Final recommendations on the future electoral arrangements for Birmingham

Report to The Electoral Commission

May 2003
## Contents

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Section</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>What is The Boundary Committee For England?</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Summary</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1  Introduction</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2  Current electoral arrangements</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3  Draft recommendations</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4  Responses to consultation</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5  Analysis and final recommendations</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6  What happens next?</td>
<td>79</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Appendices**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Appendix</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A  Final recommendations for Birmingham: Detailed mapping</td>
<td>81</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B  Guide to interpreting the first draft of the electoral change Order</td>
<td>83</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C  First draft of the electoral change Order</td>
<td>85</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
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
Robin Gray
Joan Jones CBE
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. We can also recommend changes to the electoral arrangements of parish councils.

This report sets out our final recommendations on the electoral arrangements for the city of Birmingham.
Summary

The Local Government Commission for England (LGCE) began a review of Birmingham’s electoral arrangements on 4 December 2001. As a consequence of the transfer of functions referred to earlier, it falls to us to complete the work of the LGCE. We published our draft recommendations for electoral arrangements on 22 October 2002, after which we undertook an eight-week period of consultation. We now submit final recommendations to The Electoral Commission.

- This report summarises the representations that we received during consultation on our draft recommendations, and contains our final recommendations to The Electoral Commission.

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

- in 13 of the 39 wards the number of electors represented by each councillor varies by more than 10% from the average for the city and five wards vary by more than 20%;
- by 2006 this situation is expected to worsen, with the number of electors per councillor forecast to vary by more than 10% from the average in 14 wards and by more than 20% in five wards.

Our main final recommendations for future electoral arrangements (see Tables 1 and 2 and paragraphs 346–347) are that:

- Birmingham City Council should have 120 councillors, three more than at present;
- there should be 40 wards, instead of 39 as at present;
- the boundaries of all of the existing wards should be modified, resulting in a net increase of one.

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

- In 39 of the proposed 40 wards the number of electors per councillor would vary by no more than 10% from the city average.
- This improved level of electoral equality is forecast to continue, with the number of electors per councillor in only one ward, Sheldon, expected to vary by more than 10% from the average for the city in 2006.

All further correspondence on these final recommendations and the matters discussed in this report should be addressed to The Electoral Commission, which will not make an Order implementing them before 24 June 2003. The information in the representations will be available for public access once the Order has been made.

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

Fax: 020 7271 0667
Email: implementation@electoralcommission.org.uk
(This address should only be used for this purpose)
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<th>Constituent areas</th>
<th>Large map reference</th>
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<td>4 and 5</td>
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<td>Constituent areas</td>
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<td>3 and 5</td>
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Notes:
1) New Frankley in Birmingham is the only parish in Birmingham and forms part of Longbridge ward, indicated above.
2) The wards on the above table are illustrated on Map 2 and the large maps.
3) 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>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Ward name</th>
<th>Number of councillors</th>
<th>Electorate (2001)</th>
<th>Number of electors per councillor</th>
<th>Variance from average</th>
<th>Electorate (2006)</th>
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</tbody>
</table>

**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 city. 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 for the electoral arrangements for Birmingham City. We are reviewing the seven metropolitan boroughs in the West Midlands as part of our programme of periodic electoral reviews (PERs) of all 386 principal local authority areas in England. The programme started in 1996 and is currently expected to finish in 2004.

2 This is our first review of the electoral arrangements of Birmingham. Birmingham’s last review was undertaken by the Local Government Boundary Commission for England, which reported to the Secretary of State in October 1979 (Report no. 351).

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:
  - reflect the identities and interests of local communities;
  - secure effective and convenient local government; and
  - achieve equality of representation.
- Schedule 11 to the Local Government Act 1972.

4 Details of the legislation under which the review of Birmingham was conducted are set out in a document entitled Guidance and Procedural Advice for Periodic Electoral Reviews. 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. We can also propose changes to the electoral arrangements for parish councils in the city.

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% in any ward will have to be fully justified. Any imbalances of 20% or more should only arise in the most exceptional circumstances, and will require the strongest justification.

7 We are not prescriptive on council size. However, we believe that any proposals relating to council size, whether these are for an increase, a reduction or no change, should be supported by evidence and argumentation. Given the stage now reached in the introduction of new political management structures under the provisions of the Local Government Act 2000, it is important that whatever council size interested parties may propose to us they can demonstrate that their proposals have been fully thought through, and have been developed in the context of a review of internal political management and the role of councillors in the new structure. However, we have found it necessary to safeguard against upward drift in the number of councillors, and we believe that any proposal for an increase in council size will need to be fully justified. In particular, we do not accept that an increase in electorate should automatically result in an increase in the number of councillors, nor that changes should be made to the size of the council simply to make it more consistent with the size of other similar councils.

8 Under the provisions of the Local Government Act 1972 there is no limit to the number of councillors which can be returned from each metropolitan city ward. However, the figure must be divisible by three. In practice, all metropolitan city wards currently return three councillors. Where our recommendation is for multi-member wards, we believe that the number of councillors to be returned from each ward should not exceed three, other than in very exceptional circumstances. Numbers in excess of three could lead to an unacceptable dilution of accountability to the electorate and we have not, to date, prescribed any wards with more than three councillors.
This review was in four stages. Stage One began on 4 December 2001, when the LGCE wrote to Birmingham City Council inviting proposals for future electoral arrangements. It also notified West Midlands Police Authority, the Local Government Association, West Midlands Local Councils Association, New Frankley in Birmingham Parish Council, Members of Parliament with constituency interests in the city, Members of the European Parliament for the West Midlands Region, and the headquarters of the main political parties. It placed a notice in the local press, issued a press release and invited Birmingham City Council to publicise the review further. The closing date for receipt of representations, the end of Stage One, was 8 April 2002. At Stage Two we considered all the representations received during Stage One and prepared our draft recommendations.

Stage Three began on 22 October 2002 with the publication of the report, *Draft recommendations on the future electoral arrangements for Birmingham*, and ended on 16 December 2002. During this period comments were sought from the public and any other interested parties on the preliminary conclusions. Finally, during Stage Four the draft recommendations were reconsidered in the light of the Stage Three consultation and we now publish the final recommendations.
2 Current electoral arrangements

11 Birmingham City Council is situated in the centre of the West Midlands. With a population of just over one million, it is by far the largest of any district authority in England. The current local government administrative area, which covers around 26,430 hectares, was established in 1974, with the incorporation of the former Royal Borough of Sutton Coldfield. The city is traversed by the M6 motorway with the M5 and M42 motorways in easy reach. It also contains a number of major rail routes serving the north and south, and contains Bourn Brook, the River Cole and the Birmingham Canal.

12 The electorate of the city is 722,360 (December 2001). The Council presently has 117 members who are elected from 39 wards, all of which are relatively urban. All wards are three-member wards and came into effect in 1982 following the last Electoral Review. It also has one parish council (New Frankley in Birmingham), which was established in April 2000 and comprises 0.8% of the city’s total electorate.

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

14 At present, each councillor represents an average of 6,174 electors, which the City Council forecasts will increase to 6,215 by the year 2006 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 13 of the 39 wards varies by more than 10% from the city average, five wards by more than 20% and two wards by more than 30%. The worst imbalance is in Sutton New Hall ward, where each of the councillors represents 40% more electors than the city average. Moreover, the current allocation of councillors is incorrect. Under the existing council size of 117, Sutton Coldfield is entitled to 12 councillors, but is currently represented by nine councillors.
Map 1: Existing wards in Birmingham
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Ward name</th>
<th>Number of councillors</th>
<th>Electorate (2001)</th>
<th>Number of electors per councillor</th>
<th>Variance from average</th>
<th>Electorate (2006)</th>
<th>Number of electors per councillor</th>
<th>Variance from average</th>
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<td>Electorate (2006)</td>
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<td><strong>Totals</strong></td>
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<td><strong>–</strong></td>
<td><strong>–</strong></td>
<td><strong>727,187</strong></td>
<td><strong>–</strong></td>
<td><strong>–</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Averages</strong></td>
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<td><strong>–</strong></td>
<td><strong>6,174</strong></td>
<td><strong>–</strong></td>
<td><strong>–</strong></td>
<td><strong>6,215</strong></td>
<td><strong>–</strong></td>
</tr>
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</table>

Source: Electorate figures are based on information provided by Birmingham City 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 city. The minus symbol (-) denotes a lower than average number of electors. For example, in 2001, electors in Kingsbury ward were relatively over-represented by 35%, while electors in Sutton New Hall ward were significantly under-represented by 40%. Figures have been rounded to the nearest whole number.
3 Draft recommendations

15 During Stage One 66 representations were received, including city-wide schemes from Birmingham City Council, Birmingham Conservative Association (the Conservatives) and the Liberal Democrat Group (the Liberal Democrats), and representations from six community groups, two residents’ associations, the West Midlands Police and 54 local residents. In the light of these representations and evidence available to us, we reached preliminary conclusions which were set out in our report, Draft recommendations on the future electoral arrangements for Birmingham.

16 Our draft recommendations were based on a combination of the City Council’s 120-member consultation scheme and the Conservatives’ proposals. However, we also incorporated aspects of the Liberal Democrats’ proposals and some of our own proposals. We proposed that:

- Birmingham City Council should be served by 120 councillors, compared with the current 117, representing 40 wards, one more than at present;
- the boundaries of all of the existing wards should be modified.

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Draft recommendation
Birmingham City Council should comprise 120 councillors, serving 40 wards.
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17 Our proposals would have resulted in significant improvements in electoral equality, with the number of electors per councillor in 39 of the 40 wards varying by no more than 10% from the city average. This level of electoral equality was forecast to improve further, with no ward varying by more than 10% from the average in 2006.
4 Responses to consultation

18 During the consultation on the draft recommendations report, 121 representations were received. A list of all respondents is available from us on request. All representations may be inspected at our offices and those of Birmingham City Council.

Birmingham City Council

19 Birmingham City Council broadly supported the draft recommendations, including the proposed council size of 120. The draft recommendations were discussed on a cross-party basis, with the Labour and Conservative Groups agreeing that they did not want to see any substantial change to the draft recommendations. They did, however, put forward 15 minor boundary amendments in order to provide for more clearly identifiable boundaries and a better reflection of community identity, together with three ward name changes.

The Liberal Democrat Group

20 The Liberal Democrat Group (the Liberal Democrats) strongly opposed our draft recommendations in the eastern and north-western parts of the city. They argued that the proposals used as the basis for our draft recommendations in this area were not subject to local consultation and accused them of being an example of ‘gerrymandering’. The Liberal Democrats put forward revised warding arrangements for the eastern and north-western parts of the city which they argued were based on local communities in Birmingham.

Perry Barr Liberal Democrats

21 Perry Barr Liberal Democrats broadly supported our proposed Aston, Handsworth and Sandwell wards. However, they opposed our draft recommendations in the north-western part of the city, largely on the grounds of the proposed division of the Perry Beeches estate between separate city wards and the inclusion of the Witton area in the proposed Perry Barr ward. They put forward alternative warding arrangements in this area, which were broadly similar to those put forward by the Liberal Democrats.

Birmingham Conservative Association

22 Birmingham Conservative Association (the Conservatives) broadly supported the draft recommendations. However, they proposed a number of minor modifications throughout the city based on views put forward as a result of their own consultation. They also reiterated their concerns regarding the City Council’s projected electorate figures for the Bartley Green area.

Member of Parliament

23 Richard Burden, Member of Parliament for Birmingham Northfield, expressed the views of Northfield Constituency Labour Party. Opposition was expressed in relation to our proposed boundary between Northfield and Bournville wards which it was argued is not logical and would cause confusion. An alternative boundary was suggested. Opposition was also expressed in relation to our proposed boundary between Bartley Green and Weoley wards. A revised boundary was proposed to include all of the Alwold Road area and Shenley Court College in Weoley ward.
Elected representatives

24 Councillor Roy expressed support for our draft recommendations in the Sutton Coldfield area. He also expressed concern regarding the proposals put forward by the Liberal Democrats as well as commenting on the City Council’s proposals.

25 Councillors Manku, Murphy and Tyrrell opposed our proposed boundary between Handsworth and Sandwell wards and put forward an alternative, largely based on the existing warding arrangements. Councillor Linneor supported our proposals in the north-western part of the city, and asserted the view that the M6 motorway, Kingstanding Road and Hawthorn Road are strong boundaries, while Councillor Hassall opposed our draft recommendations in this area, with specific reference to the proposed Perry Barr ward.

26 Councillors Khan and Saeed opposed our proposed Yardley ward. Specific concern was expressed in relation to the proposed boundary with Bordesley Green ward. Alternative proposals were put forward based on the community links within the Small Heath area.

27 Councillor Burfoot (supported by Councillor Jenkinson) opposed our draft recommendation to include the area known locally as the ‘Vimy Triangle’ in the proposed Springfield ward, putting forward alternative warding arrangements which would retain the area within Billesley ward. Councillor Gregory noted the concerns of some local residents regarding the revised boundaries in this area. However, he contended that our draft recommendations were the best that could be achieved to meet the criteria.

28 Councillor Barton expressed concern at our draft recommendation to include the area surrounding Weoley Castle in the revised Bartley Green ward suggesting that it should remain in Weoley ward. Councillor Harvey expressed support for our proposals in the Hall Green area.

29 Councillors Sutton and Ward expressed broad support for the proposed King’s Norton ward, but opposed the ward’s northern boundary, arguing that the properties to the north of the railway line are physically detached from the rest of the ward. Councillor Lawrence expressed opposition in relation to the boundary between our proposed King’s Norton and Northfield wards.

30 Councillor Rice expressed support for our proposed Small Heath ward. However, he strongly opposed our proposed ward name as the revised ward does not include the area known locally as Small Heath. The alternatives of Sparkbrook & Balsall Heath or Sparkbrook were put forward.

31 Councillor Ward opposed the inclusion of the area known locally as Glebe Farm in the proposed Shard End ward as opposed to Hodge Hill ward. However, no alternative proposal was put forward.

32 Finally, Councillor Hutchings expressed support for our proposed Edgbaston, Harborne and Quinton wards, while Councillor Hill fully supported our draft recommendations.

Other representations

33 A further 101 representations were received in response to our draft recommendations from local organisations and residents.

34 We received 50 submissions in relation to our proposals in the Harborne area. The Harborne Society and 48 local residents opposed our proposal to include the area surrounding Tennal Road and Queen’s Park Road in a revised Quinton ward. The Harborne Society expressed support for the modified proposals for this area put forward by the City Council as well as offering another alternative. A local resident supported our revised Harborne ward, particularly in relation to the use of Portland Road and Bourn Brook. He also expressed general support in
relation to the proposals for the south and east of the city, but proposed renaming Small Heath ward as Balsall Heath.

35 We received 15 representations in relation to the Sutton Coldfield area. Banners Gate & Parklands Neighbourhood Forum and three local residents all expressed support for our draft recommendations in this area. Falcon Lodge Advisory Committee, Sutton Christian Centre, and six local residents all opposed our proposed boundary between Sutton New Hall and Sutton Trinity wards, which would result in the division of the Falcon Lodge estate between separate city wards. A local resident, writing on behalf of Falcon Lodge residents, put forward an alternative boundary in this area, whereby the whole of the estate would fall within a single city ward. This was supported by a petition containing 289 signatures. Finally, a local resident put forward alternative warding arrangements for the whole of Sutton Coldfield, with the consequence being that the Falcon Lodge estate would be contained with a single city ward. These latter proposals were supported by Sutton Coldfield Constituency Labour Party.

36 We received 17 representations in relation to the Handsworth area. Support was expressed by 12 local residents regarding our proposed boundary between Handsworth and Sandwell wards (specifically in relation to the Handsworth Wood area). North-West-Group Influencing Boundaries (an umbrella organisation for a number of community groups) supported our draft recommendations for this area, while putting forward three alternative ward names. The Sikh Community & Youth Service opposed our proposed boundary between Handsworth and Sandwell wards and suggested an alternative. Finally, Grove Residents’ Association opposed the proposed boundary between Handsworth and Sandwell wards, contending that Grove Lane would provide for a more suitable boundary in this area.

37 A local resident and the Headteacher of Anglesey Primary School opposed our draft recommendations in relation to the boundary between the proposed Handsworth and Aston wards, largely based on the consequent division of the split-site Anglesey Primary School between separate city wards. They submitted identical alternative proposals, and the resident also submitted a petition with 124 signatures supporting his views.

38 We received five representations in relation to the Perry Barr, Kingstanding and Oscott area. Oscott North Neighbourhood Forum expressed support for the draft recommendations in this area, as did Kingstanding Neighbourhood Initiative which also supported the use of the M6 motorway and Kingstanding Road as boundaries. Booths Farm Area Residents’ Association and two local residents all opposed our draft recommendations in this area, with specific reference to the proposed Perry Barr ward. Concern was expressed that the M6 motorway is not a natural divide in this area and that the Witton area should not be incorporated in the revised ward.

39 We received two representations in relation to the Bordesley Green and Yardley area. Two local residents expressed the view that southern part of the area known locally as Small Heath should not form part of a revised Yardley ward.

40 We received two representations in relation to the Yardley, Stechford and Sheldon area. Two local residents strongly opposed our draft recommendations in this area, particularly in relation to the existing Yardley ward. An alternative proposal was put forward which was significantly different to our draft recommendations.

41 We received one representation in relation to the Billesley area. A local resident opposed our draft recommendation to include the area known locally as the ‘Vimy Triangle’ in the proposed Springfield ward, and provided some alternative warding arrangements.

42 We received two representations in relation to the Weoley area. Two local residents expressed concern at our draft recommendation to include the area surrounding Weoley Castle in the revised Bartley Green ward. Alternative options were put forward based on the transfer of the castle site only and the transfer of the whole of polling district BLA.
43 We received two representations in relation to the Hall Green area. A local resident expressed support for our proposals in this area, while Hall Green Residents’ Association (supported by the River Cole and Chinn Brook Conservation Group) also expressed support, but proposed a minor boundary amendment that would not affect any electors.

44 We received two representations in relation to the Small Heath area. St Paul’s Community Project expressed support for our proposed Small Heath ward. However, it reiterated the views expressed in relation to the naming of the ward, putting forward the alternative of Sparkbrook. Balsall Heath Forum expressed broad support for the proposed Small Heath ward, however it proposed some minor amendments in the west and east and proposed that the ward be renamed Sparkbrook.

45 We received two representations in relation to the Bournville and Selly Oak areas. A local resident expressed support for the proposed Bournville and Selly Oak wards, while another resident proposed a minor amendment to the boundary between the two wards which was broadly similar to an amendment put forward by the City Council.

46 Finally, a local resident opposed the inclusion of the Highgate area in the proposed Nechells ward, arguing that the area would be better placed with Balsall Heath (proposed Small Heath ward).
5 Analysis and final recommendations

47 As described earlier, our prime objective in considering the most appropriate electoral arrangements for Birmingham is 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’.

48 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 within the next five years. We also must have regard to the desirability of fixing identifiable boundaries and to maintaining local ties.

49 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.

50 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

51 Since 1975 there has been approximately a 6% decrease in the electorate of Birmingham City. However, between 1994 and 2001 there has been a 0.2% decrease in electorate overall. The City Council submitted electorate forecasts for the year 2006, projecting an increase in the electorate of just under 1% from 722,360 to 727,187 over the five-year period from 2001 to 2006. It expects most of the growth to be in Ladywood ward, although a significant amount is also expected in Brandwood and Kingsbury wards. However, the majority of wards will be static or see a slight decline in electorate. In order to prepare these forecasts, the Council estimated rates and locations of housing development with regard to unitary development plans, the expected rate of building over the five-year period and assumed occupancy rates.

52 At Stage One, the Conservatives questioned the City Council’s electorate projections in relation to polling district ACH in Bartley Green ward. They stated that ‘The City Council’s projection failed to take into account a development of around 500 new homes, the construction of which is due to commence in the near future’. While this had been acknowledged by the City Council, for the sake of consistency, the Conservatives proposed basing their recommendations on the original total electorate figure for 2006 of 727,187. They did, however, express concern that as this error is in a confined area, it will have a significant effect.

53 We sought further clarification from the City Council in relation to this issue. It acknowledged that upon further analysis, it was apparent that in a number of redevelopment estates (such as that in polling district ACH), electors had been deducted from some housing due for demolition when they were in fact already empty. This accounted for the low electorate forecasts in these
particular areas. It was not, therefore, the case that the new replacement housing had been omitted.

54 In the City Council’s submission, it acknowledged that since the publication of the projected electorate figures in December 2001, more up-to-date information had become available, which indicated that the 2006 forecasts might have been underestimated in a few wards. However, it stated that this would not affect the total, which was based on the Office for National Statistics population projections and the effect was therefore negligible. In addition, the City Council said it was conscious of the fact that these figures had been published and had already been used by interested parties during the formulation of schemes. It therefore made the decision that, on balance, it would be in the best interest not to republish these figures so that all submissions received by The Boundary Committee were considered on a consistent basis, and it confirmed its original forecasts as the best estimates currently available.

55 We stated in our draft recommendations report that forecasting electorates is difficult and, having considered the City Council’s figures, accepted that they were the best estimates that could reasonably be made at that time. We noted that there were a few issues regarding electorate projections at Stage One, but were satisfied that the figures produced by the City Council provided a viable estimate. We did, however, seek further views on this issue at Stage Three.

56 We received further comments on the Council’s electorate forecasts during Stage Three from the Conservatives. While it was acknowledged that the issue of electoral projections had been discussed in the draft recommendations report, the Conservatives argued ‘The City Council’s response to our concerns is not, we believe, adequate and does not appear to take account of various developments that are either on-site or will be in the immediate future’. The Conservatives requested that we look at the projected electorate figures for this area, ‘as there does appear to be an anomaly’.

57 It was argued that the City Council had failed to take account of rebuilding which commenced in polling district ACH in September 2002. It was stated that ‘some 450 homes will be built on this site – many within the period to 2006’. It was also argued that further, smaller scale developments in this area had been overlooked.

58 In relation to polling district ACD, it was argued that a development of 52 homes has been omitted and would result in an increase of electorate over the five-year period of around 100. Finally, it was argued that a development of 38 flats in polling district ACK is also proposed.

59 In light of these views, we sought further clarification from the City Council. A detailed response was submitted, addressing each of the Conservatives’ concerns. After careful consideration, the City Council reiterated its views expressed in relation to this issue at Stage One, as detailed above. It asserted the view that ‘the forecasts were based on the best information available at the time they were prepared (December 2001) … As the forecasting methodology made clear, housing sites were restricted to those that either had planning permission or had been identified in an approved Development Plan, those in other words that had a reasonable chance of being completed and occupied by 2006’.

60 Specific reference was made to the concerns expressed within polling districts ACH, ACD and ACK, with detailed analysis of the methodology applied in determining areas of demolition and development. The City Council acknowledge that ‘forecasting electorates is difficult. There are several unavoidable imperfections in any forecasting methodology’.

61 In the light of the Council’s justification, we remain satisfied that projected electorate figures supplied in December 2001 represent the best estimates available for the purposes of this review.
Council size

62 Birmingham City Council presently has 117 members. At Stage One, the City Council consulted on two proposed council sizes, of 120 and 123 members. Following this consultation it submitted a scheme based on a council size 123. This proposal, the Council contended, reflected the representational roles of councillors and also took into account the council sizes of other metropolitan districts. In addition, it was argued that this proposed increase of six councillors would address the high level of under-representation which currently exists in the Sutton Coldfield area.

63 The Liberal Democrats also proposed an increase in council size. Their proposals, which were largely based on minimal change, provided for an increase of three councillors to 120. The Liberal Democrats were strongly opposed to any reduction in council size and argued that the fact that Birmingham wards are the biggest in the country ‘drives the need to have a substantial number of councillors’. Again, largely from a representational perspective, they argued that, ‘the need for democratic accountability and communication with the citizens requires a large number of councillors’. In addition, the Liberal Democrats advocated minimal change, especially in relation to the boundary between Sutton Coldfield and rest of the city. They stated that 120 councillors would facilitate this approach and address the under-representation in the Sutton Coldfield area.

64 The Conservatives also proposed an increase in council size of three councillors to 120. They stated that they had compared Birmingham with other metropolitan councils and with shire unitary authorities and that, based on this comparison, the number of councillors should be dramatically increased. However, they accepted that this was not a viable option and, having spoken to councillors regarding workload and establishing a target electorate of around 18,000 electors per ward, concluded that their proposals should be based on a council size of 120.

