

LOCAL
GOVERNMENT
COMMISSION
FOR ENGLAND

FINAL
RECOMMENDATIONS
ON THE FUTURE
ELECTORAL
ARRANGEMENTS FOR
HARROW

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

June 1999

LOCAL GOVERNMENT COMMISSION FOR ENGLAND

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

Members of the Commission are:

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CONTENTS

	page
LETTER TO THE SECRETARY OF STATE	<i>v</i>
SUMMARY	<i>vii</i>
1 INTRODUCTION	<i>1</i>
2 CURRENT ELECTORAL ARRANGEMENTS	<i>3</i>
3 DRAFT RECOMMENDATIONS	<i>7</i>
4 RESPONSES TO CONSULTATION	<i>9</i>
5 ANALYSIS AND FINAL RECOMMENDATIONS	<i>11</i>
6 NEXT STEPS	<i>23</i>
APPENDICES	
A Draft Recommendations for Harrow (January 1999)	<i>25</i>

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



Local Government Commission for England

22 June 1999

Dear Secretary of State

On 23 June 1998 the Commission began a periodic electoral review of Harrow under the Local Government Act 1992. We published our draft recommendations in January 1999 and undertook an eight-week period of consultation.

We have now prepared our final recommendations in the light of the consultation. We have substantially confirmed our draft recommendations, although some modifications have been made (see paragraph 96) in the light of further evidence. This report sets out our final recommendations for changes to electoral arrangements in Harrow.

We recommend that Harrow Borough Council should be served by 63 councillors representing 21 wards, and that changes should be made to ward boundaries in order to improve electoral equality, having regard to the statutory criteria.

We note that you have now set out in the White Paper *Modern Local Government – In Touch with the People* (Cm 4014, HMSO), legislative proposals for a number of changes to local authority electoral arrangements. However, until such time as that new legislation is in place we are obliged to conduct our work in accordance with current legislation, and to continue our current approach to periodic electoral reviews.

I would like to thank members and officers of the Borough Council and other local people who have contributed to the review. Their co-operation and assistance have been very much appreciated by Commissioners and staff.

Yours sincerely

PROFESSOR MALCOLM GRANT
Chairman

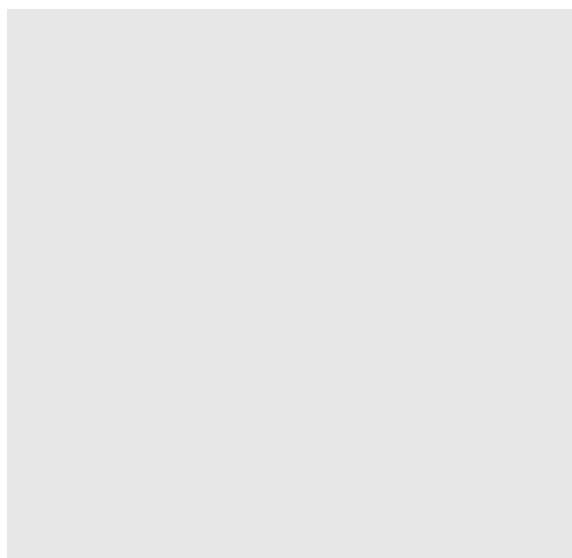
SUMMARY

The Commission began a review of Harrow on 23 June 1998. We published our draft recommendations for electoral arrangements on 26 January 1999, after which we undertook an eight-week period of consultation.

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

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

- **in three of the 21 wards, the number of electors represented by each councillor varies by more than 10 per cent from the average for the borough, and one ward varies by more than 20 per cent from the average;**
- **ov**



