and considered a reduction in council size. However, it argued that the electorate and councillor workload had increased dramatically since the previous boundary review; that the Borough had been enlarged since the last review; and that a council size of 26, 28, 30 or 31 members would create large electoral imbalances if the neighbourhood principle was adhered to. It also investigated alternative increases of between 33 to 36 members. However, it concluded that the alternative options would not provide the best fit in the borough between electoral equality and community identity. The Borough Council proposed a council of 37 members, arguing that the workload of councillors is "significantly higher than when the current ward arrangements were first introduced in 1983". It stated that an independent panel had concluded that workload was of greater concern for members than remuneration, adding that if current workloads continued it would become increasingly more difficult to "attract and retain good councillors who reflect the local population in terms of age and gender". The Borough Council also stated that, due to increased workloads, it was increasingly difficult to find councillors to serve as school governors and listed 38 outside organisations to which the Council is invited to make nominations. It also argued that a council size of 37 members would best reflect and retain the communities in the area.

29 We noted that the Borough Council's proposals for a council size of 37 members had received the unanimous support of all three political parties on the Council and that its proposals as a whole had received the broad support of the majority of those who had responded to its consultation leaflet.

30 At Stage Three we received no comments regarding council size and therefore remain of the view that a council size of 37 would best reflect the statutory criteria.

Electoral Arrangements

31 Careful consideration was given to the views submitted at Stage One. In view of the cross-party support for the Council's proposals, and the consultation exercise which it undertook with interested parties, the LGCE's draft recommendations were based on the Borough Council's scheme. It was considered that this scheme would better reflect the statutory criteria than the current arrangements. It was noted that the Borough Council's scheme utilised easily identifiable boundaries and secured good levels of electoral equality throughout the borough, while having regard to the statutory criteria. Therefore, the LGCE adopted the Borough Council's proposals in full.

32 The draft recommendations have been reviewed in the light of further evidence and the representations received during Stage Three. Given the support received, we are confirming the draft recommendations in their entirety. For borough warding purposes, the following areas, based on existing wards, are considered in turn:

- (a) Ifield, Langley Green, Northgate, Three Bridges and West Green wards;
- (b) Bewbush, Broadfield, Gossops Green, Southgate and Tilgate wards;
- (c) Furnace Green, Pound Hill North and Pound Hill South wards.

33 Details of our final recommendations are set out in Tables 1 and 2, and illustrated on Map 2 and on the large map inserted at the back of this report.

Ifield, Langley Green, Northgate, Three Bridges and West Green wards

34 These five wards are located in the north, north-west and centre of the borough. Ifield and Langley Green wards are each represented by three councillors and currently have 5 per cent fewer and 21 per cent fewer electors per councillor than the borough average (2 per cent fewer and 25 per cent fewer in 2006). Northgate, Three Bridges and West Green wards are each represented by two councillors and currently have 23 per cent fewer, 9 per cent fewer and 25

per cent fewer electors per councillor than the borough average (18 per cent fewer, 8 per cent fewer and 18 per cent fewer in 2006).

35 At Stage One the Borough Council proposed that the current two-member Northgate, Three Bridges and West Green wards be maintained on their current boundaries. It argued that all three wards were generally “consolidated and identifiable” and that they were all bounded by strong, identifiable boundaries. It proposed a minor boundary amendment between the current Ifield and Langley Green wards in order to secure an improved level of electoral equality. The Council proposed that the Apple Tree Farm Development to the south of Ifield Avenue, which separates the two wards, be transferred from Ifield ward to Langley Green ward.

36 At Stage Two the LGCE were persuaded that the Borough Council’s proposals for the area would best reflect the statutory criteria, and therefore adopted the Borough Council’s proposals in full.

37 Under the LGCE’s draft recommendations the proposed Ifield, Langley Green, Northgate, Three Bridges and West Green wards would have 10 per cent more, 8 per cent fewer, 11 per cent fewer, 5 per cent more and 13 per cent fewer electors per councillor than the borough average currently (8 per cent more, 7 per cent fewer, 6 per cent fewer, 6 per cent more and 5 per cent fewer in 2006).

38 At Stage Three the Borough Council and Laura Moffatt MP supported the draft recommendations for this area. No further submissions were received.

39 Given the support received at Stage Three for the LGCE’s draft recommendations we confirm the proposed Ifield, Langley Green, Northgate, Three Bridges and West Green wards as final.

Bewbush, Broadfield, Gossops Green, Southgate and Tilgate wards

40 These five wards are located in the south-west of the borough. Broadfield, Southgate and Tilgate wards are each represented by three councillors and currently have 24 per cent more, 12 per cent fewer and 33 per cent fewer electors per councillor than the borough average (20 per cent more, 12 per cent fewer and 37 per cent fewer in 2006). Bewbush and Gossops Green wards are each represented by two councillors and currently have 31 per cent more and 14 per cent fewer electors per councillor than the borough average (26 per cent more and 19 per cent fewer in 2006).

41 At Stage One the Borough Council proposed that the current Bewbush, Gossops Green and Southgate wards be maintained on their existing boundaries. However, it proposed that Bewbush ward be represented by three councillors instead of two as at present in order to secure an acceptable level of electoral equality. The Borough Council proposed that the current Broadfield ward be divided between a new two-member Broadfield North ward and a new two-member Broadfield South ward in order to secure acceptable levels of electoral equality. It proposed that the majority of the current Tilgate ward be maintained. However, it proposed that the number of councillors representing the ward be reduced from three to two in order to secure an acceptable level of electoral equality. It also proposed that the boundary be amended and that Chelwood Close be transferred to a modified Furnace Green ward in order to secure a more identifiable ward boundary.