65 We received two further submissions regarding council size. Balsall Heath Forum proposed a council of 96 councillors. This proposal was based on the number of neighbourhoods which exist within the city, and the Forum proposed that ward boundaries be redrawn to reflect these neighbourhoods. It was argued that this proposal would provide for the reinforcement of natural neighbourhoods, real local issues being more highly considered with party political matters counting for less and increased voter turnout. Finally, Central Moseley Neighbourhood Forum and The Moseley Society submitted joint proposals for the Moseley area, based on the assumption that the existing council size of 117 would be retained.

66 We considered the proposals submitted by Central Moseley Neighbourhood Forum and The Moseley Society and Balsall Heath Forum. However, we were not persuaded that a case had been presented for either of these options to be viable as they were supported by limited argumentation and evidence, particularly in relation to the political management of the City Council. Moreover, we received no evidence of any local consultation on these proposed council sizes nor of any widespread local support, particularly for a significant reduction to 96.

67 We therefore looked closely at the two proposed council sizes of 120 and 123. We considered that while the argumentation and evidence put forward for these proposed council sizes was helpful, it was insufficient to enable us to reach a judgement on the most suitable council size for Birmingham. Therefore, the three respondents who had proposed council sizes of 120 or 123 members, namely the City Council, the Liberal Democrats and the Conservatives, were written to on two occasions requesting further evidence and information on why the existing council size of 117 would not provide for effective and convenient local government for the electors in Birmingham, and why the proposed council sizes of either 120 or 123 should be adopted for the basis of the draft recommendations. Emphasis was placed on the City Council’s internal political management structure, the role of councillors in the new structure under the respective council size proposals, and the impact that the Council’s proposed devolved governance initiative would have on the proposed council sizes.
Further evidence was duly received from each of the respondents. The City Council addressed the issues on which we had sought further detail, identifying a number of points in support of its proposed council size of 123. Much emphasis was put on the need to increase the number of wards from three to four in the Sutton Coldfield area, asserting that this approach had received widespread support locally. The view was also asserted that an extra three councillors in the rest of the city would provide for a balance between electoral equality and the recognition of the workload of councillors which, it was argued, was perceived ‘to be more onerous than the other more leafy wards’. In relation to devolved governance, the City Council outlined how the role of the councillor would be affected. It stated that, ‘all indicators are that the council size should increase to strengthen local democracy as opposed to remaining at the same or being decreased’.

The Liberal Democrats based their evidence on the need to maintain the current boundary between Sutton Coldfield and the rest of Birmingham and on a strong opposition to any proposed reduction in council size. They also asserted the community-based links between the councillor and the electorate and how too few councillors could have a negative effect on this relationship.

The Conservatives submitted additional evidence based on the case for achieving councillor:elector ratios closer to those of other metropolitan authorities, the impact of the ‘cabinet’ style of governance on the workload of councillors and on the likely effects of a significant reduction in the number of councillors.

Having considered all the representations and the further evidence received, we noted that a large amount of information had been provided in order to inform us in relation to the issue of council size, and we were grateful to all those who contributed. We recognised that given its council size and electorate, Birmingham is unique in terms of local authority electoral arrangements. We noted that within the evidence supplied, reference was made to other metropolitan authorities as a means of justifying an increase in the number of councillors for Birmingham. However, as outlined in the Guidance, we do not take this approach when considering council size and are of the view that each area should be considered on its own merits. If our approach were to seek equality of representation between local authority areas, Birmingham would be entitled to many more councillors.

The two main areas which appeared to be paramount were the need to address the under-representation in the Sutton Coldfield area and the strong opposition by the City Council, the Conservatives and the Liberal Democrats to any potential decrease in the number of councillors serving the city. Having considered the information made available, we did not consider that a decrease in council size would provide for the achievement of effective and convenient local government. Nor would it receive local support.

We therefore considered the proposed council sizes of 120 and 123 members, with particular regard to securing the best allocation of councillors across the city as a whole. Under the existing council size of 117, the Sutton Coldfield area would be significantly under-represented by 2006, being entitled to 12 councillors and having only nine. Furthermore, the rest of the city is over-represented, being entitled to 105 councillors and having 108. Under a council size of 120, the Sutton Coldfield area would be entitled to 12.2 councillors and have 12, while the rest of the city would be entitled to 107.7 councillors and have 108. Under a council size of 123, the Sutton Coldfield area would be entitled to 12.5 councillors and have 12, while the rest of the city would be entitled to 110.4 councillors and have 111. Therefore, in comparing both the 120 and 123 council sizes, bearing in mind the need for a uniform pattern of three-member wards, we were aware that both council sizes would address the imbalance of representation between Sutton Coldfield and the rest of Birmingham.
We noted that the current significant imbalance of representation in the city, and the incorrect allocation of councillors between Sutton Coldfield and the remainder of the city, could be addressed under each of the increased council sizes. With this in mind, we therefore agreed with the view that the most appropriate way to address the under-representation in Sutton Coldfield would be to create an additional ward in that area, therefore increasing its representation by three councillors, particularly as this would be supported locally. However, having considered the allocation of councillors under both the proposed council sizes, as detailed above, we noted that the best balance of representation between Sutton Coldfield and the remainder of the city would be achieved under a council size of 120. In the light of this, together with the information and evidence provided, we were not persuaded that the case had been made for an increase in council size of six councillors to 123.

We therefore concluded that the achievement of electoral equality and the other statutory criteria would best be met by a council of 120 members.

At Stage Three, the City Council, the Conservatives, Councillor Hutchings, Councillor Hill, Councillor Gregory, Councillor Roy, Councillor Harvey and two local residents all expressed support for the proposed council size of 120, with specific support for the additional ward in Sutton Coldfield.

Having considered the representations received at Stage Three, we have decided to confirm the proposed council size of 120 as final. While the issue of council size was contentious at Stage One, the proposed council size of 120 has received a significant level of support at Stage Three.

Electoral arrangements

The fundamental starting point in relation to this review was determining the correct council size. Having reached a conclusion on this, we were unable to facilitate the Council’s official electoral scheme, which was based on a council size of 123. However, we had available to us a copy of the Council’s 120-member consultation scheme. We therefore considered the Conservatives’ scheme and the Liberal Democrats’ scheme, together with the Council’s 120-member consultation scheme. No evidence or argumentation to support the proposals was provided under the Council’s consultation scheme or the Conservatives’ scheme, while the Liberal Democrats provided limited argumentation in support of their proposals. Based on this information, we took the approach of devising a scheme for Birmingham based on areas of consensus between the three schemes, electoral equality, and strength of boundaries.

All three schemes had merit, providing for much improved levels of electoral equality and, on the whole, using strong boundaries. It was apparent from an early stage that within the city of Birmingham there are a number of geographical features (major roads, railways, rivers, etc), which could ideally be used as boundaries. However, in order to formulate a uniform three-member ward scheme for Birmingham as a whole, it was not possible for every one of these boundaries to be used in their entirety and we recognised the need to take a consistent approach in relation to this issue. Officers from the Committee visited the city and looked closely at the areas either side of these significant barriers and checked crossing/access points in order to ascertain which of these geographical features should be respected.

We acknowledged that in a large urban expanse such as Birmingham, given the need to maintain a pattern of three-member wards, it would often be the case that wards would contain disparate communities. The lack of significant community-based evidence during Stage One reinforced our approach to formulating draft recommendations, which were based on electoral equality, strength of boundaries and areas of consensus. However, in our draft recommendations report we stated that it was very much a consultation document and that we
were keen to encourage the submission of local views and community-based evidence at Stage Three.

81 We based our draft recommendations on a combination of the Council’s consultation and the Conservatives’ schemes. There was a measure of consensus between these two schemes in relation to ward patterns and the use of significant geographical features, such as the M6 motorway. We did, however, propose adopting elements of the Liberal Democrats’ proposals, together with some of our own proposals. We were also able to broadly reflect the views of a number of respondents who wrote to us at Stage One.

82 We have now carefully considered all the representations received at Stage Three, and we propose broadly confirming our draft recommendations as final. We do however propose a number of amendments throughout the city in order to provide for a better reflection of the statutory criteria.

83 While a number of submissions were received, in some cases the evidence and argumentation did not persuade us that the alternative proposals being put forward provided for a better reflection of the statutory criteria than the draft recommendations. Issues such as house prices, insurance premiums and school catchment areas were referred to on a number of occasions, matters which are not affected by ward boundary changes. Alternative proposals were also argued on the basis of regeneration and funding initiatives, as well as ward based initiatives such as policing areas. We also received a number of petitions that were largely based on assertion not evidence.

84 Having considered all the representations received, we noted that the draft recommendations have received broad support, particularly from the City Council and the Conservatives. In relation to alternative proposals, we were conscious that we needed to adopt a consistent approach and looked carefully at the evidence and argumentation being put to us when determining whether those proposals were a better reflection of the statutory criteria than those contained in the draft recommendations report.

85 As detailed above, we acknowledge that in a large urban conurbation such as Birmingham, given the requirement to maintain a uniform pattern of three-member wards, it may often be the case that wards would have to contain disparate communities. While we consider that some of the views put forward at Stage Three have merit, we have been unable to identify viable alternatives which would meet the statutory criteria while not resulting in consequential amendments to surrounding wards which had received local support. This is particularly the case in relation to the proposed Yardley ward. We have noted the views put forward at Stage Three in relation to the lack of community links between the southern area of Small Heath and the areas to its east, which we have combined together within our proposed Yardley ward. We acknowledge this view and it was an issue we discussed within our draft recommendations report. However, removing this area from the proposed Yardley ward and combining it with the area to its north (in the proposed Bordesley Green ward) would result in the ward varying by 17% by 2006. While we note the concerns expressed, we have not been persuaded by the evidence received that this level of electoral equality is justified in a such a densely urban area as Birmingham.

86 The Liberal Democrats expressed the most significant level of opposition towards our draft recommendations. They proposed revised wards in the east and north-western parts of the city which would result in changes to a total of 16 of our proposed wards. We looked carefully at these alternative proposals (which were broadly similar to those submitted by Perry Barr Liberal Democrats in the north-west of the city). Firstly, in relation to their proposals in the east of the city, we consider that elements of their proposals have some merit. However, we have not been persuaded that the substantial change to the draft recommendations which would result from these proposals is fully justified, particularly as support for our draft recommendations in this area has been received. The main areas of concern expressed by the Liberal Democrats relate
to the inclusion of the southern part of the area known as Small Heath in the proposed Yardley ward and the division of the Yardley area between three revised wards. While addressing these areas of concern in their proposals, there are a number of consequential effects on surrounding wards. While the Liberal Democrats describe the communities in these surrounding wards as ‘seamless’, we have received support for these wards at Stage Three and have not been persuaded to move away from our draft recommendations.

87 We do however propose putting forward a couple of amendments based on proposals submitted by the Liberal Democrats (and the Conservatives) in relation to the Yardley area which we have been persuaded would provide for a better reflection of the statutory criteria. These are discussed in more detail later in the report.

88 In relation to the north-western part of the city, we again note that the alternative proposals for Perry Barr ward put forward by the Liberal Democrats and Perry Barr Liberal Democrats would have a consequential effect on a number of surrounding wards which have received an element of local support at Stage Three. The two main areas of concern being expressed in this area are regarding the use of the M6 Motorway as a boundary and the inclusion of the area known as Witton in the proposed Perry Barr ward. Based on the evidence and argumentation put forward, we have not been persuaded that the local community would be adversely affected if the M6 were to be used as a boundary. In addition, the alternative proposals put forward, in our view, would provide for a boundary which is less identifiable than that put forward in our draft recommendations report. In relation to the Witton area, we consider that that there is justification in the view that this area has limited links with the rest of the proposed Perry Barr ward. However, as detailed above, the need to secure a uniform pattern of three-member wards has limited our options in this area. In addition, if the Witton area was removed from the proposed Perry Barr ward, the revised ward would contain approximately 18% fewer electors per councillor than the city average by 2006 and we have not been persuaded by the argumentation put forward that this level of electoral inequality can be justified.

89 The draft recommendations have been reviewed in the light of further evidence and the representations received during Stage Three. For city warding purposes, the following areas, based on existing wards, are considered in turn:

i. Sutton Four Oaks, Sutton New Hall and Sutton Vesey wards;
ii. Kingstanding, Oscott and Stockland Green wards;
iii. Erdington and Kingsbury wards;
iv. Hodge Hill and Shard End wards;
v. Nechells and Washwood Heath wards;
vi. Aston, Handsworth, Perry Barr and Sandwell wards;
vii. Ladywood and Soho wards;
viii. Edgbaston, Harborne and Quinton wards;
ix. Moseley, Small Heath, Sparkbrook and Sparkhill wards;
x. Acock’s Green, Sheldon and Yardley wards;
xi. Billesley, Brandwood, Fox Hollies and Hall Green wards;
xii. Bartley Green, Bournville, Selly Oak and Weoley wards;
xiii. King’s Norton, Longbridge and Northfield wards.

90 Details of our final recommendations are set out in Tables 1 and 2, and illustrated on Map 2, in Appendix A and on the large maps.

**Sutton Four Oaks, Sutton New Hall and Sutton Vesey wards**

91 The existing wards of Sutton Four Oaks, Sutton New Hall and Sutton Vesey cover Sutton Coldfield in the north-eastern part of the city council area. Each ward is represented by three councillors. Under the current arrangements all three wards are notably under-represented with Sutton Four Oaks, Sutton New Hall and Sutton Vesey wards containing 29%, 40% and 24%...
more electors per councillor than the city average respectively (31%, 43% and 23% more than the average by 2006).

92 At Stage One, the proposals for this area were identical under the City Council’s consultation scheme, the Conservatives’ scheme and the Liberal Democrats’ scheme, with one exception in relation to the Conservatives’ proposed Sutton Vesey ward. All three schemes in this area provided for the creation of four three-member wards. A revised Sutton Four Oaks ward would comprise the existing ward, less the area broadly to the south-east of Little Sutton Lane, Little Sutton Road and Wyvern Road. The remaining part of the existing Sutton Four Oaks ward would form part of a new Sutton Trinity ward (Sutton Maney under the Liberal Democrats’ proposals), together with part of the existing Sutton New Hall ward, the area broadly to the north-west of Alfred’s Way, Stephens Road, Fairfax Road, Wyatt Road and Lindridge Road. The remaining part of the existing Sutton New Hall ward would be combined with part of the existing Sutton Vesey ward, the area surrounding Walmley Golf Course, broadly to the east of the railway line and south of Station Road and Wylde Green Road, to form a revised Sutton New Hall ward. Under the City Council’s consultation scheme and the Liberal Democrats’ proposals, the remaining part of the existing Sutton Vesey ward would form a revised Sutton Vesey ward. The Conservatives’ proposed Sutton Vesey ward provided for an amendment to the southern boundary, resulting in Fosseway Drive being transferred to their proposed Erdington ward, as discussed later.

93 Under the City Council’s consultation scheme and the Liberal Democrats’ proposals, the proposed Sutton Four Oaks, Sutton New Hall, Sutton Trinity (Sutton Maney) and Sutton Vesey wards would contain 1% fewer, 3% more, 1% fewer and 2% more electors per councillor than the city average respectively (2%, 2%, 2% and 1% more by 2006). Under the Conservatives’ proposals, the proposed Sutton Four Oaks, Sutton New Hall, Sutton Trinity and Sutton Vesey wards would contain 1% fewer, 3% more, 1% fewer and 1% more electors per councillor than the city average respectively (2%, 2% and 2% more and equal to the average by 2006).

94 A further 49 representations were received from local residents in the Sutton Coldfield area. Strong concern was expressed over any proposals which would breach the historical boundary between Sutton Coldfield and the rest of Birmingham, specifically in relation to the Banners Gate area of the existing Sutton Vesey ward. Two residents suggested that the Sutton Coldfield area should be represented by four rather than three wards, while another resident included a petition containing 86 signatures in support of their submission.

95 Having considered the representations received at Stage One, we based our draft recommendations for this area on the identical proposals submitted to us for new Sutton Four Oaks, Sutton New Hall and Sutton Trinity (Sutton Maney) wards under the City Council’s consultation scheme and by the Liberal Democrats and the Conservatives. We based our proposals for the revised Sutton Vesey ward on the Conservatives’ proposals as we considered that there would be merit in Fosseway Drive forming part of the proposed Erdington ward as discussed later.

96 We noted that there was a significant level of consensus regarding the revised warding arrangements in the Sutton Coldfield area and that each of the proposed wards would provide for a much improved level of electoral equality and, on the whole, use strong boundaries. In addition, the proposals put to us reflected the views expressed by 49 local residents, including a petition. We proposed a number of minor amendments in this area in order to provide for more clearly identifiable boundaries, ensuring that defaced and undefined boundaries would no longer be used. On the whole, these amendments were minor and involved the transfer of a minimal number of electors. The more notable changes included the transfer of properties 1-97 Kirkwood Avenue, 36-40 Beech Road and 29-45 Sycamore Road from the proposed Sutton Vesey ward to the proposed Erdington ward and properties 12-86 Berwood Farm Road from the proposed Sutton New Hall ward to the proposed Erdington ward. Finally, in relation to ward names, we noted that, at Stage One, alternatives of Sutton Trinity and Sutton Maney were submitted for the
additional ward in this area. Based on the fact that there was agreement between the City Council and the Conservatives in relation to the name of Sutton Trinity, we put this forward as part of our draft recommendations.

97 Under our draft recommendations, the proposed Sutton Four Oaks, Sutton New Hall, Sutton Trinity and Sutton Vesey wards would contain 1% fewer, 2% more, 1% fewer and 1% more electors per councillor than the city average respectively (2% more, 2% more, 1% more and 1% fewer by 2006).

98 At Stage Three, Birmingham City Council expressed support for our draft recommendations in this area. However, it proposed a minor amendment to the southern boundary of the proposed Sutton New Hall ward in order to retain existing boundary in the Berwood Farm Road area, which it stated reflected the views of residents. The Conservatives expressed support for our proposals in this area, particularly in relation to the creation of an extra ward and the proposed name of Sutton Trinity. They did however propose a minor amendment to the southern boundary of the proposed Sutton New Hall ward, which was identical to that put forward by the City Council. In addition, they proposed that the boundary between the proposed Sutton New Hall and Sutton Trinity wards should broadly follow Langley Brook (thus transferring the area around Lindridge Junior School into Sutton Trinity ward) in order to secure a more identifiable boundary.

99 Councillor Hill expressed support for our proposals in this area, particularly in relation to the creation of an extra ward, while Councillor Hutchings stated that ‘the case for an extra ward in Sutton Coldfield is overwhelming’. Councillor Roy supported our draft recommendations, particularly in relation to the proposed Sutton Vesey ward. He also expressed support for the proposed name of Sutton Trinity. He noted that concerns had been expressed in relation to the division of the Falcon Lodge estate, but stated that as long as the numbers were equal, he had no strong views on where the boundary should go. Three local residents expressed support for the draft recommendation in this area, one with particular reference to the use of the word ‘Sutton’ as a prefix to the ward names in this area and one with particular reference to the proposals in the Fosseway Drive area. Banners Gate & Parklands Neighbourhood Forum fully supported the proposals for Sutton Vesey ward, while another local resident expressed full support for the proposals in this area, particularly in relation to the creation of an extra ward and the proposed name of Sutton Trinity.

100 Mrs Hunt, representing Falcon Lodge residents, expressed support for the creation of an extra ward in Sutton Coldfield. However, she was strongly opposed to the division of the Falcon Lodge estate between our proposed Sutton New Hall and Sutton Trinity wards. An alternative boundary was put forward which would rectify this division. The proposed boundary would follow Lindridge Road, Rectory Road and Grove Farm Drive and would result in the area broadly surrounding Falcon Lodge Crescent being transferred to the proposed Sutton New Hall ward. A petition containing 289 signatures was submitted in support of these proposals.

101 Mr Walton, a local resident, put forward alternative warding arrangements for the whole of Sutton Coldfield, which resulted in the Falcon Lodge estate (broadly defined as bounded by Reddicap Heath Road, Hollyfield Road and Rectory Road) being contained within a single city ward. These proposals resulted in the creation of significantly different wards to those outlined under our draft recommendations, particularly in relation to the proposed Sutton New ward (Trinity), which would stretch from the city boundary in the north to the Chester Road in the south. It was argued that these proposals ‘follow principal roads and railway lines, and also retain some of the existing boundaries therefore giving clarity to the electorate’. It was also argued that these proposals do not split communities which are ‘in fact kept intact or strengthened, unlike in the Draft Ward Plan which achieves the opposite’. Sutton Coldfield Constituency Labour Party expressed support for these proposals, arguing that they provide for a better reflection of the community, particularly regarding Falcon Lodge.
102 Falcon Lodge Advisory Committee expressed opposition to the division of the Falcon Lodge estate between separate city wards, which it contended would have a detrimental effect on the local community. It stated that the whole estate falls within four main roads and that it would make more sense for the proposed boundary to follow one of these roads. Sutton Christian Centre also expressed opposition to the division of the Falcon Lodge estate between separate city wards, as did five local residents (one of which did support the creation of an extra ward in Sutton Coldfield). Finally, another local resident opposed the proposed Sutton New Hall ward and proposed that the existing warding arrangements in this area should be retained.

103 Having carefully considered all the representations received at Stage Three, we have noted that there is broad support for our draft recommendations in the Sutton Coldfield area with particular support for the creation of an additional ward. However, we have also noted that there is some local opposition to the boundary between our proposed Sutton New Hall and Sutton Trinity wards. A number of local respondents argue that this boundary would divide the Falcon Lodge estate between two wards which would have a detrimental effect on local community identity in the area.

104 We have therefore looked closely at the alternative proposals submitted during Stage Three and have been persuaded by the evidence and argumentation put forward to modify our draft recommendations in this area. We have noted that a number of respondents clearly identified the area covered by the Falcon Lodge estate and that two of the alternative proposals put forward proposed including all of this area within the Sutton New Hall ward. However, given that there has been broad support for the remaining wards in the Sutton Coldfield area, we do not propose adopting the alternative scheme submitted by Mr Walton and supported by the Sutton Coldfield Constituency Labour Party. Furthermore, we have noted that if all of the Falcon Lodge estate were to be contained wholly within Sutton New Hall ward, as proposed by Mrs Hunt, this would result in Sutton New Hall and Sutton Trinity wards containing 14% more and 13% fewer electors per councillor than the city average respectively (14% more and 10% fewer by 2006). We have not been persuaded that such an electoral imbalance is justified in a dense urban area. However, we noted that if all of the Falcon Lodge estate were to be included wholly within Sutton Trinity ward (with the boundary following eastwards along the centre of Reddicap Heath Road, northwards along the centre of Springfield Road and then along Langley Brook) this would result in Sutton New Hall and Sutton Trinity wards containing 5% fewer and 5% more electors per councillor than the city average respectively (5% fewer and 8% more by 2006). We are of the view that this level of electoral equality is acceptable given the better reflection of local community identity achieved and therefore decided to modify the draft recommendations accordingly. This modification would also broadly reflect aspects of the Conservatives’ proposals and provide for a clearer boundary.

105 We have also noted the amendment to the southern boundary of Sutton New Hall ward as proposed by both the City Council and the Conservatives. However, we have not been persuaded to move away from our draft recommendation and remain of the view that it provides for a more identifiable boundary in this area.

106 Under our final recommendations, the proposed Sutton Four Oaks and Sutton Vesey wards would contain the same number of electors per councillor as under our draft recommendations. The proposed Sutton New Hall and Sutton Trinity wards would contain 5% fewer and 5% more electors per councillor than the city average respectively (5% fewer and 8% more by 2006).