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

Ward name	Number of councillors	Constituent areas (existing wards)
1 Belmont	3	Wemborough ward (part); Centenary ward (part); Stanmore Park ward (part)
2 Canons	3	Canons ward (part); Centenary ward (part); Wemborough ward (part)
3 Edgware	3	Stanmore South ward (part)
4 Greenhill	3	Greenhill ward (part); Marlborough ward (part)
5 Harrow on the Hill	3	Harrow on the Hill ward (part); Greenhill ward (part)
6 Harrow Weald	3	Harrow Weald ward (part); Stanmore Park ward (part); Wealdstone ward (part)
7 Hatch End	3	Hatch End ward (part); Pinner ward (part)
8 Headstone North	3	Headstone North ward (part); Hatch End ward (part); Rayners Lane ward (part)
9 Headstone South	3	Headstone South ward; Headstone North ward (part)
10 Kenton East	3	Kenton East ward (part)
11 Kenton West	3	Kenton West ward (part); Kenton East ward (part); Marlborough ward (part)
12 Marlborough	3	Marlborough ward (part); Kenton West ward (part)
13 Pinner	3	Pinner ward (part); Headstone North ward (part)
14 Pinner South	3	Pinner West ward; Rayners Lane ward (part)
15 Queensbury	3	Centenary ward (part); Stanmore South ward (part)
16 Rayners Lane	3	Rayners Lane ward (part); Roxbourne ward (part)
17 Roxbourne	3	Roxbourne ward (part); Harrow on the Hill ward (part); Rayners Lane ward (part); Roxeth ward (part)
18 Roxeth	3	Roxeth ward (part)
19 Stanmore Park	3	Stanmore Park ward (part); Canons ward (part)
20 Wealdstone	3	Wealdstone ward (part); Harrow Weald ward (part)
21 West Harrow	3	Ridgeway ward; Harrow on the Hill ward (part)

Note: Map 2 and the large map in the back of the report illustrate the proposed wards outlined above.

Figure 2:
The Commission's Final Recommendations for Harrow

Ward name	Number of councillors	Electorate (1999)	Number of electors per councillor	Variance from average %	Electorate (2004)	Number of electors per councillor	Variance from average %
1 Belmont	3	7,602	2,534	2	7,540	2,513	0
2 Canons	3	8,158	2,719	10	7,537	2,512	0
3 Edgware	3	7,233	2,411	-3	7,563	2,521	1
4 Greenhill	3	7,012	2,337	-6	7,480	2,493	-0
5 Harrow on the Hill	3	7,423	2,474	0	7,661	2,554	2
6 Harrow Weald	3	7,937	2,646	7	7,505	2,502	0
7 Hatch End	3	7,886	2,629	6	7,377	2,459	-2
8 Headstone North	3	7,297	2,432	-2	7,413	2,471	-1
9 Headstone South	3	7,338	2,446	-1	7,522	2,507	0
10 Kenton East	3	7,182	2,394	-4	7,642	2,547	2
11 Kenton West	3	7,703	2,568	3	7,792	2,597	4
12 Marlborough	3	7,376	2,459	-1	7,483	2,494	0
13 Pinner	3	7,637	2,546	3	7,381	2,460	-2
14 Pinner South	3	7,443	2,481	0	7,490	2,497	0
15 Queensbury	3	7,475	2,492	0	7,459	2,486	-1
16 Rayners Lane	3	7,466	2,489	0	7,554	2,518	1
17 Roxbourne	3	7,345	2,448	-1	7,544	2,515	0
18 Roxeth	3	7,185	2,395	-4	7,423	2,474	-1
19 Stanmore Park	3	7,610	2,537	2	7,508	2,503	0
20 Wealdstone	3	6,957	2,319	-7	7,596	2,532	1
21 West Harrow	3	7,155	2,385	-4	7,295	2,432	-3
Totals	63	156,420	—	—	157,765	—	—
Averages	—	—	2,483	—	—	2,504	—

Source: Electorate figures are based on Harrow Borough Council's submissions.

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

1. INTRODUCTION

1 This report contains our final recommendations on the electoral arrangements for the London borough of Harrow.

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

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

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

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

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

6 We are not prescriptive on council size but, as indicated in our *Guidance*, would expect the overall number of members on a London borough council

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

The London Boroughs

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

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

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

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

10 Before we started our work in London, the Government published for consultation a Green Paper, *Modernising Local Government – Local Democracy and Community Leadership* (February 1998) which, inter alia, promoted the possibility of London boroughs having annual elections with three-member wards so that one councillor in each ward would stand for election each year. In view of this, we decided that the order in which the London reviews are undertaken should be determined by the proportion of three-member wards in each borough under the current arrangements. On this basis, Harrow was in the first phase of reviews.

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

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

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

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

The Review of Harrow

14 This is our first review of the electoral arrangements for Harrow. The last such review was undertaken by our predecessor, the Local Government Boundary Commission (LGBC), which reported to the Secretary of State in October 1977 (Report No. 256).