42 In the LGCE’s draft recommendations report it was noted that the Borough Council’s proposals would secure a good level of electoral equality in the area, utilise strong boundaries and unite entire communities within wards. The LGCE therefore adopted the Borough Council’s proposed Bewbush, Broadfield North, Broadfield South, Gossops Green, Southgate and Tilgate wards as part of its draft recommendations.

43 Under the LGCE's draft recommendations the proposed Bewbush, Broadfield North, Broadfield South, Gossops Green, Southgate and Tilgate wards would have 1 per cent more, 6 per cent more, 9 per cent more, equal to, 1 per cent more and 16 per cent more electors per councillor than the borough average currently (3 per cent fewer, 3 per cent more, 5 per cent more, 6 per cent fewer, 1 per cent more and 8 per cent more in 2006).

44 At Stage Three the Borough Council and Laura Moffatt MP supported the draft recommendations for this area. No further submissions were received.

45 Given the support received at Stage Three for the LGCE's draft recommendations we confirm the proposed Bewbush, Broadfield North, Broadfield South, Gossops Green, Southgate and Tilgate wards as final.

Furnace Green, Pound Hill North and Pound Hill South wards

46 These three wards are situated in the east and south-east of the borough. Furnace Green and Pound Hill South wards are both represented by two councillors and currently have 133 per cent more and 17 per cent more electors per councillor than the borough average respectively (134 per cent more and 13 per cent more in 2006). Pound Hill North ward is represented by three councillors and currently has 27 per cent fewer electors per councillor than the borough average (16 per cent fewer in 2006).

47 At Stage One the Borough Council proposed that the current Pound Hill North ward remain unchanged. It proposed that the current Pound Hill South ward be combined with the Worth area of the current Furnace Green ward, to the east of Balcombe Road, and that the area be represented by two councillors. It proposed that the area to the west of Balcombe Road and to the east of the London to Brighton railway line in the current Furnace Green ward, form a three-member Maidenbower ward. It proposed that the area of the current Furnace Green ward to the west of the London to Brighton railway line form a revised two-member Furnace Green ward. However, it proposed that Chelwood Close in the current Tilgate ward be transferred to its proposed Furnace Green ward.

48 The LGCE noted that the Borough Council's proposals would secure a good level of electoral equality in the area, utilise strong boundaries and unite entire communities within proposed wards. The LGCE therefore adopted the Borough Council's proposed Furnace Green, Maidenbower, Pound Hill North and Pound Hill South & Worth wards as part of its draft recommendations.

49 Under the LGCE's draft recommendations the proposed Furnace Green, Maidenbower, Pound Hill North and Pound Hill South & Worth wards would have 13 per cent more, 3 per cent fewer, 16 per cent fewer and 2 per cent fewer electors per councillor than the borough average currently (5 per cent more, 2 per cent more, 3 per cent fewer and 5 per cent fewer in 2006).

50 At Stage Three the Borough Council and Laura Moffatt MP supported the draft recommendations for this area. No further submissions were received.

51 Given the support received at Stage Three for the LGCE's draft recommendations we confirm the proposed Furnace Green, Maidenbower, Pound Hill North and Pound Hill South & Worth wards as final.

Electoral Cycle

52 In conducting its review the LGCE sought views in relation to the electoral cycle of the district. However, by virtue of the amendments made to the Local Government Act 1992 by the Local Government Commission for England (Transfer of Functions) Order 2001, we have no powers to make recommendations concerning electoral cycle.

Conclusions

53 Having considered carefully all the representations and evidence received in response to the LGCE's consultation report, we have decided to endorse those draft recommendations.

54 We conclude that, in Crawley:

- there should be an increase in council size from 32 to 37;
- there should be 15 wards, two more than at present;
- the boundaries of six of the existing wards should be modified.

55 Table 4 shows the impact of our final recommendations on electoral equality, comparing them with the current arrangements, based on 2001 and 2006 electorate figures.

Table 4: Comparison of Current and Recommended Electoral Arrangements

| | 2001 electorate | | 2006 forecast electorate | |
|--|----------------------|-----------------------|--------------------------|-----------------------|
| | Current arrangements | Final recommendations | Current arrangements | Final recommendations |
| Number of councillors | 32 | 37 | 32 | 37 |
| Number of wards | 13 | 15 | 13 | 15 |
| Average number of electors per councillor | 2,285 | 1,976 | 2,400 | 2,076 |
| Number of wards with a variance more than 10 per cent from the average | 11 | 5 | 11 | 0 |
| Number of wards with a variance more than 20 per cent from the average | 8 | 0 | 4 | 0 |

56 As Table 4 shows, our recommendations would result in a reduction in the number of wards with an electoral variance of more than 10 per cent from 11 to five, with no wards having a variance of more than 20 per cent from the borough average. This level of electoral equality would improve further in 2006, with no ward varying by more than 10 per cent from the average. We conclude that our recommendations would best meet the need for electoral equality, having regard to the statutory criteria.

Final Recommendation

Crawley Borough Council should comprise 37 councillors serving 15 wards, as detailed and named in Tables 1 and 2, and illustrated on Map 2 and the large map inside the back cover.

Map 2: Final Recommendations for Crawley

6 WHAT HAPPENS NEXT?

57 Having completed the review of electoral arrangements in Crawley and submitted our final recommendations to The Electoral Commission, we have fulfilled our statutory obligation under the Local Government Act 1992 (as amended by SI 2001 No 3692).

58 It is now up to The Electoral Commission to decide whether to endorse our recommendations, with or without modification, and to implement them by means of an Order. Such an Order will not be made before 20 August 2002.

59 All further correspondence concerning our recommendations and the matters discussed in this report should be sent to The Electoral Commission, to arrive no later than 20 August 2002:

The Secretary
The Electoral Commission
Trevelyan House
Great Peter Street
London SW1P 2HW