Kingstanding, Oscott and Stockland Green wards

107 The existing wards of Kingstanding, Oscott and Stockland Green are situated in the northwest of the city to the south of Sutton Coldfield. Each ward is represented by three councillors. Under the current arrangements Kingstanding, Oscott and Stockland Green wards contain 1%, 11% and 4% fewer electors per councillor than the city average respectively (equal to, 12% fewer and 3% fewer than the average by 2006).
At Stage One, the proposals for this area were identical under the City Council’s consultation scheme and the Conservatives’ proposals, providing for the creation of three revised three-member wards. A revised Oscott ward would be largely based on the existing ward, with an amendment in the south in order to use the M6 motorway as a boundary and in the east to use Kingstanding Road as a boundary. A revised Kingstanding ward would again be broadly based on the existing ward, less the area broadly bounded by Marsh Hill and Black Hill Road (surrounding Witton Lakes), and with the inclusion of the areas to the east of Kingstanding Road from the existing Oscott ward, and broadly between Perry Common Recreation Ground and Turfpitts Lane from the existing Stockland Green ward. Finally, a revised Stockland Green ward would comprise the existing ward, less the areas broadly to the north of Short Heath Road (including the area broadly between Perry Common Recreation Ground and Turfpitts Lane), and bounded by Wheelwright Road and the A5127, and including the areas broadly bounded by Marsh Hill and Black Hill Road (surrounding Witton Lakes) from the existing Kingstanding ward and broadly bounded by Erdington Hall Road and the A4040 from the existing Erdington ward. The remaining parts of the existing Stockland Green ward would form part of the proposed Erdington and Tyburn wards, as discussed later. Under the City Council’s consultation scheme and the Conservatives’ proposals, the proposed Kingstanding, Oscott and Stockland Green wards would contain 7% fewer, 2% more and 8% fewer electors per councillor than the city average respectively (5% fewer, 1% more and 6% fewer by 2006).

The Liberal Democrats also proposed three revised three-member wards in this area. They proposed a new Great Barr ward (alternative name of Great Barr & Oscott ward) which would comprise the existing Oscott ward, less the areas to the north of King’s Road and surrounding Warren Hill Road, together with the Perry Beeches area from the existing Perry Barr ward. A revised Kingstanding ward would comprise the existing ward, less the area broadly to the south of Witton Lodge Road, together with the areas to the north of King’s Road and surrounding Warren Hill Road from the existing Oscott ward. It was stated that following consultation in this area, it was felt that ‘moving all of Kingstanding into one ward is a good idea’. Finally, a revised Stockland Green ward would contain the existing ward, less the areas containing South Road and Hunton Road and bounded by George Road and Park Road (surrounding Brookvale Park and the western end of Tyburn Road), together with the area to the south of Witton Lodge Road from the existing Kingstanding ward. It was stated, ‘the boundaries need some smoothing’. The remaining parts of the existing Stockland Green ward would form parts of the proposed Erdington, Aston and Kingsbury wards, as discussed later. Under the Liberal Democrats’ proposals, Great Barr, Kingstanding and Stockland Green wards would contain 2% more, 1% fewer and 3% fewer electors per councillor than the city average respectively (equal to the average, equal to the average and 1% fewer than the average by 2006).

Three further representations were received in relation to the Oscott area. Oscott North Neighbourhood Forum expressed support for the existing Oscott ward to be retained. However, it proposed alternative boundaries to be used if changes had to be made. It expressed support for the use of the M6 motorway as a natural boundary in the city and also proposed an alternative eastern boundary for Oscott ward in order to use Kingstanding Road. Kingstanding Neighbourhood Police Imitative proposed that the current boundaries of Oscott ward be retained. It accepted that changes would need to be made to Oscott ward in order to improve electoral equality, but requested that these be kept to a minimum. It put forward some alternative proposals, which were broadly similar to those proposed by Oscott North Neighbourhood Forum. West Midlands Pensioners Convention Perry Barr & Kingstanding Branch also proposed that the existing boundaries of Oscott ward be retained.

Having considered the representations received at Stage One, we based our draft recommendations for this area on the City Council’s consultation scheme and the Conservatives’ proposals which were identical. Based on our approach to this review, as discussed earlier, we analysed the proposals based on areas of consensus and strength of boundaries. Officers from the Committee having visited the area, we identified some key boundaries, which on the whole
were reflected in the City Council consultation/Conservative scheme. The most significant of these was the M6 motorway, which would be breached under the Liberal Democrats’ proposals. The use of the M6 motorway as a boundary was also advocated by the Oscott North Neighbourhood Forum and would be broadly supported by Kingstanding Neighbourhood Police Initiative. Having reached this conclusion, we were of the view that the City Council consultation/Conservatives’ proposals facilitated a stronger scheme in this area, using more identifiable boundaries.

112 We were not persuaded that the proposals put forward by the Liberal Democrats would provide for a satisfactory reflection of community identity. As mentioned earlier, we concurred with the views expressed under the City Council’s consultation scheme and by the Conservatives that the M6 motorway forms a significant boundary and that the Perry Beeches area has stronger links with the areas to its south. We also considered that Kingstanding Road forms a stronger northern boundary for the proposed Oscott ward than King’s Road as proposed by the Liberal Democrats, with the Wandsworth Road area having stronger links to its south. We also looked at the use of Witton Lodge Road as a boundary and considered that the areas either side share links and were similar in character. Finally, we considered that there was merit in the retention of Hawthorn Road as a boundary, with the areas surrounding Warren Hill Road remaining part of Oscott ward.

113 Under our draft recommendations Kingstanding, Oscott and Stockland Green wards would contain 7% fewer, 2% more and 8% fewer electors per councillor than the city average respectively (6% fewer, 1% more and 6% fewer by 2006).

114 At Stage Three, Birmingham City Council expressed support for the draft recommendations in this area. However, it proposed an amendment to the eastern boundary of the proposed Kingstanding ward, resulting in the use of Court Lane and Witton Lodge Road as a boundary. It stated that this would result in a better-defined boundary as well as an improved level of electoral equality.

115 The Conservatives expressed support for the draft recommendations in this area. However, they ‘strongly urge that the existing boundary along Rough Road between Oscott and Kingstanding wards be retained’. They argued that ‘Extensive consultation with residents in the tri-angular area formed by Rough Road, Kingstanding Road and the Sutton Coldfield boundary has shown that the residents feel themselves to be part of the Old Oscott community rather than the Kingstanding community’.

116 Kingstanding Neighbourhood Initiative supported our proposals in relation to Oscott and Kingstanding wards. Particular support was expressed in relation to the use of the M6 motorway and Kingstanding Road as boundaries. Oscott North Neighbourhood Forum also expressed support for our proposed Oscott and Kingstanding wards, while Councillor Linnecor expressed support for our proposed Oscott ward, particularly in relation to the use of Kingstanding Road, Hawthorn Road and the M6 motorway as boundaries and the inclusion of the Brandywood estate. He also stated that ‘The Kingstanding/Oscott/Perry Beeches community is very close knit…and your proposals seem to reflect this’. Broad agreement was also expressed regarding the neighbouring wards. Support for our proposals in this area was also expressed by Councillor Hill and a local resident.

117 The Liberal Democrats proposed revised wards in this area, largely based on their opposition towards the proposed Perry Barr ward. They proposed a revised Oscott ward which would be largely based on our proposed ward, less the areas to the east of Warren Road (surrounding Hill Crest Grove), and to the north of the M6 Motorway (surrounding Beeches Road) together with the area to the east of Kingstanding Road (broadly bounded by King’s Road and Banners Walk) from the proposed Kingstanding ward. The remaining part of our proposed Oscott ward would form part of a revised Perry Barr ward, as detailed below. They proposed a revised Kingstanding ward, which would be largely based on our proposed ward, less the area to
the east of Kingstanding Road (broadly bounded by King’s Road and Banners Walk) together with the areas to the east of Warran Road (surrounding Beeches Road) from our proposed Oscott ward, and the area surrounding Ivyfield Road from our proposed Stockland Green ward. Finally, they proposed a revised Stockland Green ward, which would be largely based on our proposed ward, less the area surrounding Ivyfield Road, together with the Witton area from the proposed Perry Barr ward.

118 The Liberal Democrats described this area as being ‘seamless’ and asserted that there are no strong community boundaries between the areas of Oscott, Kingstanding and Stockland Green. Their proposals were therefore put forward in order to address the consequential impact on electoral equality as a result of their proposed amendments to our proposed Perry Barr ward. Under the Liberal Democrats’ proposals, Kingstanding, Oscott and Stockland Green wards would contain 6%, 2% and 6% fewer electors per councillor than the city average respectively (4%, 3% and 5% fewer by 2006).

119 Perry Barr Liberal Democrats proposed identical alternative warding arrangements for this area, subject to a marginally different southern boundary for the proposed Oscott ward. As with the Liberal Democrats, these revised proposals were largely a consequence of their objection to our proposed Perry Barr ward. The two main areas of concern expressed by Perry Barr Liberal Democrats related to the use of the M6 Motorway as a boundary and the inclusion of part of the Witton area in our proposed Perry Barr ward. A petition containing 1,795 signatures was submitted in support of these views. As a result of addressing these concerns, they stated that they proposed to ‘make further changes to the artificial boundaries separating Stockland Green/Kingstanding and Kingstanding/Oscott to equalise numbers and build Oscott around the Kingstanding Circle’. Under Perry Barr Liberal Democrats’ proposals, Kingstanding, Oscott and Stockland Green wards would contain 10%, 5% and 2% fewer electors per councillor than the city average respectively (8%, 7% and 1% fewer by 2006).

120 Finally, Booths Farm Area Residents’ Association and two local residents opposed the use of the M6 motorway as a boundary between our proposed Perry Barr and Oscott wards, with the general view expressed that the Perry Beeches estate does not look south but north for local amenities.

121 Having carefully considered all the representations received at Stage Three, we have decided to confirm our draft recommendations as final, subject to the boundary amendment proposed by the City Council. We have noted that both the Liberal Democrats and the Perry Barr Liberal Democrats proposed similar modifications to the proposed Perry Barr ward which would result in consequential changes being made to the proposed Kingstanding, Oscott and Stockland Green wards. However, we have received some local support for these wards. We have carefully considered the argumentation put forward to support these alternative arrangements but have not been persuaded that the local community would be significantly adversely affected if the M6 were to be used as a boundary. We also consider that the alternative boundaries put forward in this area would be less identifiable than under our draft recommendations. Furthermore, we do not propose modifying the northern boundary of Kingstanding ward to follow Rough Road, as proposed by the Conservatives, as we remain of the view that Kingstanding Road would provide a stronger boundary in this area, which has also received some local support.

122 We have decided to adopt the City Council’s modification to the boundary between the proposed Kingstanding and Erdington wards as this would provide for a more identifiable boundary while also improving electoral equality slightly.

123 Under our final recommendations the proposed Kingstanding ward would contain 5% fewer electors per councillor than the city average initially (3% fewer by 2006). The proposed Oscott and Stockland Green would contain the same number of electors per councillor as under the draft recommendations.
Erdington and Kingsbury wards

124 The existing wards of Erdington and Kingsbury are situated in the north-east of the city to the south of Sutton Coldfield. Each ward is represented by three councillors. Under the current arrangements Erdington and Kingsbury wards contain equal to the average and 35% fewer electors per councillor than the city average respectively (1% fewer and 29% fewer than the average by 2006).

125 At Stage One, the proposals for this area under the City Council’s consultation scheme and the Conservatives’ proposals were broadly similar, and both provided for the creation of two three-member wards. The City Council’s consultation scheme provided for a revised Erdington ward which comprised the existing ward less the areas to the south-west of the A4040 and containing Hollydale Road, together with the area broadly to the north of Short Heath Road (but not including the area broadly between Perry Common Recreation Ground and Turfpitts Lane) from the existing Stockland Green ward. The City Council also proposed a new Tyburn ward, which would comprise the existing Kingsbury ward, together with the areas surrounding Hollydale Road, and bounded by Erdington Hall Road and Wheelwright Road from the existing Erdington ward, and the area bounded by Wheelwright Road and the A5217 from the existing Stockland Green ward. Under the City Council’s consultation scheme, Erdington and Tyburn wards would contain 3% and 10% fewer electors per councillor than the city average respectively (4% and 4% fewer by 2006).

126 The Conservatives proposed a broadly similar revised Erdington ward to that put forward under the City Council’s consultation scheme, with a marginally different northern boundary (to include Fosseway Drive) and a marginally different eastern boundary in the Hollydale Road area. The Conservatives’ proposed Tyburn ward was also broadly identical to that proposed by the City Council, subject to a marginally different western boundary in the Hollydale Road area. Under the Conservatives’ proposals, Erdington and Tyburn wards would contain 3% and 8% fewer electors per councillor than the city average respectively (5% and 2% fewer by 2006).

127 The Liberal Democrats also put forward broadly similar proposals in this area. Their proposed Erdington ward would comprise the existing ward less the area bounded by Kingsbury Road and Wheelwright Road and including the areas surrounding South Road and Hunton Road from the existing Stockland Green ward. A revised Kingsbury ward would comprise the existing ward together with the area bounded by Kingsbury Road and Wheelwright Road from the existing Erdington ward, and the area containing the western end of Tyburn Road from the existing Stockland Green ward. Under the Liberal Democrats’ proposals, Erdington and Kingsbury wards would contain 3% more and 9% fewer electors per councillor than the city average respectively (2% more and 3% fewer by 2006).

128 Having considered the representations received during Stage One, we based our draft recommendations for this area on the proposals submitted under the City Council’s consultation scheme. However, we adopted elements of the proposals submitted by the Conservatives, together with some of our own proposals. As discussed earlier, we were of the view that there was merit in the proposal that Fosseway Drive form part of the proposed Erdington ward, as proposed by the Conservatives. In addition, as also detailed earlier, we proposed some minor amendments to the boundary between Sutton Coldfield and the rest of Birmingham which had a minor effect on the proposed Erdington ward.

129 We noted that there was broad consensus in this area, with all three city-wide schemes proposing to retain the M6 motorway as a southern boundary of the proposed Tyburn ward (Kingsbury ward under the Liberal Democrats’ proposals) and we concurred with this view. However, based on levels of consensus and strength of boundaries, coupled with our proposals for surrounding wards, we considered that the City Council’s proposals under its consultation scheme provided for the best reflection of the statutory criteria. Officers from the Committee having visited the area, we concluded that all three city-wide schemes had merit. However, we
were not persuaded that elements of the Liberal Democrats’ and the Conservatives’ proposals provided for the best reflection of community identity. We looked at the strength of Court Lane as a boundary, as would be the case under the Liberal Democrats’ proposals, and were of the view that the areas either side are similar in nature and should form part of the same city ward. We also considered that the Conservatives’ proposed eastern boundary of Erdington ward was somewhat arbitrary, while the boundary under the City Council’s consultation scheme was more clearly identifiable.

130 Under our draft recommendations, Erdington and Tyburn wards would contain equal to the average and 10% fewer electors per councillor than the city average respectively (2% and 4% fewer by 2006).

131 At Stage Three, Birmingham City Council broadly supported the draft recommendations in this area subject to three minor boundary amendments. As detailed above, the City Council proposed an amendment to the boundary between the proposed Erdington and Sutton New Hall wards in order to retain the existing boundary in the Berwood Farm Road area, together with an amendment between the proposed Erdington and Kingstanding wards, resulting in the use of Court Lane and Witton Lodge Road as a boundary. The Council also proposed a minor amendment to the boundary between Erdington and Tyburn wards, in order to place part of Pype Hayes Park, Tyburn, in Erdington in order to account for future housing development in this area (which would not affect any electors as the development would not take place within the five-year forecast).

132 The Conservatives expressed support for the draft recommendations in this area, particularly in reference to the proposed renaming of Kingsbury ward as Tyburn. They did, however, propose a minor amendment to the boundary between the proposed Erdington and Sutton New Hall wards, as detailed above, which was identical to that put forward by the City Council.

133 Finally, Councillor Hill and a local resident expressed support for our draft recommendations in this area.

134 Having carefully considered all the representations received at Stage Three, we have decided to confirm our draft recommendations as final, subject to adopting two of the three boundary amendments put forward by the City Council. As detailed above, we do not propose adopting the modification to the northern boundary of Erdington ward put forward by both the City Council and the Conservatives, as we have not been persuaded that this would provide for a clearer boundary. However, we have decided to adopt the City Council’s other amendment to the northern boundary of Erdington ward, to include a small area from the north-western part of Tyburn ward, in order to take account of future housing development in this area. This modification would not affect any electors. As detailed earlier, we are also adopting the City Council’s proposal to modify the boundary between Erdington and Kingstanding wards, as we have been persuaded that this would provide for a more identifiable boundary while also improving electoral equality slightly.

135 Under our final recommendations the proposed Erdington ward would contain 3% fewer electors per councillor than the city average (5% fewer by 2006). The proposed Tyburn ward would contain the same number of electors per councillor as under the draft recommendations.

**Hodge Hill and Shard End wards**

136 The existing wards of Hodge Hill and Shard End are situated in the east of the city to the south of the M6 motorway. Each ward is represented by three councillors. Under the current arrangements Hodge Hill and Shard End wards contain 1% and 7% fewer electors per councillor than the city average respectively (3% and 9% fewer than the average by 2006).
At Stage One, the proposals in this area were identical under the City Council’s consultation scheme and the Conservatives’ proposals, providing for two revised three-member wards. A revised Hodge Hill ward would contain the existing ward, less the area broadly to the south of the River Cole, together with the area bounded by Washwood Heath Road and the railway line from the existing Washwood Heath ward. A revised Shard End ward would comprise the existing ward, together with the area surrounding Bushbury Road (south of the River Cole) from the existing Hodge Hill ward. The remaining part of the existing Hodge Hill ward would form part of the proposed Stechford ward, as discussed later. Under the City Council’s consultation scheme and the Conservatives’ proposals, Hodge Hill and Shard End wards would contain equal to the average and 4% more electors per councillor than the city average respectively (2% fewer and 1% more than the average by 2006).

The Liberal Democrats proposed broadly retaining the existing wards in this area. They proposed a revised Hodge Hill ward which would comprise the existing ward, less the area surrounding Teesdale Avenue, together with the area surrounding Treaford Lane from the existing Washwood Heath ward. A revised Shard End ward would comprise the existing ward, together with the area surrounding Teesdale Avenue from the existing Hodge Hill ward. The Liberal Democrats acknowledged that there were limited re-warding options in this area and identified the railway line and the M6 motorway as significant boundaries. Under the Liberal Democrats’ proposals, Hodge Hill and Shard End wards would contain 5% and 3% more electors per councillor than the city average respectively (2% and 1% more than the average by 2006).

Having considered the representations received at Stage One, we adopted the proposals submitted under the City Council’s consultation scheme and by the Conservatives for this area as part of our draft recommendations. We noted that there was consensus between these two schemes and considered that the proposals reflected the statutory criteria. We were of the view that the proposals submitted by the Liberal Democrats, which broadly retain the existing wards in this area, had merit. However, based on our proposals elsewhere in the city and the fact that the proposals put forward under the City Council’s consultation scheme and by the Conservatives used stronger boundaries, such as major railways and the River Cole, we were not persuaded that the Liberal Democrats’ proposals offered the most appropriate revised warding pattern.

Officers from the Committee having visited the area, we were not persuaded by the Liberal Democrats’ proposal to unite areas either side of the River Cole, which in addition are separated by a large expanse of land, in the same city ward. We considered that in this case, the river forms a stronger boundary than the railway line, which we identified as having a number of crossing points. We also looked at the strength of Bromford Lane as a boundary as proposed by the Liberal Democrats. While we acknowledged that this could be considered as a strong boundary, we were of the view that the areas either side are similar and that it could be argued that Bromford Lane is as much a focus as a divide. In addition, not using Bromford Lane as a boundary would facilitate a better warding pattern for this area as a whole.

Under our draft recommendations the proposed Hodge Hill and Shard End wards would contain equal to the average and 4% more electors per councillor than the city average respectively (2% fewer and 1% more by 2006).

At Stage Three, Birmingham City Council, the Conservatives, Councillor Hill and a local resident all expressed support for our draft recommendations in this area.

The Liberal Democrats proposed revised wards in this area, largely as a consequence of their objections to our proposals in the Yardley and Small Heath areas. They proposed a revised Shard End ward that would be broadly similar to our proposed Shard End ward subject to the inclusion of the Buckland End area and the exclusion of the area surrounding Bushbury Road. The Liberal Democrats asserted that ‘This is a point where the railway line as being on an embankment is a stronger boundary then the river in the Glebe Farm area’. They proposed a
revised Hodge Hill ward, which would be significantly different to our proposed ward. It would be bordered by railway lines in the north and south, Bromford Lane and Alum Rock Road in the west and Buckland End Lane, Cole Hall Lane (New Cole Hall Lane) and Church Lane in the east. In addition they argued that ‘in this area the railway line is a strong and visible boundary and has more community impact than otherwise’. Under the Liberal Democrats’ proposals, Hodge Hill and Shard End wards would both contain 5% more electors per councillor than the city average (both 3% more by 2006).

144 Finally, Councillor Ward (Hodge Hill Advisory Committee) opposed the transfer of the area known locally as Glebe Farm from the proposed Hodge Hill ward to the proposed Shard End ward. It was noted that ‘While members can see the logic in the use of the River Cole as a boundary, they believe greater attention should have been paid to both the concept of community, and the tremendous strides made in recent times to engage the community in Glebe Farm’. Concern was expressed that the proposals could result in ‘NRF monies…which could potentially be lost should the area be divided in the proposed manner’. Support was expressed for the City Council’s Stage One proposals.

145 Having carefully considered all the representations received at Stage Three, we have noted that there is notable support for our draft recommendations in this area and therefore propose confirming our draft recommendations as final, without amendment.

146 We have considered the Liberal Democrats’ proposals in this area and we are of the view that elements of their proposals have some merit. We have further noted that the amendments made in this area are predominantly as a consequence of modifications made in the areas further south. However, we have not been persuaded that the substantial change to the draft recommendations which would result from these proposals has been fully justified, particularly as we have received notable local support for the wards in this area. We have also noted that Councillor Ward made reference to the implication that ward boundary changes may have on the allocation of regeneration funds. However, as detailed earlier, this is not something that we can take into account when formulating our recommendations.

147 Under our final recommendations the proposed Hodge Hill and Shard End wards would contain the same number of electors per councillor as under the draft recommendations.

Nechells and Washwood Heath wards

148 The existing wards of Nechells and Washwood Heath are situated in the centre of the city, to the south of the M6 and to the east of the city centre. Each ward is represented by three councillors. Under the current arrangements Nechells and Washwood Heath wards contain 2% fewer and 8% more electors per councillor than the city average respectively (1% fewer and 5% more than the average by 2006).

149 At Stage One, the proposals for this area were identical under the City Council’s consultation scheme and the Conservatives’ scheme, providing for two revised three-member wards. The revised Nechells ward would contain the existing ward, less the areas to the south-east of Princip Street and Bagot Street and to the north-east of Snow Hill Station and the areas bounded by the railway line and Bordesley Green Road and surrounding the Saltley area. It would include the area to the east of the Aston Expressway from the existing Aston ward, together with part of the existing Ladywood ward, the area broadly to the east of Bristol Street (A38), and the area broadly to the north of Highgate Middleway (A4540) and Small Heath Highway (A45) from the existing Sparkbrook ward. Finally, the revised Nechells ward would also contain part of the existing Small Heath ward, the area broadly bounded by Coventry Road and Cattell Road (B4128).

150 The revised Washwood Heath ward would comprise the existing ward, less the area bounded by Washwood Heath Road and the railway line, as discussed earlier, and the Alum...
Rock area, to the south of the railway line, together with the Saltley area from the existing Nechells ward, as detailed above. The remaining parts of the existing Nechells ward would form part of the revised Aston, Ladywood and Bordesley Green wards, while the remaining part of the existing Washwood Heath ward would form part of a revised Bordesley Green ward, all of which are discussed later. Under the City Council’s consultation scheme and the Conservatives’ proposals, Nechells and Washwood Heath wards would contain 2% and 5% more electors per councillor than the city average respectively (3% and 4% more by 2006).

151 The Liberal Democrats proposed retaining the existing Nechells ward and broadly retaining the existing Washwood Heath ward. The revised Washwood Heath ward would comprise the existing ward, less the area surrounding Trefaford Lane, as detailed above, together with the area surrounding Birmingham Heartlands Hospital from the existing Small Heath ward. Under the Liberal Democrats’ proposals, Nechells and Washwood Heath wards would contain 1% and 5% more electors per councillor than the city average respectively (2% and 3% more by 2006).

152 Having considered the representations received at Stage One, we adopted the City Council’s consultation scheme and the Conservatives’ proposals for this area as part of our draft recommendations. We noted that there was consensus between these two schemes and considered that the proposals reflect the statutory criteria. However, we proposed a minor amendment to the eastern boundary of the proposed Nechells ward in order to provide for an improved level of electoral equality for the neighbouring Bordesley Green ward. We proposed that properties 240-388 Charles Road, 338-356 Green Lane and 193-223 Bordesley Green be transferred to the proposed Nechells ward.