15 This review was in four stages. Stage One began on 23 June 1998, when we wrote to Harrow Borough Council inviting proposals for future electoral arrangements. We also notified the local authority associations, the Metropolitan Police, Members of Parliament and the Member of the European Parliament with constituency interests in the borough, and the headquarters of the main political parties. At the start of the review and following publication of our draft recommendations, we placed a notice in the local press, issued a press release and other publicity, and invited the Borough Council to publicise the review further. The closing date for receipt of representations was 28 September 1998. At Stage Two we considered all the representations received during Stage One and prepared our draft recommendations.

16 Stage Three began on 26 January 1999 with the publication of our report, *Draft Recommendations on the Future Electoral Arrangements for Harrow*, and ended on 22 March 1999. Comments were sought on our preliminary conclusions. Finally, during Stage Four we reconsidered our draft recommendations in the light of the Stage Three consultation and now publish our final recommendations.

2. CURRENT ELECTORAL ARRANGEMENTS

17 Harrow is an outer London borough situated in north-west London and has a population of around 200,000. It borders the London Borough of Hillingdon to the west, the London Borough of Barnet to the east, the London boroughs of Brent and Ealing to the south and the districts of Hertsmere and Three Rivers (in Hertfordshire) to the north. The borough is predominantly urban, and comprises several old village settlements, notably Harrow on the Hill, Pinner and Stanmore. However, it also comprises large areas of Green Belt land in the north of the borough and metropolitan open land in the centre and the south, particularly around Harrow on the Hill. The borough is well served by rail and London Underground trains, which all run overground in Harrow, including the west coast main line from London Euston and suburban rail routes from London Marylebone.

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

19 The electorate of the borough (February 1998) is 156,420. The Council currently has 63 councillors who are elected from 21 wards each returning three councillors (Map 1 and Figure 3). As in all London boroughs, the whole council is elected together every four years.

20 Since the last electoral review, there has been a small increase in electorate in the borough, with around 3 per cent more electors than two decades ago, as a result of new housing developments and demographic changes.

21 At present, each councillor represents an average of 2,483 electors, which the Borough Council forecasts will increase to 2,504 electors by the year 2003, if the present number of councillors is maintained. However, due to demographic and

other changes over the past two decades, the number of electors per councillor in three of the 21 wards varies by more than 10 per cent from the borough average, and in one ward by more than 20 per cent. The worst imbalance is in Stanmore South ward, where each of the three councillors represents 26 per cent more electors than the average for the borough.

Map 1:
Existing Wards in Harrow



Figure 3:
Existing Electoral Arrangements

Ward name	Number of councillors	Electorate (1998)	Number of electors per councillor	Variance from average %	Electorate (2003)	Number of electors per councillor	Variance from average %
1 Canons	3	6,510	2,170	-13	5,898	1,966	-21
2 Centenary	3	6,961	2,320	-7	6,814	2,271	-9
3 Greenhill	3	6,347	2,116	-15	6,793	2,264	-10
4 Harrow on the Hill	3	7,792	2,597	5	8,042	2,681	7
5 Harrow Weald	3	7,737	2,579	4	7,292	2,431	-3
6 Hatch End	3	7,262	2,421	-3	6,777	2,259	-10
7 Headstone North	3	7,906	2,635	6	8,014	2,671	7
8 Headstone South	3	6,805	2,268	-9	6,982	2,327	-7
9 Kenton East	3	7,852	2,617	5	8,355	2,785	11
10 Kenton West	3	8,048	2,683	8	8,101	2,700	8
11 Marlborough	3	7,030	2,343	-6	7,153	2,384	-5
12 Pinner	3	7,744	2,581	4	7,457	2,486	-1
13 Pinner West	3	7,302	2,434	-2	7,113	2,371	-5
14 Rayners Lane	3	6,915	2,305	-7	7,248	2,416	-4
15 Ridgeway	3	7,155	2,385	-4	7,295	2,432	-3
16 Roxbourne	3	7,689	2,563	3	7,876	2,625	5
17 Roxeth	3	7,601	2,534	2	7,853	2,618	5
18 Stanmore Park	3	7,855	2,618	5	7,764	2,588	3
19 Stanmore South	3	9,348	3,116	26	9,775	3,258	30
20 Wealdstone	3	6,929	2,310	-7	7,569	2,523	1
21 Wemborough	3	7,632	2,544	2	7,594	2,531	1
Totals	63	156,420	—	—	157,765	—	—
Averages	—	—	2,483	—	—	2,504	—

Source: Electorate figures are based on Harrow Borough Council's Stage One submission.