153 Having considered the alternative proposals in this area we were of the view that the proposed Nechells ward put forward under the City Council’s consultation scheme and by the Conservatives used strong boundaries such as major roads and railway lines. While we acknowledged that this ward would cover a large geographical area, we considered that this was justified due to the nature of the area of the city that this ward covers. The area is mainly industrial/commercial and it is therefore necessary to create a ward which would encompass this area together with enough residential parts in order to obtain an acceptable level of electoral equality.

154 While we considered that the Liberal Democrats’ proposals had merit, we were not persuaded that they used such strong boundaries, with, for example, their proposed Washwood Heath ward straddling the railway line and uniting areas which have limited communication links between them.

155 Under our draft recommendations, Nechells and Washwood Heath wards would contain 3% and 5% more electors per councillor than the city average respectively (4% and 4% more by 2006).

156 At Stage Three, Birmingham City Council supported our draft recommendations in this area. However it proposed two minor amendments to the boundary between the proposed Nechells and Ladywood wards in order to provide for a more clearly identifiable boundary. It proposed an amendment around Bristol Street, which involved the transfer of six electors and corrected an apparent anomaly. It also proposed an amendment involving no electors to reflect a change in road layouts around the Bull Ring and Masshouse developments. These modifications would have a negligible effect on electoral equality in Nechells ward.

157 The Conservatives, Councillor Hill and a local resident all expressed support for our draft recommendations in this area.

158 The Liberal Democrats proposed revised wards in this area, largely as a consequence of their objections to our proposals in the Yardley and Small Heath areas. They proposed a revised Nechells ward which would be identical to our draft recommendations in the north, but
significantly different in the south. The revised ward would exclude the large areas broadly to the north of Highgate Middleway and Bordesley Middleway (surrounding the Highgate and Digbeth areas) and to the east of Palace Road, while including the areas surrounding Saltley and Little Bromwich. They argued that their proposed amendment resulting in the use of Alum Rock Road ‘causes no difficulties for the local community’. They also stated that ‘The railway line is a weak boundary here being in a cutting in the residential areas’.

159 The Liberal Democrats also proposed a revised Washwood Heath ward, which would be significantly different to our draft recommendations. It would be bounded by railway lines to the north and south, Bromford Lane and Alum Rock Road to the east and the railway line, Alum Rock Road and Ellesmere Road to the west. The Liberal Democrats argued that ‘moving people around in Washwood Heath causes no difficulties from a community perspective. It helps in reuniting Ward End’. Under the Liberal Democrats’ proposals, Nechells and Washwood Heath wards would contain 8% and 6% more electors per councillor than the city average respectively (both 5% more by 2006).

160 Finally, a local resident opposed the inclusion of the area known locally as Highgate in the proposed Nechells ward. It was argued that ‘It would appear that The Boundary Committee’s recommendations are based solely on number of electors. This takes no account of our developing local community identity, nor does it recognise physical boundaries that make Highgate a totally unsuitable appendage to Nechells’. It was also argued that ‘Capacity building in the area as a result of SRB2 would be undermined were the some 3,000 souls required to relate to a new Nechells ward. Highgate fits most naturally and historically into Balsall Heath’.

161 Having carefully considered all the representations received at Stage Three, we have noted that there is notable support for our draft recommendations in this area and therefore propose confirming our draft recommendations as final, subject to the two boundary amendments proposed by the City Council. We agree that these modifications would provide for a more identifiable boundary without affecting electoral equality.

162 We have noted the Liberal Democrats’ proposals in this area and consider that aspects of their proposals have some merit. We have further noted that the amendments made in this area are predominantly as a consequence of modifications made in the areas further south and east. However, we have not been persuaded that the substantial change to the draft recommendations which would result from these proposals has been fully justified, particularly as we have received notable local support for our proposed wards in this area.

163 We have also noted the local resident’s proposal that the Highgate area should be included in a ward with Balsall Heath. We recognise that this proposal has some merit and acknowledge that the proposed Nechells ward would cover a large geographic area, an issue that we highlighted in our draft recommendations report. However, we do not propose modifying the southern boundary of the proposed Nechells ward as this would have consequential effects on our proposed Small Heath ward (covering the Balsall Heath area) to its south which has received broad local support, as detailed below, and would result in a significant deterioration in electoral equality. As discussed earlier, we acknowledge that in a large urban area such as Birmingham, it may often be the case that wards would contain disparate communities given the need to maintain a pattern of three-member wards across the city as a whole. We therefore do not propose any further modifications to our draft recommendations in this area.

164 Under our final recommendations the proposed Nechells and Washwood Heath wards would contain the same number of electors per councillor as under the draft recommendations.

Aston, Handsworth, Perry Barr and Sandwell wards

165 The existing wards of Aston, Handsworth, Perry Barr and Sandwell are situated in the west of the city broadly to the north of the city centre. Each ward is represented by three councillors.
Under the current arrangements Aston, Handsworth, Perry Barr and Sandwell wards contain 8% fewer, 4% fewer, 4% fewer and 9% more electors per councillor than the city average respectively (9% fewer, 6% fewer, 6% fewer and 7% more than the average by 2006).

166 At Stage One, the proposals in this area were broadly similar under the City Council’s consultation scheme and the Conservatives’ proposals, providing for the creation of four revised three-member wards. The City Council’s consultation scheme proposed a revised Perry Barr ward that would comprise the existing ward, less the area to the north of the M6 motorway, as discussed earlier, together with the area bounded by Witton Lane, Aston Expressway (A38) and the M6 motorway, from the existing Aston ward and the area to the north of Aston Lane/Wellington Road (A4040) from the existing Handsworth ward. A revised Sandwell ward would comprise the existing ward, less the areas surrounding Murdock Road, and part of the Handsworth Wood area, broadly to the east of Handsworth Wood Road/Hamstead Hill (B4124).

167 A revised Handsworth ward would comprise the existing ward, less the areas to the north of Aston Lane/Wellington Road (A4040) and broadly to the east of Birchfield Road (A34), together with part of the Handsworth Wood area and the Murdock Road area from the existing Sandwell ward, as detailed above, the area broadly to the north of Nursery Road/Gerrard Street from the existing Aston ward and the area broadly bounded by Soho Road and Holly Road from the existing Soho ward. Finally, a revised Aston ward would comprise the existing ward, less the areas to the east of the Aston Expressway, bounded by Witton Lane, Aston Expressway (A38) and the M6 motorway, and broadly to the north of Nursery Road/Gerrard Street, as discussed earlier, and the area surrounding Jewellery Quarter railway station. The revised ward would include part of the existing Handsworth ward, the area broadly to the east of Birchfield Road (A34) and part of the existing Nechells ward, the area to the south-east of Princip Street and Bagot Street, as discussed earlier. The remaining part of the existing Aston ward would form part of the revised Soho ward, as discussed later. Under the City Council’s consultation scheme, Aston, Handsworth, Perry Barr and Sandwell wards would contain 4% fewer, 16% more, 1% fewer and 9% fewer electors per councillor than the city average respectively (6% fewer, 14% more, 3% fewer and 10% fewer by 2006).

168 The Conservatives’ proposals in relation to the revised Perry Barr ward were identical to those in the City Councils’ consultation scheme, as detailed earlier. The revised Sandwell ward would comprise the existing ward, less the area surrounding Murdock Road and Brunswick Road, together with a small area to the north of Wellington Road (A4040) from the existing Handsworth ward. A revised Handsworth ward would comprise the existing ward, less the small area to the north of Wellington Road, the area to the north of Wellington Road/Aston Lane (A4040) and the area broadly to the east of Birchfield Road (A34). The revised ward would contain the areas surrounding Murdock Road and Brunswick Road from the existing Sandwell ward, the area broadly to the north of Nursery Road/Gerrard Street from the existing Aston ward and the area broadly bounded by Soho Road (A41) and Holly Road from the existing Soho ward.

169 Finally, a revised Aston ward would comprise the existing ward, less the areas to the east of the Aston Expressway, bounded by Witton Lane, Aston Expressway (A38) and the M6 motorway, and broadly to the north of Nursery Road/Gerrard Street, all discussed earlier, and the area surrounding Jewellery Quarter railway station. The revised ward would include part of the existing Handsworth ward, the area broadly to the east of Birchfield Road (A34) and part of the existing Nechells ward, the area to the south-east of Princip Street and Bagot Street, as discussed earlier. The remaining part of the existing Aston ward would form part of the revised Ladywood ward, as discussed later. Under the Conservatives’ proposals, Aston, Handsworth, Perry Barr and Sandwell wards would contain 2% fewer, 1% more, 1% fewer and 5% more electors per councillor than the city average respectively (3% fewer, 1% fewer, 3% fewer and 3% more by 2006).

170 The Liberal Democrats also proposed four revised three-member wards in this area, largely based on the existing arrangements. They proposed a new Perry Hall ward (alternative name of
Perry Barr ward), comprising the existing Perry Barr ward, less the Perry Beeches area, as discussed earlier, together with part of the Handsworth Wood area, broadly to the north-east of Handsworth Wood Road and Hamstead Hill from the existing Sandwell ward. The revised Sandwell ward would comprise the existing ward, less the area broadly to the north-east of Handsworth Wood Road and Hamstead Hill, as detailed earlier, together with the areas surrounding Handsworth Park and Denewood Avenue from the existing Handsworth ward and the area broadly bounded by Soho Road and Holly Road from the existing Soho ward, with the Liberal Democrats identifying Soho Road as a strong boundary.

171 The revised Handsworth ward would comprise the existing ward, less the areas surrounding Handsworth Park and Denewood Avenue, together with the area surrounding Hall Road from the existing Soho ward. Finally, the revised Aston ward would comprise the existing ward with an amendment to the northern boundary to include the area bounded by George Road and Park Road (surrounding Brookvale Park) from the existing Stockland Green ward, as discussed earlier. Under the Liberal Democrats’ proposals, Aston, Handsworth, Perry Hall (Perry Barr) and Sandwell wards would contain 1% fewer, 4% fewer, 1% more and 3% fewer electors per councillor than the city average respectively (2%, 5%, 1% and 4% fewer by 2006).

172 We received one further representation in relation to this area. Handsworth Wood Residents’ Association proposed some amendments in relation to the existing Handsworth and Sandwell wards, expressing opposition to the inclusion of part of Handsworth Wood in the proposed Handsworth ward under the City Council’s consultation scheme.

173 Having considered the representations received at Stage One, we based our draft recommendations for this area on the Conservatives’ proposals, encompassing elements of the City Council’s consultation scheme and the Liberal Democrat scheme. We noted that there was consensus regarding the proposed Perry Barr ward under the City Council’s consultation scheme and the Conservatives’ proposals and given our conclusions regarding the use of the M6 motorway as a boundary, as discussed earlier, we were content to put this ward forward as part of our draft recommendations. However, we adopted the Liberal Democrats’ proposed southern boundary, which used the railway line. We were of the view that this provided for a more clearly identifiable boundary than that proposed under the City Council’s consultation scheme and by the Conservatives, linking the area immediately south of the railway line with the areas by which it is accessed.

174 We noted that the proposals in the Sandwell area were significantly different under each of the three city-wide schemes and, having carefully considered these, we were of the view that the Conservatives’ proposals provided for the best reflection of the statutory criteria. This was largely based on their decision to retain part of the Handsworth Wood area in the revised Sandwell ward. Officers from the Committee having visited the area, and given the views expressed by Handsworth Wood Residents’ Association, we concurred with the view expressed by the Conservatives that this part of Handsworth Wood has little in common with Handsworth and would be better represented in a ward with Sandwell. In light of this, we based our proposals for Aston, Handsworth and Sandwell wards on the Conservatives’ proposals. However, we proposed amendments to the northern boundaries of the proposed Handsworth and Aston wards (with Perry Barr ward) in order to use the railway line, as detailed earlier.

175 Under our draft recommendations, Aston, Handsworth, Perry Barr and Sandwell wards would contain 1% fewer, 4% more, 5% fewer and 5% more electors per councillor than the city average respectively (2% fewer, 2% more, 7% fewer and 3% more by 2006).

176 At Stage Three, Birmingham City Council, the Conservatives, Councillor Hill and a local resident all expressed support for our draft recommendations in this area. However, the City Council argued that the proposed Sandwell ward be renamed Handsworth Wood ‘in order to avoid confusion with Sandwell Council’.
177 Councillor Linnecor, Kingstanding Neighbourhood Initiative and Oscott North Neighbourhood Forum all expressed support for the proposed Perry Barr ward, with specific reference to the use of the M6 motorway as a boundary. Twelve local residents expressed support for the proposed Sandwell ward, particularly in relation to the Cherry Orchard Road area of Handsworth Wood forming part of the proposed ward.

178 A further local resident (on behalf of North-West-Group Influencing Boundaries; an umbrella organisation representing a variety of local community groups) broadly supported our draft recommendations in this area. They strongly supported the proposed Sandwell ward, particularly in relation to the retention of the Handsworth Wood community within one ward. However, it was argued that Sandwell is an inappropriate name for the ward as it ‘borders Sandwell Metropolitan Borough and this has caused great confusion at all levels for over 25 years’. The alternatives of Handsworth Wood or Handsworth Wood & West Handsworth were put forward. Support was also expressed in relation to the proposed Handsworth ward, particularly in relation to the boundary with Sandwell ward and the fact that Handsworth Park is a focus for the revised ward. It was however argued that Lozells & East Handsworth would be a more appropriate ward name. Finally, support was expressed in relation to the use of Birchfield Road as a boundary between the proposed Handsworth and Aston wards, arguing that ‘it is a very busy dual carriageway that acts as a strong barrier, which people rarely crossover by foot’.

179 The Liberal Democrats strongly opposed the proposed Perry Barr ward, particularly in relation to the use if the M6 motorway as an eastern boundary which, they argued, divides the community of ‘The Beeches’. They also opposed the inclusion of the area known locally as Witton which, it was argued, ‘is not connected to Perry Barr’. A revised ward was proposed which would be broadly similar to our proposed ward, less the area known as Witton (which would form part of a revised Stockland Green ward, as detailed above) together with the area surrounding Beeches Road from our proposed Oscott ward. It was argued that ‘The M6 crossing between Beeches Road behind Thornbridge Avenue is however far from a “natural” divider of the community’. It was further argued that three roads link the areas either side of the motorway (Beeches Road, Hassop Road and Thornbridge Avenue) and that ‘The M6 appears to have been constructed at this point so as to minimise disruption of the existing community’. The issue of school catchment areas was also stated in the Liberal Democrats’ argumentation. Under the Liberal Democrats’ proposals, Perry Barr ward would contain 3% fewer electors per councillor than the city average (5% fewer by 2006).

180 Perry Barr Liberal Democrats broadly supported our proposed boundaries for Aston, Handsworth and Sandwell wards. However, they strongly opposed our proposed Perry Barr ward, particularly in relation to the use of the M6 as a boundary and the inclusion of the area known locally as Witton. They proposed a revised Perry Barr ward which was identical to that proposed by the Liberal Democrats, subject to a marginally different eastern boundary. In relation to the use of the M6 motorway as a boundary, it was also argued that ‘The M6 crossing between Beeches Road behind Thornbridge Avenue is far from a “natural” divider of the community’. They also reiterated the views expressed by the Liberal Democrats in relation to the linkages between the areas either side of the motorway as well as stating the impact our proposals would have on school catchment areas and policing initiatives. In addition, they argued that our proposed Perry Barr ward would contain two – possibly three – major recreational centres within or adjoining its boundaries, which it argues ‘places particular burdens on local councillors’.

181 In relation to the inclusion of the Witton area in the proposed Perry Barr ward, it was argued that this ‘will not benefit the community – and will significantly detract from the quality of representation enjoyed in [the Aston and Perry Barr] areas’. It was also argued that ‘the maps showing Perry Barr ward linking to the Witton are misleading. The maps appear to show a series of roads linking the Aldridge Road and Oscott Road to the new area. There are in fact no public roads linking the two areas within the proposed ward boundaries…There is only one open road that would connect the new ward and it is far from a direct connection’. Under Perry Barr Liberal
Democrats’ proposals, Perry Barr ward would contain an equal number of electors per councillor to the city average (2% fewer by 2006).

182 Councillor Hassall, Booths Farm Area Residents’ Association and two local residents opposed our proposed Perry Barr ward, largely based on the use of the M6 motorway as a boundary and the inclusion of the area known locally as Witton in the proposed ward.

183 Grove Residents’ Association, which states that it represents ‘over 700 households in the Handsworth area’, opposed our proposals to transfer the area it covers (which is currently split between Soho and Sandwell wards) into Handsworth ward. It argued that much time had been spent building up relationships with councillors and local authority officers and ‘if we moved into Handsworth ward we will have to begin this process from scratch’. It proposed that its area would be better served in Sandwell ward and suggested that the natural boundary for Handsworth ward would be Grove Lane.

184 Councillors Manku, Murphy and Tyrrell opposed our draft recommendations in relation to the boundary between the proposed Handsworth and Sandwell wards. It was argued that ‘Your recommendation to dissect an area around Rookery Road and add it to Handsworth ward is a retrograde step. Rookery Road is a shopping area in Sandwell ward and is the centre of many activities…Dissecting part of Rookery Road out of the ward is like breaking the heart of the community’.

185 It was argued that the Handsworth area around Rookery Road ‘is subject to many development schemes to regenerate the area…Many of the activities are ward based. An area divided into two wards will face major problems to regenerate’. In addition, it was stated that ‘Sandwell ward is a mixture of middle-income and deprived community where as your proposals will increase the percentage of middle-income community in the ward. As far as Handsworth ward is concerned it will further become more deprived’. It was proposed that the existing boundary in the south be retained. However, it was acknowledged that an amendment needed to be made in the north in order to provide for acceptable levels of electoral equality. It was therefore proposed that an area broadly bounded by Selborne Road, Handsworth Wood Road and Worlds End Road (surrounding Butlers Road) be transferred from the proposed Sandwell ward to the proposed Handsworth ward. It was also proposed that Sandwell ward be renamed Hamstead Hall ward ‘as there is confusion over the name Sandwell with neighbouring Sandwell District Council’. Councillor Manku also forwarded a petition, signed by 48 ‘residents of Handsworth’, opposing the division of the Sandwell part of the Sandwell ward into different wards. The petition contended that the residents ‘do not have much in common with Handsworth ward which is separated from us by Handsworth Park’.

186 The Sikh Community & Youth Service also expressed opposition towards our boundary between the proposed Sandwell and Handsworth wards. It was argued that our proposals would divide Rookery Road into two wards and that ‘This will have the result of dividing the community into two wards. We will suffer as a result, we will lose funding from Sandwell ward due to the changes, because this ward will only cover a small proportion of the area we service’. It was argued that the existing arrangements should be retained in this area as ‘[Handsworth] Park is a natural boundary’. It was proposed that some extra part of Handsworth Wood should form part of Handsworth ward instead.

187 Finally, a local resident (Mr Khan) and the Headteacher of Anglesey Primary School both opposed our boundary between the proposed Aston and Handsworth wards. Mr Khan strongly opposed the proposal that the area known locally as Lozells from part of our proposed Handsworth ward, arguing that ‘Ever since I can recall, Lozells has been part of the Aston ward and in doing has created a unique and distinct identity and culture for itself. To be part of Handsworth ward would be a backward step as Lozells has advanced in terms of image and reputation by being associated with Aston’. In addition, to this, it was argued that our proposals would result in the Anglesey Primary School (which is on a split site) being divided between
separate city wards. It was argued that the school has made ‘tremendous effort’ to overcome the disadvantage of being on a split site and ‘The Boundary Committee proposal puts all this hard work and effort at risk’. An alternative boundary was proposed between the two wards, largely based on the existing warding arrangements in this area. A petition containing 124 signatures was submitted in support of these views.

188 The Headteacher of Anglesey Primary School reiterated the concerns of Mr Khan with regard to the division of the school between separate city wards. A number of potential problems where outlined and the view expressed that ‘the children have always known themselves as part of Aston ward’. Alternative proposals were put forward which were identical to those of Mr Khan.

189 We have carefully considered all the representations received at Stage Three and have decided to confirm our draft recommendations as final, subject to one minor boundary amendment and two ward name changes. We have carefully considered the alternative proposals for Perry Barr ward put forward by the Liberal Democrats and Perry Barr Liberal Democrats but have noted that they would have a consequential effect on a number of surrounding wards which have received an element of local support at Stage Three, as detailed above. The two main areas of concern being expressed in this area were regarding the use of the M6 Motorway as a boundary (dividing the Perry Beeches estate) and the inclusion of the area known as Witton in the proposed Perry Barr ward. Based on the evidence and argumentation put forward, we have not been persuaded that the local community would be adversely affected if the M6 were to be used as a boundary and we consider that the alternative boundaries put forward would be less identifiable. Furthermore, we have received local support in favour of using the M6 as a boundary.

190 In relation to the Witton area, we consider that that there is some justification in the view that this area has limited links with the rest of the proposed Perry Barr ward. However, the need to secure a uniform pattern of three-member wards has limited our options in this area and we acknowledge that in some instances it has been necessary to link disparate areas in order to facilitate a three-member ward scheme while also securing reasonable electoral equality across the city as a whole. In addition, we have noted that if the Witton area were removed from the proposed Perry Barr ward, the revised ward would contain approximately 13% fewer electors per councillor than the city average by 2006. We have not been persuaded by the level of argumentation put forward that this level of electoral inequality can be justified.

191 With regard to the three wards to the south-west of the proposed Perry Barr ward we have noted that our draft recommendations have received some broad support, but that a number of alternative boundaries have been put forward. We have considered the alternative boundaries put forward between Sandwell and Handsworth wards but we have not been persuaded by the evidence received to move away from our draft recommendations. We have noted that reference has been made to the effect that ward boundary changes may have on the allocation of regeneration funds. However, as detailed earlier, this is not something that we can take into account when formulating our recommendations. In analysing the different submissions received, there was limited consensus as to where the focus of the Handsworth community was and it was unclear as to how far the area known as Handsworth extended. We have recognised that it covers a large geographic area, the edges of which are not clearly defined, and that it would not be possible to place the whole of the area referred to as Handsworth within one ward. We were therefore not persuaded that any of the proposals put forward were a better reflection of the statutory criteria than the draft recommendations. However, it has been made clear that the Handsworth Wood area can be more clearly defined and we have noted that there has been support for the retention of this area within one ward. We therefore do not propose adopting any of the modified boundaries put forward which would result in the division of the Handsworth Wood area as we are of the view that this would have a detrimental effect on the reflection of the local community. In addition, we have noted that there was limited consensus expressed with regard to the most appropriate warding arrangements for this area and that our draft recommendations received some broad support.
192 We have also considered the boundary between the proposed Handsworth and Aston wards and have noted that there is significant opposition to our draft recommendation as it would result in the split-site Anglesey Primary School being divided between two wards. We have noted that a local resident opposed the inclusion of the Lozells area within Handsworth ward but that the main thrust of his argument rested on the division of the split-site Anglesey Primary School between two wards. Furthermore, his alternative boundary between Handsworth and Aston wards would move away from using Birchfield Road which, in our view, would provide for a less identifiable boundary. However, in order to provide for a more convenient boundary and in order to better reflect local community identities we are proposing one boundary amendment and a ward name change.

193 In order to unite Anglesey Primary School we propose modifying the boundary so that it moves away from Nursery Road to follow to the south of Anglesey Primary School, then along the centre of Hunter’s Vale and then further eastwards to meet Hockley Circus. This amendment would have a negligible effect on electoral equality. Furthermore, in order to reflect the constituent communities of the ward, we propose renaming our proposed Handsworth ward as Lozells and East Handsworth, as put forward by a local resident (on behalf of North-West-Group Influencing Boundaries). In addition, we have noted that there has been notable opposition to the name of our proposed Sandwell ward as it is believed to be confusing given the proximity of Sandwell Metropolitan Borough Council. Having considered all the alternative proposals we propose renaming the ward as Handsworth Wood and East Handsworth in order to better reflect the areas that the ward covers.

194 Under our final recommendations our proposed Aston and Perry Barr wards would contain 1% fewer and 5% fewer electors per councillor than the city average (2% fewer and 7% fewer by 2006). Our proposed Lozells & East Handsworth and Handsworth Wood & West Handsworth wards would contain the same number of electors per councillor as under the draft recommendations for our proposed Handsworth and Sandwell wards respectively.