Note: The 'variance from average' column shows by how far, in percentage terms, the number of electors per councillor varies from the average for the borough. The minus symbol (-) denotes a lower than average number of electors. For example, in 1998, electors in Greenhill ward are relatively over-represented by 15 per cent, while electors in Kenton West ward are relatively under-represented by 8 per cent. Figures have been rounded to the nearest whole number.

3. DRAFT RECOMMENDATIONS

²² We received four representations during Stage One. The Borough Council, the Liberal Democrat Group and Harrow East Conservative Association all submitted borough-wide schemes, while Headstone Residents' Association commented on warding arrangements for Headstone North and Headstone South wards.

²³ Our draft recommendations were based on proposals put forward by the Borough Council and the Liberal Democrat Group which, in our judgement, represented the best balance between electoral equality and the statutory criteria, and provided good boundaries. However, in the interests of electoral equality, we proposed a minor boundary modification between Rayners Lane ward and Headstone North ward. We proposed that:

- (a) Harrow Borough Council should be served by 63 councillors;
- (b) there should be 21 wards, involving changes to the boundaries of all but one of the existing wards.

Draft Recommendation

Harrow Borough Council should comprise 63 councillors serving 21 wards.

²⁴ Our proposals would have resulted in significant improvements in electoral equality, with the number of electors per councillor in 18 of the 21 wards varying by no more than 7 per cent from the borough average. This level of electoral equality was forecast to improve further, with all wards expected to vary by no more than 4 per cent from the borough average in 2003.

4. RESPONSES TO CONSULTATION

²⁵ During the consultation on our draft recommendations report, 15 representations were received. A list of respondents is available on request from the Commission. All representations may be inspected at the offices of Harrow Borough Council and the Commission.

Harrow Borough Council

²⁶ The Borough Council welcomed our draft recommendations which, it acknowledged, had substantially reflected its Stage One submission. However, it did not support our proposed boundary modification between Headstone North and Rayners Lane wards, and maintained that its proposed ward boundaries would better reflect communities in this area. The Borough Council also proposed modifications to ward boundaries between Headstone North, Pinner and Hatch End in the interests of electoral equality, and a minor boundary modification between Harrow Weald and Stanmore Park wards.

Harrow East Conservative Association

²⁷ Harrow East Conservative Association ('the Conservatives') expressed concern regarding the warding arrangements in several parts of the borough, and argued that their Stage One proposals for 57 members achieved better electoral equality and followed stronger boundaries, particularly in relation to the boundaries between Greenhill and Harrow Weald, and Marlborough and Wealdstone wards. In addition, they proposed alternative ward boundaries between Greenhill and Marlborough.

Harrow Liberal Democrat Council Group

²⁸ Harrow Liberal Democrat Council Group ('the Liberal Democrats') commented that while the draft recommendations had not reflected their proposals in parts of the borough, they accepted that "reasonable alternatives" had been proposed. However, they opposed our proposed ward

boundary between Rayners Lane and Roxbourne wards, and argued that their proposed boundary between these two wards would represent the best balance between electoral equality and the statutory criteria. They also proposed modifications to the boundaries of Edgware, Harrow on the Hill, Harrow Weald, Hatch End, Headstone North, Pinner, Queensbury, Ridgeway and Stanmore Park wards. In addition, while they supported the majority of ward names, alternative ward names were proposed for Marlborough, Pinner, Ridgeway and Wealdstone wards.

Other Representations

²⁹ A further 12 representations were received in response to our draft recommendations. Headstone Residents' Association and Pinner South Residents' Association proposed alternative warding arrangements for wards adjoining Rayners Lane ward, while South Harrow & Roxeth Residents' Association supported our draft recommendations in Roxeth ward. Two councillors proposed identical warding arrangements to those of the Liberal Democrats in relation to warding arrangements in Rayners Lane ward and the surrounding area. Four residents opposed the draft recommendations for boundary changes between Headstone North and Rayners Lane wards, while another resident proposed alternative warding arrangements in Harrow Weald and Hatch End wards, with minor boundary modifications proposed elsewhere. One resident supported our draft recommendations, although he proposed an alternative name for the proposed Edgware ward, while one resident proposed identical warding arrangements to those of the Liberal Democrats.