Ladywood and Soho wards

195 The existing wards of Ladywood and Soho are situated broadly in the west of the city. The commercial and main shopping centre of the city is contained within Ladywood ward. Each ward is represented by three councillors. Under the current arrangements, Ladywood and Soho wards contain 6% more and 7% fewer electors per councillor than the city average respectively (30% more and 5% fewer than the average by 2006).

196 At Stage One, the City Council’s consultation scheme and the Conservatives’ proposals were broadly similar in this area. Both provided for two revised three-member wards. The City Council’s consultation scheme proposed a revised Soho ward comprising the existing ward, less the area bounded by Soho Road and Holly Road, as discussed earlier, together with the area surrounding Jewellery Quarter railway station from the existing Aston ward and the area broadly bounded by Portland Road and Gillott Road from the existing Ladywood ward. The revised Ladywood ward would comprise the existing ward, less the areas broadly bounded by Portland Road and Gillott Road and broadly to the east of Bristol Street (A38), as detailed earlier, and the area broadly between Portland Road and Hagley Road (A456), together with the area to the north-east of Snow Hill Station from the existing Nechells ward and the area broadly surrounding Waterworks Road from the existing Edgbaston ward. The remaining part of Ladywood ward would form part of the revised Harborne ward, as discussed later. Under the City Council’s consultation scheme, Ladywood and Soho wards would contain 23% and 7% fewer electors per councillor than the city average respectively (2% and 1% fewer by 2006).

197 The Conservatives proposed a revised Soho ward comprising the existing ward, less the area bounded by Soho Road and Holly Road, as discussed above, together with the area broadly bounded by Gillott Road and Fountain Road/Wadhurst Road (surrounding The George
Dixon Schools), from the existing Ladywood ward. The revised Ladywood ward would comprise
the existing ward, less the areas broadly bounded by Gillott Road and Fountain Road/Wadhurst
Road (surrounding The George Dixon Schools), and broadly to the east of Bristol Street (A38),
as detailed earlier, and the area broadly between Hagley Road (A456) and Fountain
Road/Wadhurst Road. It would include the area to the north-east of Snow Hill Station from the
existing Nechells ward and the area surrounding Jewellery Quarter Station from the existing
Astron ward. The remaining part of Ladywood ward would form part of the revised Harborne
ward, as discussed later. Under the Conservatives’ proposals, Ladywood and Soho wards would
contain 33% and 2% fewer electors per councillor than the city average respectively (9% fewer
and 2% more by 2006).

198 The Liberal Democrats proposed a revised Soho ward comprising the existing ward, less
the area broadly bounded by Soho Road and Holly Road, as discussed earlier, together with the
area surrounding Edgbaston Reservoir from the existing Ladywood ward. The revised Ladywood
ward would be broadly based on the existing ward, less the area surrounding Edgbaston
Reservoir, as detailed previously, and the area broadly between Shenstone Road and Hagley
Road (A546), together with the area broadly to the north of Hagley Road (A546) from the
existing Edgbaston ward. The remaining part of Ladywood ward would form part of the revised
Harborne ward, as discussed later. Under the Liberal Democrats’ proposals, Ladywood and
Soho wards would contain 19% fewer and equal to the average number of electors per
councillor than the city average respectively (4% and 1% more by 2006).

199 Having considered the representations received at Stage One, we based our draft
recommendations for this area on the Conservatives’ proposals. We considered that these
proposals used strong boundaries and facilitated our proposals elsewhere in the city. There
were also elements of similarity with the Liberal Democrats’ proposals. However, we proposed
two amendments in order to provide for a more clearly identifiable boundary and an improved
level of electoral equality. We adopted the City Council’s consultation scheme’s southern
boundary for the proposed Soho ward which, officers from the Committee having visited the
area, we considered to be stronger than the alternatives put forward by the Conservatives or the
Liberal Democrats, although we considered that the Liberal Democrats’ proposed boundary had
some merit. While the use of Portland Road as a boundary (as proposed under the City
Council’s consultation scheme) appeared to dissect Stanmore Road, we noted that the part of
Stanmore Road to the north of Portland Road is different in character to that to the south of
Portland Road. Therefore, on balance, we were of the view that Portland Road provided for the
most viable boundary option in this area.

200 Based on our proposals to the north and east of this area, we adopted the Conservatives’
proposed Ladywood ward. However, under the Conservatives’ proposals, Ladywood ward would
contain 9% fewer electors per councillor than the city average by 2006. We were of the view that
this level of electoral equality could be improved upon and consequently proposed an
amendment. We proposed that the area broadly to the north of Noel Road and the reservoir be
transferred to the proposed Ladywood ward from the proposed Edgbaston ward.

201 Under our draft recommendations, Ladywood and Soho wards would contain 30% and 8%
fewer electors per councillor than the city average respectively (5% and 4% fewer by 2006).

202 At Stage Three, Birmingham City Council expressed support for the proposed wards in this
area, subject to a couple of minor amendments to the boundary with Nechells ward to provide
for a more clearly identifiable boundary, as detailed above. These amendments would result in a
very slight deterioration in electoral equality. Birmingham Conservative Association, Councillor
Hill and a local resident also expressed support for the wards in this area, with the local resident
expressing specific support for the use of Portland Road as a southern boundary for the
proposed Soho ward.
203 A further local resident (on behalf of North-West-Group Influencing Boundaries) broadly supported the draft recommendations in this area, particularly in relation to the retention of the Ladywood ward name. However, in relation to the proposed Soho ward, it was stated that a more appropriate name would be Winson Green & South Handsworth.

204 Having carefully considered all the representations received at Stage Three, we have noted that there is notable support for our draft recommendations in this area and therefore propose confirming our draft recommendations as final, subject to the two boundary amendments proposed by the City Council. As detailed earlier, we agree that these modifications would provide for a more identifiable boundary without affecting electoral equality.

205 We have considered the alternative Winson Green & South Handsworth ward name, but have not been persuaded that this would better reflect the area covered by the ward, particularly as there has been local support for our draft recommendations.

206 Under our final recommendations the proposed Ladywood ward would contain 30% fewer electors per councillor than the city average (6% fewer by 2006). The proposed Soho ward would contain the same number of electors per councillor as under the draft recommendations.

**Edgbaston, Harborne and Quinton wards**

207 The existing wards of Edgbaston, Harborne and Quinton are situated in the west of the city, broadly to the south-west of the city centre. Each ward is represented by three councillors. Under the current arrangements Edgbaston, Harborne and Quinton wards contain 6% more, 7% fewer and 16% fewer electors per councillor than the city average respectively (5% more, 7% fewer and 18% fewer than the average by 2006).

208 At Stage One, the City Council’s consultation scheme and the Conservatives’ proposals were broadly similar in this area, both of which provided for the creation of three revised three-member wards. The City Council’s consultation scheme proposed a revised Edgbaston ward, which would be largely based on the existing ward, less the area surrounding Waterworks Road, as discussed earlier. The revised Harborne ward would also be largely based on the existing ward, less the areas broadly to the west of Harborne Golf Course and surrounding Bottetourt Road, together with the area to the south of Portland Road from the existing Ladywood ward, as discussed earlier, and the area broadly to the south-east of Croftdown Road from the existing Quinton ward. Finally, the revised Quinton ward would again be broadly based on the existing ward, less the area broadly to the east of Croftdown Road and including the area broadly to the west of Harborne Golf Course from the existing Harborne ward. The remaining part of the existing Harborne ward would form part of a revised Bartley Green ward, as discussed later. Under the City Council’s consultation scheme, Edgbaston, Harborne and Quinton wards would contain 2% fewer, 3% more and 4% fewer electors per councillor than the city average respectively (2% fewer, 2% more and 6% fewer by 2006).

209 The Conservatives proposed broadly retaining the existing Edgbaston ward, subject to the inclusion of the area bounded by Pershore Road and Raglan Road in the proposed Small Heath ward, as discussed later. The Conservatives’ revised Harborne ward would also be largely based on the existing ward, less the area broadly to the west of Harborne Golf Course, together with the area broadly between Hagley Road (A456) and Fountain Road/Wadhurst Road, as discussed earlier. Finally, the revised Quinton ward would comprise the existing ward, together with the area broadly to the west of Harborne Golf Course from the existing Harborne ward. Under the Conservatives’ proposals, Edgbaston, Harborne and Quinton wards would contain 1% more, 3% fewer and equal to the average number of electors per councillor than the city average respectively (1% more, 4% fewer and 2% fewer by 2006).

210 The Liberal Democrats’ new Edgbaston & Selly Park ward would comprise the existing Edgbaston ward, less the areas broadly to the north of Hagley Road (A546), as discussed
earlier, and bounded by Pershore Road and Raglan Road, together with the Selly Park area, south of Bourn Brook from the existing Selly Oak ward. The remaining part of Edgbaston ward would form part of the proposed Balsall Heath & Sparkbrook ward, as discussed later. The revised Harborne ward would contain the existing ward, less the areas to the south of Bourn Brook and broadly to the west of Harborne Golf Course, together with the area broadly between Shenstone Road and Hagley Road (A546) from the existing Ladywood ward, as discussed earlier. The remaining parts of the existing Harborne ward would form parts of the proposed Bartley Green and Selly Oak wards, as discussed later. Finally, the Liberal Democrats proposed a revised Quinton ward, which would comprise the existing ward, together with the area broadly to the west of Harborne Golf Course from the existing Harborne ward. Under the Liberal Democrats’ proposals, Edgbaston & Selly Park, Harborne and Quinton wards would contain 3%, 2% and 1% fewer electors per councillor than the city average respectively (2% fewer, equal to the average and 4% fewer by 2006).

211 We received one further representation in relation to this area. A local resident proposed a revised Quinton ward, based on the need for Tennal Road to be contained wholly within a single city ward.

212 Having considered the representations received at Stage One, we based our draft recommendations for this area on the Conservatives’ proposals. However, we proposed a number of amendments based on proposals put forward under the City Council’s consultation scheme and the Liberal Democrats’ scheme, together with some of our own proposals. We considered that all the proposals in this area had merit, and were broadly similar in nature. Officers from the Committee having visited the area, we identified some key boundaries and with this in mind, together with the alternative proposals received, we determined a set of proposals for this area which, in our view, best reflected the statutory criteria.

213 In relation to the proposed Quinton ward, we adopted the Conservatives’ proposals in full. All three schemes were broadly similar in relation to this proposed ward and we based our decision largely on strength of boundaries and areas of consensus. We also considered that part of the Conservatives’ eastern boundary provided for a better reflection of community identity, with Queen’s Park Road being in the same ward as Queen’s Park. In addition, a local resident would broadly support the proposals, with the majority of Tennal Road being contained within a revised Quinton ward. In relation to the proposed Harborne ward we based our proposals on the Conservatives’ proposals. However, based on our proposals in the Soho area, as discussed earlier, we adopted the City Council’s northern boundary for Harborne ward. As mentioned above, officers from the Committee having visited the area, we identified some key boundaries, one of which was Bourn Brook. We considered that there are limited crossing points at this part of the brook and in addition, the areas either side are somewhat different in character. We therefore proposed that the Liberal Democrats’ proposed boundary of Bourn Brook should be used as the southern boundary for Harborne ward. We proposed one further amendment to the proposed Harborne ward in order to provide for an improved level of electoral equality. We proposed that the area surrounding Roman Way and Underwood Close be transferred to the proposed Harborne ward from the proposed Edgbaston ward.

214 Finally, we adopted the Conservatives’ proposed Edgbaston ward, subject to the amendments with Ladywood and Harborne wards as detailed above. The proposals for this ward were again broadly similar under the City Council’s consultation scheme, continuing the use of Bourn Brook as a boundary, which we noted, is breached under the Liberal Democrats’ proposals. We were of the view that the brook forms a strong boundary in this area and that the area to the south has better links with the areas to its south.

215 Under our draft recommendations, Edgbaston, Harborne and Quinton wards would contain 5% fewer, 4% fewer and equal to the average number of electors per councillor than the city average respectively (4%, 4% and 2% fewer by 2006).
216 At Stage Three, Birmingham City Council broadly supported our draft recommendations in this area. However, it proposed two minor amendments. In order to reflect historical and local community ties, and to reflect the views of the Harborne Society, the City Council proposed a revised boundary between the proposed wards of Harborne and Quinton. It proposed that the boundary continue westwards along Tennal Road, northerly up Tennal Lane and in an easterly direction along Court Oak Road to the junction with Queen’s Park Road. It also proposed an amendment to the boundary between the proposed Harborne and Edgbaston wards in order to provide for a better defined boundary and a better reflection of community identity. It proposed that the area surrounding Roman Way be retained in the proposed Edgbaston ward.

217 Councillor Hill supported our draft recommendations in this area, as did Councillor Hutchings who stated that the proposed Edgbaston ward ‘generally keeps local committees together as far as possible and do recognise strong boundaries’. A local resident supported our proposals in this area, particularly in relation to the use of Portland Road and Bourn Brook as boundaries in respect of the proposed Harborne ward.

218 The Conservatives supported our proposed Edgbaston ward, and broadly supported our proposed Harborne and Quinton wards, subject to a minor amendment. They stated that ‘it has been suggested to us that the boundary between Quinton and Harborne wards in the area around Queen’s Park could be simplified further, retain the link between Queen’s Park Road and Queen’s Park and marginally improve the electoral averages of both wards’. They proposed an alternative boundary which would follow Welsh Farm Road to the junction with Tennal Road, then head eastwards using the boundary of Harborne Golf Course and the rear-garden line of properties fronting Tennal Road to emerge at Northfield Road/Tennal Road junction. From this point, the boundary should continue northwards along the centre of Fellows Lane to the suggested boundary in Court Oak Road. The Conservatives did however state that if we did not support this modification, ‘we would support the recommendations as published’.

219 The Liberal Democrats proposed a minor amendment to our proposed Edgbaston ward, largely as a consequence of its proposals to the east. They proposed reverting back to the ‘traditional boundaries’ for Edgbaston, taking the area to the west of the River Rea back into the proposed Edgbaston ward from the proposed Small Heath ward. They argued that ‘The River Rea has been used as a boundary for [Edgbaston] since before the days of Market Hall ward…That still leaves the community of Balsall Heath united whilst not dividing Speedwell Road’. The Liberal Democrats asserted that the River Rea is a strong boundary in this area. Under the Liberal Democrats’ proposals, Edgbaston ward would contain 3% more electors per councillor than the city average, both now and in five years’ time.

220 Finally, we received 49 representations from local residents and the Harborne Society (including a petition with 126 signatures) strongly opposing our boundary between the proposed Harborne and Quinton wards. It was argued that it is not the desire of residents of 85-119 Queen’s Park Road, 224-276 Court Oak Road, Court Oak Grove, Tennal Grove and 97-195 Tennal Road to be transferred to the proposed Quinton ward. It was argued that this area has strong community links with Harborne and that the interests of the local community would not be best served if the draft recommendations in this area were to be endorsed. Much of the argumentation focused on the impact that our proposals would have on house prices, insurance premiums, post codes and school catchment areas. However, we also received evidence detailing local amenities (such as shops, banks, doctors’ surgeries) that these residents used which were situated in the centre of Harborne.

221 Having carefully considered all the representations received during Stage Three, we have noted that there has been general support overall for our proposals in this area, but that there has been strong local opposition to our proposed boundary between Harborne and Quinton wards. Having considered the evidence and argumentation received, we have been persuaded that the identities and interests of the local community would not be fully reflected if our draft recommendations were to be endorsed. While some of the evidence and argumentation put
forward was of a nature that we can not take into account (house prices etc), we did receive other community-based evidence that has persuaded us to move away from our draft recommendations in this area. We have decided to adopt the revised boundary put forward by the City Council and endorsed by the Harborne Society and a number of local residents, as we believe that this would better reflect local community identity. We have noted that the Conservatives’ revised ward boundary would result in an even greater part of this area around Queen’s Park being included within Quinton ward which, we believe, would not be supported locally.

222 With regard to the proposed boundary between Harborne and Edgbaston ward, we have noted the amendment put forward by the City Council and have been persuaded that this would provide for a more identifiable boundary and a better reflection of local community identity, while also facilitating a better level of electoral equality in Harborne ward as a consequence of the other amendment detailed above. We have therefore decided to adopt this amendment as part of our final recommendations.

223 We have noted the Liberal Democrats’ proposed amendment to the eastern boundary of Edgbaston ward, and further acknowledge this amendment has been made mainly as a consequence of modifications made in the areas further east. We have not been persuaded that this amendment would provide for a better balance between the statutory criteria in this area, particularly as we have received broad support for our wards in this area. Furthermore, we do not propose adopting this modification as it would have consequential effects on our proposed Small Heath ward to the east which has received broad local support, as detailed below.

224 Under our final recommendations the proposed Edgbaston, Harborne and Quinton wards would contain 2% fewer, 5% fewer and 2% fewer electors per councillor than the city average respectively (2% fewer, 5% fewer and 4% fewer by 2006).

Moseley, Small Heath, Sparkbrook and Sparkhill wards

225 The existing wards of Moseley, Small Heath, Sparkbrook and Sparkhill are situated broadly to the south and east of the city centre. Each ward is represented by three councillors. Under the current arrangements Moseley, Small Heath, Sparkbrook and Sparkhill wards contain 6% fewer, 14% more, 4% fewer and 3% more electors per councillor than the city average respectively (7% fewer, 12% more, 4% fewer and 1% more than the average by 2006).

226 At Stage One, the City Council’s consultation scheme and the Conservatives’ proposals were broadly similar in this area. Under the City Council’s consultation scheme, the proposed Moseley ward would comprise the existing ward, less the areas bounded by Wyke Green Road and Swanshurst Lane and bounded by Mary Street, Edward Street and the River Rea, together with the area surrounding King’s Heath Park from the existing Bournville ward, the area to the north of Howard Road from the existing Brandwood ward, and the area broadly to the south of Woodstock Road from the existing Sparkhill ward. The remaining parts of the existing Moseley ward would form part of the proposed Small Heath and Springfield wards. The revised Small Heath ward would comprise the existing Sparkbrook ward, less the area broadly to the north of Highgate Middleway (A4540) and Small Heath Highway (A45), together with the area bounded by Mary Street, Edward Street and the River Rea from the existing Moseley ward and the area broadly bounded by Woodstock Road and Durham Road (surrounding Balsall Heath Park) from the existing Sparkhill ward.

227 A new Springfield ward would comprise the existing Sparkhill ward, less the area broadly to the south of Woodstock Road, the area broadly bounded by Woodstock Road and Durham Road (surrounding Balsall Heath Park), as detailed previously, together with the area bounded by Wyke Green Road and Swanshurst Lane from the existing Moseley ward, the area bounded by Shaftmoor Lane and Olton Boulevard West from the existing Fox Hollies ward, the area bounded by Weston Lane and Warwick Road (A41) from the existing Small Heath ward, the area
bounded by Yardley Wood Road and Brook Lane from the existing Billesley ward and the area broadly to the west of the River Cole from the existing Hall Green ward. Finally, under the City Council’s consultation scheme a new Bordesley Green ward was proposed, which would comprise the existing Small Heath ward, less the area to the south of Coventry Road, surrounding Small Heath Park, and the area broadly to the west of Charles Road and Muntz Street, together with the areas to the south of the railway line (less the area surrounding Bachelors Farm Recreation Ground) from the existing Nechells and Washwood Heath wards, as discussed earlier. The remaining parts of the existing Small Heath ward would form part of the proposed Stechford and Yardley wards, as discussed later. Under the City Council’s consultation scheme, Bordesley Green, Moseley, Small Heath and Springfield wards would contain 9% more, 7% more, 5% more and 1% fewer electors per councillor than the city average respectively (7% more, 6% more, 3% more and 3% fewer by 2006).

228 The Conservatives’ revised Moseley ward would be the same as the proposals in the City Council’s consultation scheme. However, they proposed broadly retaining the southern boundary, therefore not incorporating the area to the north of Howard Road from the existing Brandwood ward. The Conservatives’ revised Small Heath ward would also be broadly similar to that proposed under the City Council’s consultation scheme, subject to an alternative western boundary, whereby that area between Raglan Road and Pershore Road would be transferred from the existing Edgbaston ward, as detailed earlier and a marginally different southern boundary. The proposed Springfield ward would also be broadly similar to that proposed under the City Council’s consultation scheme, subject to an alternative southern boundary whereby the area surrounding Vimy Road would also be transferred from the existing Billesley ward. Finally, the Conservatives also proposed a new Bordesley Green ward, which was identical to that proposed under the City Council’s consultation scheme, subject to the breaching of the River Cole as part of the eastern boundary. Under the Conservatives’ proposals, Bordesley Green, Moseley, Small Heath and Springfield wards would contain 7%, 4%, 7% and 9% more electors per councillor than the city average respectively (5%, 3%, 4% and 7% more by 2006).

229 The Liberal Democrats proposed a new Moseley & King’s Heath ward, which was broadly similar to the proposed Moseley ward under the City Council’s consultation scheme and in the Conservatives’ proposals, subject to the retention of the southern boundary and a marginally different boundary in the north-east. They proposed a new Balsall Heath & Sparkbrook ward, based on the existing Sparkbrook ward, less the areas broadly bounded by Glovers Road and Jenkins Street and the area surrounding Walford Road, together with the area surrounding Mary Street, Edward Street and the River Rea from the existing Moseley ward, and the area surrounding Nelson Mandela School from the existing Sparkhill ward. They proposed a revised Sparkhill ward, which would comprise the existing ward, less the areas broadly to the west of Woodstock Road and surrounding Nelson Mandela School, together with the area surrounding Walford Road from the existing Sparkbrook ward, the area surrounding Golden Hillock Secondary School from the existing Small Heath ward, the area bounded by Wyke Green Road and Swanshurst Lane from the existing Moseley ward and the area surrounding Dovey Road from the existing Hall Green ward.

230 Finally, the Liberal Democrats proposed a revised Small Heath ward, largely based on the existing ward, less the areas surrounding Birmingham Heartlands Hospital, as discussed earlier, and the areas surrounding Golden Hillock Secondary School, Birmingham Railway Museum and Havelock Road, together with the area broadly bounded by Glovers Road and Jenkins Street from the existing Sparkbrook ward, as detailed earlier. The remaining part of the of the existing Small Heath ward would form part of the proposed Accock’s Green and Fox Hollies wards, as discussed later. Under the Liberal Democrats’ proposals, Balsall Heath & Sparkbrook, Moseley & King’s Heath, Small Heath and Sparkhill wards would contain 4%, 2%, 6% and 6% more electors per councillor than the city average respectively (3%, 1%, 4% and 4% more than the average by 2006).
231 Three further submissions were received in relation to the Balsall Heath area. Balsall Heath Forum put forward proposals for a ward which encompassed the neighbourhood area of Balsall Heath. St Paul's Community Project expressed the view that the whole of Balsall Heath should be contained within the same city ward due to the strong community links which exist. A local resident also proposed a modification in this area. He argued that residents in the Alder Road, Birchwood Road and Newport Road areas have more in common with Balsall Heath.

232 Two representations were received in relation to the Moseley area. A joint submission was received from Central Moseley Neighbourhood Forum and The Moseley Society, which proposed a revised Moseley ward, which it stated comprised the distinct area of Moseley. A local resident also proposed a modification in the Moseley area, requesting that the ward be extended northwards to take in the area finishing at the northern end of Church Road.

233 Having considered the representations received at Stage One, we based our draft recommendations for this area on the proposals in the City Council’s consultation scheme and the Conservatives' proposals, largely based on our conclusions elsewhere in the city, coupled with the level of consensus achieved between these two sets of proposals.

234 We adopted the City Council’s consultation scheme’s Bordesley Green ward, which was identical to that proposed by the Conservatives, subject to an alternative eastern boundary. Officers from the Committee having visited the area, we identified the River Cole as a strong boundary and we considered that the Conservatives’ proposal to breach the river in this area would not provide for the best reflection of community identity. However, we proposed an amendment between the proposed Bordesley Green and Nechells wards, as detailed earlier. Having identified the River Cole as a strong boundary in this area, we looked at the possibility of using it as a southern boundary for Bordesley Green ward, as proposed by the Liberal Democrats. However, this would have resulted in the proposed Bordesley Green ward containing 17% more electors per councillor than the city average by 2006 and we were not of the view that there was sufficient justification in this case to accept such a high level of electoral inequality for an urban area such as Birmingham.

235 We adopted the Conservatives’ proposed Moseley ward, which was broadly similar to that proposed under the City Council’s consultation scheme and the Liberal Democrat scheme, but which provided for a better level of electoral equality than the proposals under the City Council’s consultation scheme. It was also supported by a local resident and broadly supported by Central Moseley Neighbourhood Forum and The Moseley Society. Officers from the Committee having visited the area, we considered that the proposals in this area used strong boundaries. We were also of the view that King’s Park should form part of the revised Moseley ward as proposed under the City Council’s consultation scheme and by the Conservatives. We looked at the possibility of incorporating the area broadly to the south of Woodlands Road in the proposed Moseley ward as proposed by Central Moseley Neighbourhood Forum and The Moseley Society. Officers from the Committee having visited the area, we were of the view that there would be merit in this area forming part of Moseley ward, however, this would have involved the transfer of a large number of electors and have a significantly negative impact on electoral equality. We were therefore not minded to put this forward as part of our draft recommendations.

236 Largely based on our conclusions elsewhere in the city, we adopted the Conservatives’ proposed Small Heath ward. This ward was broadly similar to that proposed under the City Council’s consultation scheme, used strong boundaries and would be broadly supported by Balsall Heath Forum, St Paul’s Community Project and a local resident.

237 Finally, we adopted the Conservatives' proposed Springfield ward, subject to some minor amendments in order to provide for more clearly identifiable boundaries. We proposed that the area surrounding The Hurst be transferred from the proposed Springfield ward to the proposed Billesley ward from which its access is served. We also proposed an amendment to the eastern boundary of the proposed Springfield ward in order for the River Cole to be used as a boundary.
This resulted in properties 278-426 Sarehole Road being transferred from the proposed Springfield ward to the proposed Hall Green ward.

238 These proposals for Springfield ward were broadly similar to those under the City Council’s consultation scheme and, on the whole, used strong boundaries. However, we looked closely at two aspects of this proposed ward. Firstly, the Liberal Democrats maintained the use of the River Cole in this area while the City Council’s consultation scheme and the Conservatives’ proposals breached it. Officers from the Committee having visited the area, we were content that the river could be breached, with the areas either side being somewhat similar in nature and linked by Forman’s Road. As discussed earlier, there are a number of strong boundaries in Birmingham and it would not be possible to use all of them in their entirety. Therefore, in taking a consistent approach to this issue, on balance, we were of the view that the identities and interests of the local community would not be adversely affected if the river were to be breached in this case, as it would facilitate a better scheme overall. The other area we looked at was surrounding Vimy Road. Under the Conservatives’ proposals, this area would be combined with areas to its north, while the City Council’s consultation scheme and the Liberal Democrats locate it with areas to its south. As already outlined, we based our proposed Springfield ward on the Conservatives’ proposals, therefore combining the Vimy Road area with areas to its north.

239 Under our draft recommendations, Bordesley Green, Moseley, Small Heath and Springfield wards would contain 8%, 4%, 7% and 6% more electors per councillor than the city average respectively (6%, 3%, 4% and 4% more by 2006).

240 At Stage Three, Birmingham City Council broadly supported the draft recommendations in this area, subject to a minor amendment and two ward name changes. It proposed that Whitby Road and Pembroke Road should form part of the proposed Moseley ward in order ‘to reflect more accurately the recognisable local community ties’. In addition, it proposed that Moseley ward be renamed Moseley & King’s Heath ‘as King’s Heath is one of Birmingham’s largest and well known local centres’, and that Small Heath ward be renamed Sparkbrook as neither the Small Heath Centre or Small Heath park are actually within the ward. It argued that ‘Much of the proposed ward falls within the existing Sparkbrook ward, which is considered to be a more appropriate name for the ward’.

241 The Conservatives, Councillor Hill and a local resident expressed support for our draft recommendation in this area. St Paul’s Community Project strongly supported the proposals in this area, particularly in relation to the fact that the whole of the Balsall Heath area would be united in the proposed Small Heath ward. It did however, express surprise at the chosen name of Small Heath and put forward the alternative of Sparkbrook ‘as this is the name which is known and understood by residents’.

242 Balsall Heath Forum also supported the draft recommendations in this area, which it stated were ‘such an improvement on the past situation’. However, it proposed three minor amendments, which ‘would mean that the whole of the social neighbourhood of Balsall Heath would, in the future be combined within the new Small Heath ward’. In addition, it argued that the retention of the existing name of Sparkbrook would be more appropriate as ‘now almost none of Small Heath is contained within your proposed boundaries’. The Forum proposed that the proposed ward should include the Benmore Estate, which is located between the Pershore Road (east) and Bristol Road (south), and Belgrave Middleway (north) and Speedwell Road (south) as this area is also part of Balsall Heath. It also proposed that the areas from Stoney Lane to Stratford Road and the triangular Wedge around Woodstock Road should be removed from the proposed ward.

243 Councillor Rice also expressed support for our proposed Small Heath ward, stating that he had ‘no objection to the way you have reorganised the ward and think that this is entirely sensible’. However, he strongly opposed the proposed ward name of Small Heath and proposed the alternatives of Sparkbrook & Balsall Heath or Sparkbrook.
Councillor Gregory broadly supported our proposed Springfield ward. He stated that ‘I have been made aware of concerns by some, but not all, Billesley residents who, it is proposed, will live in the new Springfield ward…Whilst I can understand the reservations expressed, I feel the proposals by the [Committee] are the best that can be achieved in the circumstances to meet the [Committee’s] criteria’.

The Liberal Democrats strongly opposed our draft recommendations in relation to the proposed Bordesley Green, Springfield and Small Heath wards. They proposed alternative warding arrangements in this area which they argued would be ‘substantially better from a community aspect’ than our draft recommendations. They proposed a revised Small Heath ward which would be largely based on our proposed Bordesley Green ward, less the area surrounding Little Bromwich together with the small area surrounding Palace Road and the part of Small Heath to the south of Coventry Road which formed part of our proposed Yardley ward, resulting in the use of the River Cole as a boundary, rather than Coventry Road. It was argued that ‘the draft proposals divide the Small Heath Community substantially’ and that the southern area of Small Heath (south of Coventry Road) has very few links east of the River Cole. Particular reference was made in relation to Small Heath School, Small Heath Park, Small Heath railway station and Small Heath Central Congregational (Jamiat) Mosque. It was contended that these are all integral parts of the Small Heath community and therefore placing them in the proposed Yardley ward would not be an adequate reflection of community identity and interests. It was acknowledged that moving these key areas back into a revised Small Heath ward would have knock-on effects. However, the Liberal Democrats argued that ‘The communities within inner city Birmingham …are more seamless compared to boundaries such as the River Cole’.

The Liberal Democrats proposed a new Sparkbrook ward which would be based on our proposed Small Heath ward, but with a significantly different northern boundary. The proposed ward would exclude the area west of the River Rea, as detailed above, and the area surrounding Nelson Mandela School and Balsall Heath Park. It would however include the Highgate and Digbeth areas from our proposed Nechells ward. It was also argued that Sparkbrook would be a more suitable name than Small Heath. Finally, the Liberal Democrats proposed a revised Springfield ward, which would be broadly similar to our proposed Springfield ward, subject to the continuation of the River Cole as an eastern boundary (therefore transferring the area to the east to a proposed Fox Hollies ward), and the inclusion of the areas surrounding Nelson Mandela School and Balsall Heath Park, and the small area in between Warwick Road and Spark Brook (surrounding Golden Hillock Secondary School). While support was expressed for the proposed Springfield ward under the draft recommendations in relation to The Hurst remaining within the proposed Billesley ward, it was argued that ‘The boundaries proposed here are stronger than those of the Draft Plan’. Under the Liberal Democrats’ proposals, Small Heath, Sparkbrook and Springfield wards would contain 8%, 2% and 4% more electors per councillor than the city average respectively (5%, 4% and 2% more by 2006).

Councillors Khan and Saeed largely reiterated the views expressed by the Liberal Democrats in relation to the southern area, of the area known locally as Small Heath, forming part of our proposed Yardley ward. It was proposed that the area to the north of Small Heath Highway should be included with the rest of the Small Heath area to the north in our proposed Bordesley Green ward. It was acknowledged that this would have an impact on the electoral equality of surrounding wards, although no specific proposals were put forward. Specific reference was made to Small Heath Park arguing that ‘The Park is one of the major landmarks’ and that under any local devolution of powers it ‘would be vital to retain [the park] under the same area of “control” as nearby Coventry Road residents in that locality’. It was argued that the area to the north of the Small Heath Highway has its community focus on Coventry Road. In addition, it was argued that the western side of Muntz Street should be included in a ‘Small Heath’ based ward as it includes a number of local Small Heath facilities. Finally, the impact that our proposals would have on future devolution and budgetary decisions was referred to.
248 Two local residents opposed the inclusion of the area to the north of Small Heath Highway in the proposed Yardley ward. The view was expressed that ‘Small Heath is an inner-city area, and has received grants as such. We in Yardley are a suburb and have had no money put into this area’.

249 As detailed above, a local resident opposed the inclusion of the area known locally as Highgate in the proposed Nechells ward, arguing that the draft recommendations took no account of community identity and that ‘Highgate fits most naturally and historically into Balsall Heath’. Another local resident proposed renaming Small Heath ward as Balsall Heath.

250 Hall Green Residents’ Association (supported by the River Cole and Chinn Brook Conservation Group) proposed a minor amendment to the boundary between the proposed Hall Green and Springfield wards, so that the ‘green space’ surrounding the River Cole (including Sarehole Mill) could form part of the proposed Hall Green ward. It was argued that ‘to state that the whole of Greet Mill Meadow is in Hall Green ward is much simpler and understandable than saying that because the River Cole runs through the middle of it one part is in Hall Green and one part is in Springfield’. It was further argued that including all of this area within Hall Green ward would make co-ordinating the conservation group’s work much easier. The proposed change would not involve the transfer of any electors.

251 Councillor Burfoot (supported by Councillor Jenkinson) strongly opposed our proposal to include the area known locally as the ‘Vimy Triangle’ (or ‘Menin Triangle’) in the proposed Springfield ward. It was argued that residents in this area want to stay in the revised Billesley ward, as they are concerned that the area will become known as Springfield rather than Billesley. It was argued that ‘Historically Vimy Triangle was part of Billesley Farm (see 1919 survey) so for the area to now be considered as part of Springfield makes residents feel their identity is being challenged… Residents use leisure facilities, schools, places of worship in Billesley, not in Springfield’. A number of other issues were raised, particularly in relation to the impact our proposals will have on local funding, house prices, insurance premiums and postcodes. Reference was also made to some residents feeling they were being transferred to what they regarded was an inner city area with a different cultural make up. It was proposed that the existing boundary along Coldbath Road and Swanshurst Lane be retained and for the Vimy Triangle to remain part of Billesley ward.

252 These views were reiterated by a local resident, and were supported be a petition containing 283 signatures. Concern was expressed at our proposal to include The Hurst in the proposed Billesley ward and the ‘Menin Triangle’ area in the proposed Springfield ward. It was argued that ‘[The Hurst] more than us should have moved to Springfield as they all have cars, a lot of residents in the triangle are pensioners who if they are moved to another ward will have to use buses to go to their community centre’. It was argued that Billesley is a ‘leafy suburb’ while Springfield is an ‘inner-city ward’. Concern was also expressed at the proposed amendment between the proposed Brandwood and Billesley ward. It was therefore argued that we reconsider our proposals in this area and that the Menin Triangle remains in Billesley ward.

253 Having carefully considered all the representations received at Stage Three, we have noted that our draft recommendations have received a varied response. We have noted that a number of respondents have expressed support for our draft recommendations, but that we have also received a number of alternative proposals. However, having considered all the alternative proposals, taking into account the implications for electoral equality and the knock-on effects across the city as a whole, we have decided to confirm our draft recommendations as final, subject to one minor boundary amendment (affecting no electors) and two ward name changes.

254 We do not propose adopting the boundary amendments submitted by the City Council and Balsall Heath Forum as we have not been persuaded by the evidence and argumentation received that these would secure a better balance between the statutory criteria than our draft recommendations, which have received broad support. In addition, we do not propose adopting
the proposal put forward by a local resident to include the Highgate area within the Small Heath ward, as outlined above

255 We have noted that the main area of concern expressed by the Liberal Democrats related to the inclusion of the southern part of the area known as Small Heath in the proposed Yardley ward. While addressing this concern in their alternative proposals, we have noted that there would be a number of consequential effects on surrounding wards. Given that our draft recommendations for these surrounding wards have received broad support at Stage Three, we are reluctant to move away from them. However, we do consider that the concerns expressed by the Liberal Democrats and a number of other respondents in relation to the southern part of the Small Heath area have some justification, and this was an issue that we looked at closely when formulating our draft recommendations. However, as discussed in our draft recommendations report, we recognised that the need to secure a uniform pattern of three-member wards, while also securing a reasonable level of electoral equality, would at times result in the combining of disparate communities in a single city ward. While we consider that the concerns raised by the Liberal Democrats are warranted, we have not been persuaded by the argumentation put forward that the resulting variance of 17% above the city average by 2006 in Bordesley Green ward could be justified in a densely urban area such as Birmingham.

256 We have also considered the opposition to the inclusion of the area known locally as the ‘Vimy’ or ‘Menin’ triangle in Springfield ward. We looked carefully at the evidence received but noted that the almost all the argumentation received related to issues that we cannot take into account such as local funding, house prices, insurance premiums and postcodes. On balance, we have not been persuaded by the evidence and argumentation put forward that the identities and interests of the local community would be significantly adversely affected if this area were to form part of the proposed Springfield ward as opposed to the proposed Billesley ward.

257 We have considered the boundary amendment put forward by the Hall Green Residents’ Association (and supported by the River Cole and Chinn Brook Conservation Group) and have noted that it would not affect any electors. We have been persuaded that moving the boundary between Springfield and Hall Green slightly westwards, so that the ‘green space’ surrounding the River Cole (including Sarehole Mill) would form part of the proposed Hall Green ward, would provide a more convenient boundary locally. Given that this proposal would not affect any electors we have decided to modify our draft recommendations accordingly.

258 We have also noted that a number of respondents proposed changing the proposed Small Heath ward’s name as it would not adequately reflect the area it covered. We have noted that the majority of respondents proposed that this ward should be named Sparkbrook in order to better reflect the area and have therefore decided to adopt this revised ward name as part of our final recommendations. Similarly, we have been persuaded to adopt the City Council’s proposal to rename the proposed Moseley ward as Moseley & King’s Heath ward in order to identify the communities contained within the ward.

259 Under our final recommendations the number of electors per councillor in our proposed Bordesley Green and Springfield wards would be the same as under our draft recommendations. The number of electors per councillor in our proposed Sparkbrook and Moseley & King’s Heath wards would be the same as under our draft recommendations for Small Heath and Moseley wards respectively.

**Acock’s Green, Sheldon and Yardley wards**

260 The existing wards of Acock’s Green, Sheldon and Yardley are situated in the east of the city. Each ward is represented by three councillors. Under the current arrangements Acock’s Green, Sheldon and Yardley wards contain 6% more, 15% fewer and 7% fewer electors per councillor than the city average respectively (5% more, 17% fewer and 9% fewer than the average by 2006).
261 At Stage One, the City Council’s consultation scheme and the Conservatives’ proposals were broadly similar in this area, providing for the creation of three three-member wards. Both schemes were identical in relation to a revised Sheldon ward, which would comprise the existing ward, together with the area surrounding Gilbertstone Recreation Ground from the existing Yardley ward and the area broadly bounded by Church Road and Coventry Road (A45) from the existing Acock’s Green ward. The proposals were also identical with regard to the proposed Yardley ward which would be largely based on the existing Acock’s Green ward, less the areas bounded by Church Road and Coventry Road (A45) and broadly bounded by Stockfield Road, Cambridge Way and the southern edge of Yardley Cemetery. The proposed ward would include the area bounded by Bordesley Green East and Station Road from the existing Yardley ward and the area broadly to the south of Coventry Road from the existing Small Heath ward. The remaining part of the existing Acock’s Green ward would form part of a revised Acock’s Green ward, as discussed later.

262 Under the Conservatives’ proposals, the existing Yardley ward would largely form the basis for a new Stechford ward which would comprise the existing Yardley ward, less the areas surrounding Gilbertstone Recreation Ground and broadly bounded by Bordesley Green East and Station Road, together with the area broadly to the south of the River Cole from the existing Hodge Hill ward and the area surrounding Bachelors Farm Recreation Ground, from the existing Washwood Heath ward.

263 The City Council’s consultation scheme proposals were the same as the Conservatives’ proposals, subject to the retention of the River Cole as a western boundary.

264 Under the City Council’s consultation scheme, Sheldon, Stechford and Yardley wards would contain 3% fewer, 1% more and 5% more electors per councillor than the city average respectively (5% fewer, 1% fewer and 4% more by 2006).

265 Under the Conservatives’ proposals, Sheldon, Stechford and Yardley wards would contain 3% fewer, 3% more and 5% more electors per councillor than the city average respectively (5% fewer, 1% more and 4% more by 2006).

266 The Liberal Democrats proposed broadly retaining the existing three-member wards in this area. The revised Acock’s Green ward would comprise the existing ward, less the area broadly bounded by Moor Road and Wash Lane, together with the area surrounding Birmingham Railway Museum from the existing Small Heath ward. The revised Yardley ward would comprise the existing ward, less the area surrounding Outmore Road, together with the area broadly bounded by Moor Road and Wash Lane from the existing Acock’s Green ward. Finally, a revised Sheldon ward would comprise the existing ward, together with the area surrounding Outmore Road from the existing Yardley ward. The Liberal Democrats acknowledged that the wards in this area are constrained by the railway line, River Cole, the City boundary and Warwick Road. Under the Liberal Democrats’ proposals, Acock’s Green, Sheldon and Yardley wards would contain 1%, 2% and 2% fewer electors per councillor than the city average respectively (3%, 4% and 3% fewer by 2006).

267 Having considered the representations received at Stage One, we based our draft recommendations for this area on the proposals in the City Council’s consultation scheme and the Conservatives’ proposals. The proposed Sheldon and Yardley wards were identical under both proposals, used strong boundaries and provided for acceptable levels of electoral equality. This, coupled with our proposals for surrounding wards, led us to conclude that, on balance, these proposals provided for the best reflection of the statutory criteria. However, we proposed one minor amendment in order to provide for a more clearly identifiable boundary. We proposed that properties 39-79 Moat Lane be transferred from the proposed Sheldon ward to the proposed Stechford ward. As mentioned earlier, we looked at the possibility of using the River Cole as a boundary in this area (as proposed by the Liberal Democrats), however it would have resulted in
unacceptably high levels of electoral inequality, particularly in the case of the proposed Bordesley Green ward, which we did not consider to be justified in this case.

268 In relation to the proposed Stechford ward, we again noted that the proposals were identical under the City Council’s consultation scheme and the Conservatives’ proposals, subject to an alternative western boundary. As mentioned in relation to the proposed Bordesley Green ward, we concurred with the proposal put forward under the City Council’s consultation scheme that the River Cole forms a strong boundary in this area. We considered that the Conservatives’ proposed boundary would not provide for the best reflection of community identity.

269 While we considered that the Liberal Democrats’ proposals in this area had merit, we were not persuaded that they provided for the best reflection of the statutory criteria. However, they had broad similarities to the City Council’s and the Conservatives’ proposals, particularly in relation to the use of the River Cole and railway lines as boundaries.

270 Under our draft recommendations, the proposed Sheldon, Stechford and Yardley wards would contain 4% fewer, 1% more and 5% more electors per councillor than the city average respectively (5% fewer, 1% fewer and 4% more by 2006).

271 At Stage Three, Birmingham City Council, Councillor Hill and a local resident expressed support for our draft recommendations in this area.

272 The Conservatives broadly supported the draft recommendations in this area. However they proposed some amendments. Based on representations received by local residents, they proposed that the boundary between the proposed Acock’s Green and Yardley ward be amended to continue roughly south-eastwards from Woodcock Lane along the line of the Grand Union Canal to the City boundary. They stated that ‘This would result in both sides of Woodcock Lane, and the whole of The Avenue, Dagnall Road and other minor roads being united in the new Acock’s Green ward’.

273 The Conservatives opposed the use of Church Road as boundary in this area. They argued that ‘The proposals to use Church Road as a boundary between the new Yardley and Stechford wards has the effect of splitting a conservation area and puts both the Yardley School and the historic church in the new Stechford ward’. They therefore proposed alternative boundaries for this area, which they argued were ‘not perfect boundaries but have the merit of preserving the unity of a well-established conservation area in the new Yardley ward’. They proposed that the revised boundary in this area should proceed southwards along the line of Queen’s Road (from Bordesley Green East/Meadway) to the junction with Barrows Lane and then south and east along Barrows Lane to Moat Lane then along the eastern and southern edges of Gilbertstone Recreation Ground to Coventry Road.

274 The Liberal Democrats strongly opposed our draft recommendations in this area, primarily based on the inclusion of the area to the north of the Small Heath Highway in our proposed Yardley ward, as detailed above, and the division of the Yardley area between three city wards. It was argued that ‘It is the Yardley/Acock’s Green ward that has the most impractical boundaries suggested. Dividing The Avenue part way down and making the ward look a bit spidery makes the boundaries unworkable for the police… From the perspective of decentralisation operating such disjointed boundaries would cause substantial problems. Splitting the core of Small Heath is not a sensible proposal’.

275 The Liberal Democrats proposed a revised Yardley ward which would be broadly based on our proposed Stechford ward, less the areas to the north of the railway line and surrounding Homestead Road, together with the areas broadly bounded by Moor Road and Wash Lane and surrounding Gilbertstone Recreation Ground. The Liberal Democrats stated that ‘Yardley Old Church is then in Yardley ward rather than being in Stechford’. They proposed a revised Sheldon ward which would be broadly similar to our proposed Sheldon ward, less the areas
surrounding Gilbertstone Recreation Ground and the area known locally as ‘The Swan’, together
with the area surrounding Homestead Road from our proposed Stechford ward, as detailed
above. Finally, they proposed significantly different proposals in relation to our proposed Yardley
ward, resulting in the creation of a revised Acock’s Green ward. As detailed above, part of our
proposed Yardley ward, the area to the north of the Small Heath Highway, would form part of a
revised Small Heath ward. The remaining part of our proposed Yardley ward, less the area
broadly bounded by Moor Road and Was Lane, would be combined with the area known locally
as ‘The Swan’ from our proposed Sheldon ward and the area to the north of Warwick Road from
our proposed Acock’s Green ward. Thirty proforma-style slips were enclosed in support of these
views. Under the Liberal Democrats’ proposals, Acock’s Green, Sheldon and Yardley wards
would contain 1%, 2% and 2% fewer electors per councillor than the city average respectively
(3%, 4% and 3% fewer by 2006).

276 Finally, we received opposition to our proposals from four local residents. Two expressed
concern in relation to the southern part of the area known locally as Small Heath forming part of
the proposed Yardley ward, while the other two were concerned at the proposal to include
Yardley Old Church in the proposed Stechford ward.

277 Having carefully considered all the representations received at Stage Three, we have noted
that our draft recommendations have received a varied response. We have noted that a number
of respondents have expressed broad support for our draft recommendations, but that we have
also received a number of alternative proposals in this area. However, having considered all the
alternative proposals, taking into account the implications for electoral equality and the knock-on
effects across the city as a whole, we have decided to confirm our draft recommendations as
final, subject to two boundary amendments to better reflect local communities.

278 We have noted the concern expressed by the Liberal Democrats relating to the inclusion of
the southern part of the area known as Small Heath in the proposed Yardley ward and the
division of the Yardley area between three revised wards. As detailed above, while their
proposals address these areas of concern, there are a number of consequential effects on
surrounding wards that have received support at Stage Three. We have not been persuaded
that the substantial change to the draft recommendations which would result from these
proposals has been fully justified, particularly as we have received notable local support for our
proposed wards in this area. We are therefore reluctant to move away from our draft
recommendations. Furthermore, as detailed above, to include the southern part of the Small
Heath area in our proposed Bordesley Green ward rather than our proposed Yardley ward would
result in an unacceptable level of electoral equality. However, we propose putting forward two
boundary amendments based on proposals put forward by the Liberal Democrats (and the
Conservatives) in relation to the Yardley area which we have been persuaded would provide for
a better reflection of the statutory criteria and would result in the Yardley area being only divided
between two wards rather than three.

279 We propose that the area known locally as ‘the Swan’ should be included in the proposed
Yardley ward in order to better reflect local communities. We have therefore decided that the
boundary between Sheldon and Yardley wards should be amended so that it runs along the
centre of Rowlands Road. This amendment would mean that Church Road would not be used as
a boundary which would be supported locally. It would also result in the proposed Sheldon ward
varying by 11% by 2006. However, we have been persuaded that this is acceptable given the
better reflection of local communities and particularly given the fact that this ward is situated on
the eastern edge of the city and is surrounded by the city boundary to the east and south.

280 We also intend modifying the boundary between the proposed Yardley and Acock’s Green
wards, to follow the Grand Union Canal as put forward by the Conservatives and the Liberal
Democrats, in order to secure a more convenient boundary and a better reflection of
communities. This amendment would also facilitate securing reasonable electoral equality within
the proposed Yardley ward.
281 Under our final recommendations the proposed Stechford ward would contain the same number of electors per councillor as under the draft recommendations. The proposed Sheldon and Yardley wards would contain 10% fewer and 7% more electors per councillor than the city average (11% fewer and 6% more by 2006).

**Billesley, Brandwood, Fox Hollies and Hall Green wards**

282 The existing wards of Billesley, Brandwood, Fox Hollies and Hall Green are situated in the south-east of the city. Each ward is represented by three councillors. Under the current arrangements Billesley, Brandwood, Fox Hollies and Hall Green wards contain 6% more, 1% more, 8% fewer and 7% more electors per councillor than the city average respectively (4% more, 8% more, 9% fewer and 5% more than the average by 2006).

283 The proposals in this area were broadly similar under the City Council’s consultation scheme and the Conservatives’ scheme. Under both schemes, the existing Fox Hollies ward would form the basis of a revised Acock’s Green ward, less the area broadly bounded by Shaftmoor Lane and Olton Boulevard West, together with the area broadly bounded by Stockfield Road, Cambridge Way and the southern edge of Yardley Cemetery from the existing Acock’s Green ward, as detailed above. The City Council’s consultation scheme proposed broadly retaining the existing Hall Green ward, subject to an amendment to the western boundary to include the area to the west of the River Cole in the proposed Springfield ward, as detailed above, and to include that area surrounding Trittiford Mill Park from the existing Billesley ward. The City Council’s consultation scheme proposed a revised Billesley ward, largely based on the existing ward, less the areas surrounding Trittiford Mill Park and bounded by Yardley Wood Road and Brook Lane, together with the area surrounding Wheeler’s Lane from the existing Brandwood ward.

284 Finally, the City Council’s consultation scheme proposed a revised Brandwood ward, largely based on the existing ward, less the areas to the north of Howard Road, surrounding Wheeler’s Lane and surrounding Baldwin Road. Under the City Council’s consultation scheme, Acock’s Green, Billesley, Brandwood and Hall Green wards would contain 4% more, 2% more, 5% fewer and 6% more electors per councillor than the city average respectively (2% more, equal to the average, 1% more and 4% more by 2006).

285 The Conservatives’ proposals were the same for Hall Green ward as those in the City Council’s consultation scheme, subject to the amendment involving the Trittiford Mill Park area, therefore retaining the River Cole as a boundary. The Conservatives’ proposals for Billesley ward were identical to those in the City Council’s consultation scheme, subject to the retention of the eastern boundary (River Cole) and the transfer of the area surrounding Vimy Road to the proposed Springfield ward. Finally, the Conservatives’ proposals for Brandwood ward were identical to those in the City Council’s consultation scheme, subject to the retention of the existing northern boundary. Under both of these city-wide schemes, the remaining part of Brandwood ward would form part of the proposed King’s Norton ward, as detailed below. Under the Conservatives’ proposals Acock’s Green, Billesley, Brandwood and Hall Green wards would contain 4% more, 2% more, 2% fewer and 1% more electors per councillor than the city average respectively (2% more, 1% more, 4% more and 1% fewer by 2006).

286 The Liberal Democrats proposed broadly retaining the existing wards in this area. They proposed a revised Fox Hollies ward, based on the existing ward, together with the area surrounding Havelock Road from the existing Small Heath ward. The revised Hall Green ward would again be based on the existing ward, less the area surrounding Dovey Road. The revised Billesley ward would be based on the existing ward, less Chesterwood Road, while the revised Brandwood ward would comprise the existing ward, less the area surrounding Lindsworth Road, together with Chesterwood Road from the existing Billesley ward. The remaining part of Brandwood ward would form part of the revised King’s Norton ward, as detailed below. Under the Liberal Democrats’ proposals, Billesley, Brandwood, Fox Hollies and Hall Green wards
would contain 6% more, 6% fewer, 1% fewer and 4% more electors per councillor than the city average respectively (4% more, 1% more, 2% fewer and 2% more by 2006).

287 We received one further representation in relation to this area. Billesley Residents' Association opposed changes to the existing Billesley ward which would result in an amalgamation with Sparkhill ward.

288 Having considered the representations received at Stage One, we based our draft recommendations for this area on the Conservatives' proposals, which were broadly similar to those in the City Council's consultation scheme and, in part, the Liberal Democrats. These proposals used strong boundaries and provided for acceptable levels of electoral equality. However, we proposed two minor amendments in order to provide for more clearly identifiable boundaries, as discussed earlier. We proposed that the area surrounding The Hurst be transferred from the proposed Springfield ward to the proposed Billesley ward, from which its access is served. We also proposed an amendment to the eastern boundary of the proposed Springfield ward, to use the River Cole as a boundary. This resulted in properties 278-426 Sarehole Road being transferred to the proposed Hall Green ward from the proposed Springfield ward.

289 The proposed Acock's Green ward was identical under the City Council's consultation scheme and the Conservatives' proposals and, on balance, we were persuaded that it provided for the best reflection of the statutory criteria. We noted, however, that in the north of the ward the railway line would be breached and we were keen to ensure that there were adequate crossing points at this part of the railway line. Officers from the Committee having visited the area, we were aware of a number of crossing points that could be accessed by road or foot and we were therefore content to put this proposal forward as part of our draft recommendations.

290 We noted that the proposed Hall Green ward was broadly similar under each of the city-wide schemes submitted at Stage One. Based on our conclusions elsewhere in the city, we were unable to adopt the Liberal Democrats' proposals in full. We were also not persuaded by elements of the City Council's consultation scheme proposals, particularly in relation to the southern part of the western boundary where it moved away from using the River Cole as a boundary. We concurred with the views expressed by the Conservatives and the Liberal Democrats that the River Cole provides for a strong boundary in this area, and therefore adopted the Conservatives' proposed Hall Green ward, subject to the minor amendment with Springfield ward, as detailed earlier.

291 Based on our conclusions to use of the River Cole as a boundary in this area and our proposals to the north, we based our draft recommendations for Billesley ward on the Conservatives' proposals, which again were broadly similar to those put forward under the City Council's consultation scheme and by the Liberal Democrats. However, we proposed an amendment to the northern boundary with Springfield ward as mentioned earlier. We noted the concerns of Billesley Residents' Association with regard to the proposed Billesley ward. While under existing arrangements Billesley ward contains an acceptable level of electoral equality, we were unable to look at any one area in isolation and in order to facilitate a scheme for the whole of the city, with all the wards requiring an element of change. In addition, Officers from the Committee having visited the area, we did not consider that the Billesley and Sparkhill areas were significantly different in nature and were of the view that it would not be too detrimental to include parts of those areas in the same city ward.

292 Finally, largely based on our conclusions in surrounding wards, we adopted the Conservatives' proposed Brandwood ward. Again, all three of the city-wide schemes were similar in relation to this proposed ward, particularly those put forward under the City Council's consultation scheme and by the Conservatives.
293 Under our draft recommendations, Acock's Green, Billesley, Brandwood and Hall Green wards would contain 4% more, 4% more, 2% fewer and 2% more electors per councillor than the city average respectively (2% more, 3% more, 4% more and equal to the average by 2006).

294 At Stage Three, Birmingham City Council, Councillor Hill and a local resident all expressed support for our draft recommendation in this area, while Councillor Harvey and a local resident expressed support for our proposed Hall Green ward. The Conservatives also supported our proposals in this area, subject to a minor amendment to the boundary between the proposed Yardley and Acock’s Green wards, as detailed above. As discussed earlier, Councillor Gregory acknowledged the concerns of local residents regarding the proposed boundary between Billesley and Springfield wards, however, he concluded that it was a practical solution based on the need to reflect the statutory criteria.

295 The Liberal Democrats strongly opposed our proposals in the Yardley and Acock’s Green areas, as detailed above. They proposed a revised Fox Hollies ward which would be broadly based on our proposed Acock’s Green ward, less the area to the north of Warwick Road, together with the area to the east of the River Cole from our proposed Springfield ward. They argued that this ward was based on ‘traditional boundaries that are appropriate and well recognised for the communities’. Under the Liberal Democrats’ proposals, Fox Hollies ward would contain 1% fewer electors per councillor than the city average (2% fewer by 2006).

296 Hall Green Residents’ Association (supported by the River Cole and Chinn Brook Conservation Group) broadly supported our proposed Hall Green ward. However, they proposed a minor amendment to the boundary between Hall Green and Springfield wards so that the ‘green space’ surrounding the River Cole (including Sarehole Mill) could form part of the proposed Hall Green ward, as detailed above.

297 Councillor Burfoot (supported by Councillor Jenkinson) strongly opposed our proposal to include the area known locally as the ‘Vimy Triangle’ or ‘Menin Triangle’ in the proposed Springfield ward, as detailed above. It was argued that residents in this area want to stay in the revised Billesley ward as ‘Historically Vimy Triangle was part of Billesley Farm (see 1919 survey) so for the area to now be considered as part of Springfield makes residents feel their identity is being challenged’. It was proposed that the existing boundary along Coldbath Road and Swanshurst Lane be retained with the Vimy Triangle remaining part of Billesley ward.

298 These views were reiterated by a local resident, and were supported by a petition containing 283 signatures, as detailed above. It was argued that ‘[The Hurst] more than us should have moved to Springfield’ and that Billesley is a ‘leafy suburb’ while Springfield is an ‘inner-city ward’.

299 Having carefully considered all the representations received at Stage Three we have noted that we received broad support for our draft recommendations and have therefore decided to confirm our draft recommendations as final, subject to the two boundary amendments detailed above. We have decided that the boundary between the proposed Springfield and Hall Green wards should be amended so that all of the ‘green space’ around the River Cole should be included within Hall Green ward. We have also decided that the boundary between the proposed Yardley and Acock’s Green should be amended to follow the Grand Union Canal.

300 We considered the Liberal Democrats’ alternative proposals but we have not been persuaded that the substantial change to the draft recommendations which would result from these proposals has been fully justified, particularly bearing in mind that we have received broad local support for our proposed wards in this area. However, our amendment between the proposed Yardley and Acock’s Green wards would reflect part of the Liberal Democrats’ proposals.

301 As detailed above, we have not been persuaded to modify the boundary between our proposed Springfield and Billesley wards to include the ‘Vimy’ or ‘Menin’ triangle in Billesley
ward. We looked carefully at the evidence received but, on balance, we have not been persuaded by the evidence and argumentation put forward that the identities and interests of the local community would be significantly adversely affected if this area were to form part of the proposed Springfield ward as opposed to the proposed Billesley ward.

302 Under our final recommendations the proposed Billesley, Brandwood and Hall Green wards would contain the same number of electors per councillor as under the draft recommendations. The proposed Acock’s Green ward would contain 8% more electors per councillor than the city average (6% more by 2006).

**Bartley Green, Bournville, Selly Oak and Weoley wards**

303 The existing wards of Bartley Green, Bournville, Selly Oak and Weoley are situated in the south-west of the city. Each ward is represented by three councillors. Under the current arrangements Bartley Green, Bournville, Selly Oak and Weoley wards contain 13% fewer, 1% fewer, 17% more and 17% fewer electors per councillor than the city average respectively (18% fewer, 2% fewer, 19% more and 19% fewer than the average by 2006).

304 At Stage One, the proposals for this area were significantly different under each of the three city-wide schemes. The City Council’s consultation scheme proposed a revised three-member Bartley Green ward which would comprise the existing ward, together with the area bounded by Burnel Road and Bourn Brook (surrounding Bourneto Road) from the existing Harborne ward, and the areas broadly to the south of California Way and broadly to the west of Shenley Lane and north of Brook Lane (surrounding Ley Hill Recreation Ground) from the existing Weoley ward. A revised three-member Weoley ward would comprise the existing ward, less the areas broadly to the south of California Way and broadly to the west of Shenley Lane and north of Brook Lane (surrounding Ley Hill Recreation Ground) as detailed earlier, together with the area broadly to the south-west of Weoley Avenue and Weoley Park Road from the existing Selly Oak ward, the area surrounding Fitzroy Road, to the north of Beeches Road from the existing Longbridge ward, as detailed later and the Park View Road area from the existing Northfield ward, as detailed later.

305 A revised three-member Selly Oak ward would comprise the existing ward, less the area to the south-west of Weoley Avenue and Weoley Park Road, as detailed above, and the area broadly to the south of Selly Oak Hospital (bounded by Bristol Road and the railway). Finally, a revised three-member Bournville ward would comprise the existing ward, less the area surrounding King’s Heath Park, as detailed earlier, and the area to the south of Middleton Hall Road (B4121) and Barron Road, as detailed later, together with the area broadly to the south of Selly Oak Hospital (bounded by Bristol Road and the Railway) from the existing Selly Oak ward, as detailed earlier, and the area north of Church Road/Bunbury Road (surrounding Victoria Common) from the existing Northfield ward, as detailed later. The remaining parts of the existing Bournville ward would form part of revised King’s Norton and Northfield wards, as detailed later. Under the City Council’s consultation scheme, Bartley Green, Bournville, Selly Oak and Weoley wards would contain 5% more, 7% more, equal to the average and 2% fewer electors per councillor than the city average respectively (1% fewer, 5% more, 3% more and 4% fewer by 2006).

306 The Conservatives proposed a revised three-member Bartley Green ward which would be based on the existing ward, together with the areas broadly bounded by Shenley Lane and Shenley Hill (and including Ley Hill Recreation Ground) and broadly to the south of California Way from the existing Weoley ward. A revised three-member Weoley ward would comprise the existing ward, less the areas broadly bounded by Shenley Lane and Shenley Hill (and including Ley Hill Recreation Ground) and broadly to the south of California Way, as detailed earlier. It would also include the area bounded by Brushwood Road and Witherford Way (surrounding Valley Parkway Cricket Ground) from the existing Selly Oak ward, the area surrounding Fitzroy Road, to the north of Beeches Road from the existing Longbridge ward, the area surrounding the

67
Royal Orthopaedic Hospital from the existing Bournville ward and the area surrounding Park Hill Road from the existing Northfield ward.

307 A revised three-member Selly Oak ward would comprise the existing ward, less the area bounded by Brushwood Road and Witherford Way (surrounding Valley Parkway Cricket Ground), as detailed earlier, the area broadly to the south of Selly Oak Hospital (bounded by Bristol Road and the railway) and the area broadly to the south of Dogpool Lane. Finally, a revised three-member Bournville ward would comprise the existing ward, less the area surrounding King’s Heath Park, the area surrounding the Royal Orthopaedic Hospital, the area broadly to the north of St Laurence Road, to the south of the Royal Orthopaedic Hospital and the area broadly bounded by the railway line and B4121 (surrounding Longfellow Road and Ingoldsby Road). It would include the areas broadly to the south of Selly Oak Hospital (bounded by Bristol Road and the railway) and the area broadly to the south of Dogpool Lane from the existing Selly Oak ward, as detailed earlier and the area surrounding Claine’s Road from the existing Northfield ward, as detailed earlier. Under the Conservatives’ proposals, Bartley Green, Bournville, Selly Oak and Weoley wards would contain 6% fewer, equal to the average, 7% more and equal to the average number of electors per councillor than the city average respectively (11% fewer, 1% fewer, 8% more and 3% fewer by 2006).

308 The Liberal Democrats proposed a revised three-member Bartley Green ward which would comprise the existing ward, together with the area bounded by Burnel Road and Bourn Brook from the existing Harborne ward and the areas to the north of Weoley Castle (Alwold Road area) and west of Shenfield Lane (north of Ley Hill Recreation Ground) from the existing Weoley ward. In addition, they stated that ‘This should really be called Weoley West ward, but that would really confuse people’. A new three-member Northfield ward would comprise the existing Weoley ward, less the areas to the north of Weoley Castle and west of Shenfield Lane (north of Ley Hill Recreation Ground), as detailed above, together with the area broadly to the north of Quarry Lane, Park View Road and the railway line from the existing Northfield ward and the areas bounded by Norman Road and Bunbury Road and surrounding Hole Farm Road from the existing Bournville ward.

309 A revised three-member Selly Oak ward would comprise the existing ward, less the Selly Park area, south of Bourn Brook, as detailed above, and the area broadly to the south of Selly Oak Hospital (bounded by Bristol Road and the railway line), together with the area to the south of Bourn Brook (surrounding Reservoir Road) from the existing Harborne ward. Finally, the Liberal Democrats proposed a revised three-member Bournville ward which would comprise the existing ward, less the areas bounded by Norman Road and Bunbury Road and surrounding Hole Farm Road, as detailed above, together with the area broadly to the south of Selly Oak Hospital (bounded by Bristol Road and the railway line) from the existing Selly Oak ward, as detailed above. Under the Liberal Democrats’ proposals, Bartley Green, Bournville, Northfield and Selly Oak wards would contain 5% more, 5% more, 4% more and 7% fewer electors per councillor than the city average respectively (equal to the average, 3% more, 2% more and 5% fewer by 2006).

310 Having considered the representations received at Stage One, we based our draft recommendations for this area on a combination of each of the city-wide schemes that were submitted at Stage One. We noted that there was minimal consensus between each of the city-wide schemes, and based on the fact that we received limited community-based evidence we were minded to devise a scheme largely based on strength of boundaries and acceptable levels of electoral equality. However, we did identify any areas of consensus between the three schemes in order to assist us in our proposals.

311 During their visit to this area, officers from the Committee looked carefully at each of the city-wide schemes, and identified some key boundaries such as Bristol Road/Bristol Road South, Weoley Avenue/Weoley Park Road, Bourn Brook and the railway line. Having identified
these, we were able to locate where these boundaries had been respected under each of the city-wide schemes.

312 We therefore proposed a revised three-member Bartley Green ward based on the proposals submitted by the Liberal Democrats, with an amendment based on the proposals submitted by the Conservatives, together with our own amendment. We noted that there was consensus between all three schemes that Bourn Brook be used as a northern boundary for this revised ward, and we concurred with this view. We also considered that the Liberal Democrats’ proposal to transfer the Alwold Road area to the proposed Bartley Green ward provided for a good reflection of community identity. However, we proposed adopting the Conservatives’ eastern boundary, which we considered provided for a better reflection of community identity and a more clearly identifiable boundary, uniting the whole of the Spiceland Road area in the same city ward. We also proposed transferring properties 17-23 Merrit’s Hill from the proposed Bartley Green ward to the proposed Weoley ward in order to provide for a more clearly identifiable boundary.

313 We based the revised three-member Selly Oak ward on elements of each of the three city-wide schemes. It therefore comprised the City Council’s consultation/Conservatives’ northern boundary (subject to an amendment to the western part to use Bourn Brook as proposed by the Liberal Democrats), the City Council’s consultation scheme’s western boundary, the Conservatives’ southern boundary, and an eastern boundary which was identical under each of the city-wide proposals. The proposed ward, in our view, used strong boundaries and provided for an acceptable level of electoral equality.

314 Our proposed three-member Weoley ward was predominantly based on the Conservatives’ proposals but again encompassed part of the City Council’s consultation scheme and the Liberal Democrats’ scheme. Based on our conclusions regarding the surrounding wards, coupled with our view that Bristol Road/Bristol Road South forms a strong boundary, we considered that our proposed ward provided for the best reflection of the statutory criteria. The revised Weoley ward therefore comprised the Conservatives’ western and southern boundaries, the City Council’s consultation scheme’s northern boundary and an eastern boundary based on elements of each of the schemes, resulting in the use of Bristol Road/Bristol Road south.

315 Finally, a revised three-member Bournville ward was largely based on the Conservatives’ proposals, with an amendment to the western boundary to use Bristol Road/Bristol Road South as proposed under the City Council’s consultation scheme and by the Liberal Democrats. We considered that on the whole this proposed ward used strong boundaries such as Bristol Road/Bristol Road South and the railway line and provided for an acceptable level of electoral equality. As mentioned below, in relation to the proposed King’s Norton ward, we looked at the possibility of using the railway line in its entirety as a boundary in this area. However, this would result in Bournville ward containing 11% more electors per councillor than the city average by 2006 and we did not consider that this level of electoral inequality could be justified in a dense urban area such as Birmingham.

316 Under our draft recommendations, Bartley Green, Bournville, Selly Oak and Weoley wards would contain 3% more, 2% more, 4% more and equal to the average number of electors per councillor than the city average respectively (2% fewer, 1% more, 6% more and 2% fewer by 2006).

317 At Stage Three, Councillor Hill and a local resident expressed support for our proposals in this area. Birmingham City Council broadly supported our draft recommendations in this area, subject to four minor boundary amendments. It proposed transferring the remains of Weoley Castle back into Weoley ward from Bartley Green ward in order to reflect ‘strong local feelings/ties and common sense’. It also proposed retaining Shenley Court Secondary School in Weoley ward as the school ‘serves Weoley residents’. The City Council proposed two minor amendments to the boundary between Bournville and Selly Oak wards. It proposed the ‘well
defined’ River Rea be used as a boundary rather than Dogpool Lane/Pershore
Road/Riddlesdale Road and that the boundary continue along Raddlebarn Road rather than
cutting through open space.

318 As detailed above, the Conservatives questioned the projected electorate figures in the
Bartley Green area. They stated that ‘If our doubts prove to be well-founded, we would welcome
an opportunity to consider the proposed ward boundaries afresh’. They also acknowledged the
views expressed locally in relation to the Weoley Castle area (polling district BLA) being
transferred from Weoley ward to Bartley Green ward. Support was expressed for the views of
Councillor Barton (as detailed below). They also opposed part of the boundary between the
proposed Northfield and Bournville wards, arguing that ‘The proposed boundary between
Bournville ward and Northfield ward spits the Jervoise Estate’. The alternative boundary of Hole
Lane was put forward. Opposition was also expressed in relation to the use of Lomaine Drive as
a boundary. It is argued that ‘This separates around 50 properties from the estate and we
suggest that the boundary be the divide between this estate and the Masefield Estate’. Finally,
the Conservatives noted how they had received a petition (155 signatures) from residents in the
Hill Top Road/Park View Road area ‘objecting to the proposal that they form part of the new
Weoley ward’. It was argued that this area is close to the centre of Northfield and the residents
‘see themselves as part of that community rather than Weoley’. In addition, the Conservatives
stated that ‘We understand and accept the Committee’s desire to use Bristol Road/Bristol Road
South as a clear boundary, but are honour-bound to make representations on behalf of the local
residents’.

319 Councillor Barton proposed that polling district BLA (around Alwold Road) should be
retained in Weoley ward, arguing that ‘to sever part of Weoley Castle and transfer it to Bartley
Green would be detrimental to those living in Weoley Castle’. She also submitted 116 proforma
letters from residents in that area which stated that they wished to stay in Weoley ward.

320 Councillors Sutton and Ward opposed the southern boundary of the proposed Bournville
ward arguing that the properties to the north of the railway line are ‘physically detached’ from the
rest of King’s Norton ward. They argued that ‘Because of natural contours the railway line is
carried on an [eight]-metre high embankment at this point. This embankment forms a solid
physical barrier between this area and the rest of the ward’. They contended that this area, to
the north of the railway line, should not be included in King’s Norton ward and be retained in
Bournville ward, suggesting that ‘extensions to the east or west’ of the proposed King’s Norton
ward should be considered ‘to enlarge the ward even further’.

321 Richard Burden, Member of Parliament for Birmingham Northfield, submitted the views of
Northfield Constituency Labour Party which opposed the proposed boundary between Bartley
Green and Weoley wards. Opposition was expressed in relation to the inclusion of the Alwold
Road area, including the remains of Weoley Castle, in Bartley Green ward as this would not
reflect local community identity. A revised boundary was proposed to include all of the Alwold
Road area in Weoley ward. Furthermore, it was proposed that Shenley Court College should be
included in Weoley ward as it draws most of its pupils from Weoley ward. It was also argued that
this boundary amendment was required ‘to ensure that governor recruitment is reflective of the
main catchment area’. Opposition was also expressed in relation to the southern boundary of
Bournville ward as it divided the Jervoise estate. A revised boundary was proposed which would
follow Church Road/Bunbury Road ‘thus having the advantage that the wards are divided along
a clear main road’.

322 A local resident also contended that ‘the actual site of Weoley Castle should remain within
the historical ward of Weoley’. A library assistant from Weoley Castle Library also opposed the
inclusion of the Alwold Road area and the site of Weoley Castle in Bartley Green ward. He
argued that this area forms part of the ‘ancient Manor of Northfield and Weoley’ and forms an
integral part of the Weoley community, which is reflected in the Weoley Collection (a local history
study aid and photographic archive) based in Weoley Castle Library.
323 A local resident opposed the proposed boundary between Selly Oak ward and Bournville ward where it followed the centre of Ribblesdale Road. He also proposed that the existing boundary, the River Bourne, which runs to the south of the properties on the southern side of Ribblesdale Road should be retained to avoid the ‘artificial split’ of this ‘quiet residential road’.

324 Another local resident supported the proposed Bournville and Weoley wards which would ‘result in the unification of the Bournville Village Trust Estate within those two wards’. He stated that ‘at present the estate is distributed between three wards with the original Village area split between the Selly Oak and Bournville wards. This results in local decision making by councillors being potentially fragmented’.

325 We have carefully considered all the representations received at Stage Three and have noted that our draft recommendations have received an element of broad support. However, we have noted that a number of boundary amendments have been put forward in order to secure more identifiable boundaries and a better reflection of communities and we therefore propose making a number of amendments to our draft recommendations.

326 We have noted all the views expressed in relation to the area surrounding Weoley Castle. Having considered the argumentation put forward, we agree that the castle remains site should form part of the proposed Weoley ward. However, we have not been persuaded by the evidence and argumentation put forward that the surrounding area (polling district BLA) should also be transferred from Bartley Green ward to Weoley ward. We have noted that if all of this polling district were transferred the consequent affect would mean that the area around Swinford Road would be virtually cut-off from the remainder of Bartley Green ward which would not provide for effective and convenient local government. We therefore propose adopting the City Council’s alternative boundary which would, we believe, receive an element of support locally.

327 We have also considered the proposals to include Shenley Court Secondary School in Weoley ward. However, we have not been persuaded that this amendment would provide for a better balance between the statutory criteria. Furthermore, we remain of the view that Shenley Lane provides a strong boundary in this area. We have also considered the proposal put forward that the residents in the Hill Top Road/Park View Road should not be included in Weoley ward as they have closer links to Northfield. We have not been persuaded by the evidence put forward to move away from our draft recommendations in this area and we remain of the view that Bristol Road South provides for a strong and clearly identifiable boundary in this area. However, in the light of the evidence and argumentation received we have decided to adopt the City Council’s other two amendments to the boundaries between Bournville and Selly Oak wards as these would secure more identifiable boundaries, with a limited effect on electoral equality.

328 We have also considered the proposals in relation to the southern boundary of the proposed Bournville ward and have been persuaded that using the railway line as a boundary in this area would provide for a clearer boundary and a better reflection of local communities. We have further noted that there has been opposition to the south-eastern boundary of Bournville ward with suggestions that this boundary should either follow the centre of Hole Lane or the centre of Church Road/Bunbury Road. We have carefully considered both these options and have been persuaded that in order to secure a more identifiable boundary in this area, while also providing for reasonable electoral equality (particularly in the proposed Bournville ward as a consequence of using the railway as a boundary, as proposed by Councillors Sutton and Ward) the proposed Bournville ward’s south-eastern boundary should be modified to follow the centre of Hole Lane, as proposed by the Conservatives.

329 Under the final recommendations the proposed Bartley Green and Weoley wards would contain 3% more than and equal to the city average number of electors per councillor (3% fewer and 2% fewer than the average by 2006). The proposed Bournville and Selly Oak wards would
contain 8% more and 4% more electors per councillor than the city average (7% more and 6% more by 2006).

**King's Norton, Longbridge and Northfield wards**

330 The existing wards of King’s Norton, Longbridge and Northfield are situated in the far south of the city. Each ward is represented by three councillors. Under the current arrangements King’s Norton, Longbridge and Northfield wards contain 17% fewer, 21% more and 2% fewer electors per councillor than the city average respectively (18% fewer, 19% more and 4% fewer than the average by 2006).

331 At Stage One, the proposals for this area under the City Council’s consultation scheme and the Conservatives’ proposals were broadly similar, providing for the creation of three three-member wards. The City Council’s consultation scheme proposed a revised King’s Norton ward, which would comprise the existing ward, together with the area surrounding Baldwin Road from the existing Brandwood ward and the area to the south of Middleton Hall Road (B4121) from the existing Bournville ward. The revised Northfield ward would be based on the existing ward, less the areas to the north of Church Road/Bunbury Road (surrounding Victoria Common) and broadly bounded by Tessall Lane, Josiah Road and Beeches Road (to the east of North Worcestershire Golf Course), together with the area surrounding Thurlestone Road (to the east of the railway line from the existing Longbridge ward and Baron Road from the existing Bournville ward. Finally, the revised Longbridge ward would comprise the existing ward, less the areas surrounding Thurlestone Road (to the east of the railway line) and the area surrounding Fitzroy Road, to the north of Beeches Road, as detailed above, together with the area broadly bounded by Tessall Lane, Josiah Road and Beeches Road, less the Park View Road area (to the east of North Worcestershire Golf Course) from the existing Northfield ward. Under the City Council’s consultation scheme, King’s Norton, Longbridge and Northfield wards would contain 2% fewer, 2% more and 4% more electors per councillor than the city average respectively (3% fewer, equal to the average and 2% more by 2006).

332 The Conservatives’ revised King’s Norton ward would comprise the existing ward, together with the area surrounding Baldwin Road from the existing Brandwood ward, the area broadly bounded by the railway line and B4121 (surrounding Longfellow Road and Ingoldsby Road) from the existing Bournville ward and the area bounded by Lilley Lane and Alvechurch Road from the existing Northfield ward. The revised Northfield ward would comprise the existing ward, less the areas bounded by Lilley Lane and Alvechurch Road, broadly bounded by Tessall Lane, Josiah Road and Beeches Road (to the east of North Worcestershire Golf Course) from the existing Longbridge ward. Finally, the revised Longbridge ward would comprise the existing ward, less the areas surrounding Thurlestone Road (to the east of the railway line), Kemshead Avenue and surrounding Fitzroy Road, to the north of Beeches Road, together with the area broadly bounded by Tessall Lane, Josiah Road and Beeches Road, less the Park View Road area (to the east of North Worcestershire Golf Course) from the existing Northfield ward. Under the Conservatives’ proposals, King’s Norton, Longbridge and Northfield wards would contain 5% more, equal to the average and 4% more electors per councillor than the city average respectively (4% more, 1% fewer and 2% more by 2006).

333 The Liberal Democrats proposed the creation of three three-member wards in this area and identified the railway line as a key boundary. The existing King’s Norton ward would be broadly retained, together with the area surrounding Lindswort Road from the existing Brandwood ward. The Liberal Democrats proposed a revised Longbridge ward, which would encompass a significant part of the existing Northfield ward, the area broadly to the south-east of the railway line, together with the area broadly to the east of Cliff Rock Road (surrounding Cofton Park) from the existing Longbridge ward. The remaining part of the existing Longbridge ward, together with
part of the existing Northfield ward, the area broadly bounded by the railway line, Tessall Road, Josiah Road and Beeches Road, would combine to form a new Frankley ward. Under the Liberal Democrats’ proposals, Frankley, King’s Norton and Longbridge wards would contain 2% more, 2% fewer and equal to the average number of electors per councillor than the city average respectively (equal to the average, 4% fewer and 1% fewer by 2006).

334 Having considered the representations received at Stage One, we based our draft recommendations for this area on the Conservatives’ proposals, which were broadly similar to the City Council’s consultation scheme. Officers from the Committee having visited the area, and given our conclusions for surrounding wards, we were of the view that the Conservatives’ proposals provided for the best reflection of the statutory criteria.

335 In relation to the proposed King’s Norton ward, we concurred with the view expressed by the Conservatives and the Liberal Democrats that the railway line provides for a strong northern boundary. However, we were unable to use the railway in its entirety as proposed by the Liberal Democrats due to the impact that this would have had on electoral equality. We therefore adopted the Conservatives’ proposed ward. As a consequence of this, we also adopted the Conservatives’ proposed Northfield ward. This ward reflected the statutory criteria and, officers from the Committee having visited the area, we were content that it was formed by strong boundaries.

336 One of the key issues relating to this area concerned the proposals for the existing Longbridge ward. The proposals were broadly similar under the City Council’s consultation scheme and the Conservatives’ proposals, but the Liberal Democrats’ proposals were significantly different. Officers from the Committee having visited the area, we were able to identify some significant boundaries, the key ones being Bristol Road South, Beeches Road and the railway line. Based on this, we were not persuaded that the Liberal Democrats’ proposals provided for the best reflection of community identity, being largely based on less well-defined boundaries. While the City Council’s consultation scheme and the Conservatives’ proposals both used these boundaries, we considered that the City Council’s consultation scheme’s eastern boundary was not as strong as that proposed by the Conservatives as it isolated Kemshead Avenue from the rest of Northfield ward, from which it is accessed.

337 Under our draft recommendations, King’s Norton, Longbridge and Northfield wards would contain 5% more, equal to the average and 4% more electors per councillor than the city average respectively (3% more, 1% fewer and 2% more by 2006).

338 At Stage Three, the City Council, Councillor Hill and a local resident expressed support for our proposals in this area.

339 The Conservatives opposed our proposed boundary between Bournville and Northfield wards and put forward an alternative boundary which would follow Hole Lane, as detailed above. They also noted that they had received a petition (155 signatures) from residents in the Hill Top Road/Park View Road area who wished to remain in Northfield ward, also detailed above.

340 Richard Burden, Member of Parliament for Birmingham Northfield, submitted the views of Northfield Constituency Labour Party. Opposition was expressed in relation to the boundary between Northfield and Bournville wards as it divided the Jervoise estate, as detailed above. A revised boundary was proposed which would follow Church Road/Bunbury Road.

341 Councillors Sutton and Ward expressed broad support for the proposed King’s Norton ward, stating that the eastern boundary would ‘bring people who consider they live in King’s Norton into the King’s Norton ward’. They acknowledged that in the west ‘the area brought into King’s Norton ward … is in West Heath. However, there is no natural boundary between King’s Norton and West Heath and therefore we see no reason to object to the position of the boundary’. However, they opposed the ward’s northern boundary, asserting that the properties to the north
of the railway line are ‘physically detached’ from the rest of King’s Norton ward as the railway embankment forms ‘a solid physical barrier between this area and the rest of the ward’. They contended that this area, to the north of the railway line, should not be included in King’s Norton ward and suggested that ‘extensions to the east or west’ should be considered ‘to enlarge the ward even further’, as detailed above.

342 Councillor Lawrence expressed the views of a number of electors who live within the area to be transferred from Northfield ward to King’s Norton ward who had raised concerns with him. He stated that our proposed boundary between Northfield and King’s Norton wards would split the community based around St John Fisher School and would ‘separate out a large part of West Heath’ which has an active neighbourhood forum, part of which would be transferred. He also contended that the ‘economic centre’ of West Heath is based on Alvechurch Road so most residents would continue to use that rather than the centre of King’s Norton, further arguing that if the historical links of this community were divided many local ‘contracts and relationships that have enabled cohesion will be broken’.

343 Having carefully considered all the representations received at Stage Three, we have noted that we have received some broad support for our proposals in this area, but that a number of alternative boundaries were also put forward in order to better reflect local communities and provide for stronger boundaries. We are therefore proposing to modify the northern boundaries of King’s Norton and Northfield wards, as detailed above. However, as detailed above and having considered all the other representations received for this area, we have not been persuaded by the arguments received to make any further modifications to our draft recommendations.

344 Under our final recommendations the proposed Longbridge ward would contain the same number of electors per councillor as under the draft recommendations. The proposed King’s Norton and Northfield wards would contain 4% fewer and 6% more electors per councillor than the city average (5% fewer and 4% more by 2006).

Electoral cycle

345 Under section 7(3) of the Local Government Act 1972, all Metropolitan boroughs have a system of elections by thirds.

Conclusions

346 Having considered carefully all the representations and evidence received in response to our consultation report, we have decided substantially to endorse those draft recommendations, subject to the following amendments:

- amending the boundary between Sutton New Hall and Sutton Trinity wards in order that the Falcon Lodge estate be contained within a single city ward;
- a minor amendment to the boundary between Kingstanding and Erdington wards to provide for a clearer boundary and an improved level of electoral equality;
- a minor amendment to the boundary between Erdington and Tyburn wards to take account of a future development site;
- two minor amendments to the boundary between Nechells and Ladywood wards to provide for a more clearly identifiable boundary;
- amending the boundary between the proposed Aston and Handsworth wards in order that the whole of Anglesey Primary School be contained within a single city ward;
- an amendment to the boundary between Harborne and Edgbaston wards to better reflect community identity;
- an amendment between the proposed Harborne and Quinton wards to better reflect community identity;
• an amendment between the proposed Acock’s Green and Yardley wards to provide for a more clearly identifiable boundary;
• an amendment to the boundary between Yardley and Sheldon wards to provide for a better reflection of community identity;
• an amendment to the boundary between Hall Green and Springfield wards to secure a more convenient boundary;
• an amendment to the boundary between Bartley Green and Weoley wards in order that the site of Weoley Castle ruins be retained in Weoley ward;
• amending the boundary between Bournville and King’s Norton wards to provide for a more clearly identifiable boundary;
• two amendments to the boundary between Bournville and Selly Oak wards to provide for a more clearly identifiable boundary;
• an amendment to the boundary between the Bournville and Northfield wards to provide for a more clearly identifiable ward boundary;
• renaming Handsworth ward as Lozells & East Handsworth ward, Moseley ward as Moseley & King’s Heath ward, Sandwell ward as Handsworth Wood & West Handsworth ward and Small Heath ward as Sparkbrook ward.

347 We conclude that, in Birmingham:

• there should be an increase in council size from 117 to 120;
• there should be 40 wards, one more than at present;
• the boundaries of all of the existing wards should be modified.

348 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

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>2001 electorate</th>
<th>2006 electorate</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Current arrangements</td>
<td>Final recommendations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number of councillors</td>
<td>117</td>
<td>120</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number of wards</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Average number of electors per councillor</td>
<td>6,174</td>
<td>6,020</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number of wards with a variance more than 10% from the average</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number of wards with a variance more than 20% from the average</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

349 As Table 4 shows, our recommendations would result in a reduction in the number of wards with an electoral variance of more than 10% from 13 to one, with one ward varying by more than 20% from the city average. This level of electoral equality would improve further by 2006, with only one ward, Sheldon, varying by more than 10% from the average, at 11%. We conclude that our recommendations would best meet the statutory criteria.
**Final recommendation**

Birmingham City Council should comprise 120 councillors serving 40 wards, as detailed and named in Tables 1 and 2, and illustrated on Map 2 and in Appendix A and the large maps.

**Parish Council electoral arrangements**

350 When reviewing parish electoral arrangements, we are required to comply as far as possible with the rules set out in Schedule 11 to the 1972 Act. The Schedule provides that if a parish is to be divided between different city wards it must also be divided into parish wards, so that each parish ward lies wholly within a single ward of the city. However, our final recommendations would not require any consequential warding of New Frankley in Birmingham parish and we therefore do not propose any change to its electoral arrangements.
Map 2: Final recommendations for Birmingham
6  What happens next?

351 Having completed our review of electoral arrangements in Birmingham 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).

352 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 24 June 2003, and The Electoral Commission will normally consider all written representations made to them by that date. They particularly welcome any comments on the first draft of the Order, which will implement the new arrangements.

353 All further correspondence concerning our recommendations and the matters discussed in this report should be addressed to:

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

Fax: 020 7271 0667
Email: implementation@electoralcommission.org.uk
(This address should only be used for this purpose)
Appendix A

Final recommendations for Birmingham:

**Detailed mapping**

The following maps illustrate our proposed ward boundaries for the Birmingham area.

**Map A1** illustrates, in outline form, the proposed ward boundaries within the city and indicates the areas which are shown in more detail on the large maps.

The **large maps** illustrate the proposed warding arrangements for Birmingham.
Map A1: Final recommendations for Birmingham: Key map
Appendix B

Guide to interpreting the first draft of the electoral change Order

Preamble
This describes the process by which the Order will be made, and under which powers. Text in square brackets will be removed if The Electoral Commission decide not to modify the Final Recommendations.

Citation and commencement
This defines the name of the Order and sets the dates on which it will come into force.

Interpretation
This defines terms that are used in the Order.

Wards of the city of Birmingham
This abolishes the existing wards, and defines the names and areas of the new wards, in conjunction with the map and the schedule.

Elections of the council of the city of Birmingham
This sets the date on which a whole council election will be held to implement the new wards, and the dates on which councillors will retire.

Maps
This requires Birmingham City Council to make a print of the map available for public inspection.

Electoral registers
This requires Birmingham City Council to adapt the electoral register to reflect the new wards.

Revocation
This revokes the Order that defines the existing wards, with the exception of the article that established the system of election by thirds.

Explanatory note
This explains the purpose of each article. Text in square brackets will be removed if The Electoral Commission decide not to modify the Final Recommendations.
First draft of electoral change Order for Birmingham

2003 No.

LOCAL GOVERNMENT, ENGLAND

The City of Birmingham (Electoral Changes) Order 2003

Made - - - - - - - - - 2003

Coming into force in accordance with article 1(2)

Whereas the Boundary Committee for England(a), acting pursuant to section 15(4) of the Local Government Act 1992(b), has submitted to the Electoral Commission(e) recommendations dated May 2003 on its review of the city(d) of Birmingham:

And whereas the Electoral Commission have decided to give effect [with modifications] to those recommendations:

And whereas a period of not less than six weeks has expired since the receipt of those recommendations:

Now, therefore, the Electoral Commission, in exercise of the powers conferred on them by sections 17(e) and 26(f) of the Local Government Act 1992, and of all other powers enabling them in that behalf, hereby make the following Order:

Citation and commencement

1.—(1) This Order may be cited as the City of Birmingham (Electoral Changes) Order 2003.
(2) This Order shall come into force –
   (a) for the purpose of proceedings preliminary or relating to any election to be held on 6th May 2004, on 15th October 2003;

(b) 1992 c.19. This section has been amended by S.I. 2001/3962.
(c) The Electoral Commission was established by the Political Parties, Elections and Referendums Act 2000 (c. 41). The functions of the Secretary of State, under sections 13 to 15 and 17 of the Local Government Act 1992, to the extent that they relate to electoral changes within the meaning of that Act, were transferred with modifications to the Electoral Commission on 1st April 2002 (S.I. 2001/3962).
(d) The metropolitan district of Birmingham has the status of a city.
(e) This section has been amended by S.I. 2001/3962 and also otherwise in ways not relevant to this Order.
(f) This section has been amended by S.I. 2001/3962.
Interpretation

2. In this Order –
“city” means the city of Birmingham;
“existing”, in relation to a ward, means the ward as it exists on the date this Order is made; and
any reference to the map is a reference to the map marked “Map referred to in the City of Birmingham (Electoral Changes) Order 2003”, of which prints are available for inspection at –
(a) the principal office of the Electoral Commission; and
(b) the offices of Birmingham City Council.

Wards of the city of Birmingham

3.—(1) The existing wards of the city(a) shall be abolished.
(2) The city shall be divided into forty wards which shall bear the names set out in the Schedule.
(3) Each ward shall comprise the area designated on the map by reference to the name of the ward and demarcated by red lines; and the number of councillors to be elected for each ward shall be three.
(4) Where a boundary is shown on the map as running along a road, railway line, footway, watercourse or similar geographical feature, it shall be treated as running along the centre line of the feature.

Elections of the council of the city of Birmingham

4.—(1) Elections of all councillors for all wards of the city shall be held simultaneously on the ordinary day of election of councillors in 2004(b)(c).
(2) The councillors holding office for any ward of the city immediately before 10th May 2004 shall retire on that date and the newly elected councillors for those wards shall come into office on that date.
(3) Of the councillors elected in 2004 one shall retire in 2006, one in 2007 and one in 2008.
(4) Of the councillors elected in 2004 –
(a) the first to retire shall, subject to paragraphs (6) and (7), be the councillor elected by the smallest number of votes; and
(b) the second to retire shall, subject to those paragraphs, be the councillor elected by the next smallest number of votes.
(5) In the case of an equality of votes between any persons elected which makes it uncertain which of them is to retire in any year, the person to retire in that year shall be determined by lot.
(6) If an election of councillors for any ward is not contested, the person to retire in each year shall be determined by lot.
(7) Where under this article any question is to be determined by lot, the lot shall be drawn at the next practicable meeting of the council after the question has arisen and the drawing shall be conducted under the direction of the person presiding at the meeting.

(a) See the City of Birmingham (Electoral Arrangements) Order 1980 (S.I. 1980/594).
(b) Article 4 provides for a single election of all the councillors and for reversion to the system of election by thirds, as established by articles 8 and 9(7) of S.I. 1980/594.
(c) For the ordinary day of election of councillors of local government areas, see section 37 of the Representation of the People Act 1983 (c.2), amended by section 18(2) of the Representation of the People Act 1985 (c.50) and section 17 of, and paragraphs 1 and 5 of Schedule 3 to, the Greater London Authority Act 1999 (c.29).
Maps

5. Birmingham City Council shall make a print of the map marked “Map referred to in the City of Birmingham (Electoral Changes) Order 2003” available for inspection at its offices by any member of the public at any reasonable time.

Electoral registers

6. The Electoral Registration Officer(a) for the city shall make such rearrangement of, or adaptation of, the register of local government electors as may be necessary for the purposes of, and in consequence of, this Order.

Revocation

7. The City of Birmingham (Electoral Arrangements) Order 1980(b) is revoked, save for articles 8 and 9(7).

Signed by the members of the Electoral Commission

Pamela Gordon  
Commissioner

Glyn Mathias  
Commissioner

Neil McIntosh  
Commissioner

Karamjit Singh  
Commissioner

Sam Younger  
Commissioner

Graham Zellick  
Commissioner

(a) As to electoral registration officers and the register of local government electors, see sections 8 to 13 of the Representation of the People Act 1983 (c.2).

(b) S.I. 1980/594.
SCHEDULE

NAMES OF WARDS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Acock’s Green</th>
<th>Northfield</th>
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<tr>
<td>Bartley Green</td>
<td>Perry Barr</td>
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<tr>
<td>Billesley</td>
<td>Quinton</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bordesley Green</td>
<td>Selly Oak</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bournville</td>
<td>Shard End</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Brandwood</td>
<td>Sheldon</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Edgbaston</td>
<td>Soho</td>
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<td>Erdington</td>
<td>Sparkbrook</td>
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<tr>
<td>Hall Green</td>
<td>Springfield</td>
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<tr>
<td>Handsworth Wood and West Handsworth</td>
<td>Stechford</td>
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<td>Harborne</td>
<td>Stockland Green</td>
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<td>Hodge Hill</td>
<td>Sutton Four Oaks</td>
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<td>King’s Norton</td>
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<td>Longbridge</td>
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<td>Nechells</td>
<td>Yardley</td>
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EXPLANATORY NOTE

(This note is not part of the Order)

This Order gives effect, [with modifications], to recommendations by the Boundary Committee for England, a committee of the Electoral Commission, for electoral changes in the city of Birmingham.

The modifications are indicate the modifications.

The changes have effect in relation to local government elections to be held on and after 6th May 2004.

Article 3 abolishes the existing wards of the city and provides for the creation of 40 new wards. That article and the Schedule also make provision for the names and areas of, and numbers of councillors for, the new wards.

Article 4 makes provision for a whole council election in 2004 and for reversion to the established system of election by thirds in subsequent years.
Article 6 obliges the Electoral Registration Officer to make any necessary amendments to the electoral register to reflect the new electoral arrangements.

Article 7 revokes the City of Birmingham (Electoral Arrangements) Order 1980, with the exception of articles 8 and 9(7).

The areas of the new city wards are demarcated on the map described in article 2. Prints of the map may be inspected at all reasonable times at the offices of Birmingham City Council and at the principal office of the Electoral Commission at Trevelyan House, Great Peter Street, London SW1P 2HW.