5. ANALYSIS AND FINAL RECOMMENDATIONS

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

31 In relation to Schedule 11, our recommendations are not intended to be based solely on existing electorate figures, but also on assumptions as to changes in the number and distribution of local government electors likely to take place within the ensuing five years. We must have regard to the desirability of fixing identifiable boundaries and to maintaining local ties which might otherwise be broken.

32 It is therefore impractical to design an electoral scheme which provides for exactly the same number of electors per councillor in every ward of an authority. There must be a degree of flexibility. However, our approach, in the context of the statutory criteria, is that such flexibility must be kept to a minimum.

33 Our *Guidance* states that, while we accept that the achievement of absolute electoral equality for the authority as a whole is likely to be unattainable, we consider that, if electoral imbalances are to be kept to the minimum, the objective of electoral equality should be the starting point in any review. We therefore strongly recommend that, in formulating electoral schemes, local authorities and other interested parties should start from the standpoint of electoral equality, and then make adjustments to reflect relevant factors, such as community identity. Regard must also be had to five-year forecasts of changes in electorates. We will require particular justification for schemes which result in, or retain, an electoral imbalance over 10

per cent in any ward. In reviews of predominantly urban areas such as the London boroughs, our experience suggests that we would expect to achieve a high degree of electoral equality in all wards.

Electorate Forecasts

34 At Stage One the Borough Council submitted electorate forecasts for the year 2003, projecting an increase in the electorate of around 1 per cent from 156,420 to 157,764 over the five-year period from 1998 to 2003. It argued that this growth would be evenly spread throughout the borough, with the only major new housing developments over the next five years expected to take place within the wards of Canons, Greenhill, Rayners Lane and Stanmore Park. The Council has estimated rates and locations of housing development with regard to structure and local plans, and the expected rate of building over the five-year period and assumed occupancy rates. In our draft recommendations report we accepted that forecasting electorate is an inexact science and, having given consideration to the forecast electorates, we were satisfied that they represented the best estimates that could reasonably be made at the time.

35 At Stage Three, we received no comments on the Council’s electorate forecasts, and remain satisfied that they represent the best estimates presently available.

Council Size

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

37 Harrow Borough Council currently has 63 members. At Stage One the Borough Council and the Liberal Democrats both proposed the retention

of the current council size, while the Conservatives proposed that there should be 57 councillors, a reduction of six. In our draft recommendations report we considered the size and distribution of the electorate, the geography and other characteristics of the area, together with the representations received, and we concluded that the statutory criteria and the achievement of electoral equality would best be met by a continuing council of 63 members. In particular, we noted that the Borough Council's and the Liberal Democrats' proposals would provide minimal disturbance to the existing arrangements, while the Conservatives' proposals would result in a far more radical departure from the existing arrangements, reducing the council size by six and significantly modifying the current ward boundaries. On balance, we were not persuaded that the level of change proposed under the Conservatives' scheme was justified.

38 At Stage Three, our draft recommendations in respect of council size was broadly supported. However, the Conservatives continued to argue that 57 members would secure more effective and convenient local government in the light of the White Paper, as well as offering potential cost savings. However, in view of no new evidence being put forward and the general support for a council of 63 members, we are confirming our draft recommendation for a council size of 63.

Electoral Arrangements

39 As indicated in our draft recommendations report, we carefully considered the representations received at Stage One from the Borough Council, the Conservatives, the Liberal Democrats and Headstone Residents' Association. We expressed gratitude for the positive approach taken by respondents. From these representations some considerations emerged which helped to inform us when preparing our draft recommendations.

40 First, with the exception of the Conservatives, there was a consensus for the retention of a council size of 63. We agreed with this assessment, and were content to recommend that Harrow should continue to be represented by 63 members.

41 Second, the current electoral arrangements provide for a pattern of three-member wards in Harrow. Each of the borough-wide schemes was based on a pattern of entirely three-member wards for the borough, with the Borough Council and the Liberal Democrats proposing 21 three-member

wards and the Conservatives proposing 19 three-member wards.

42 Third, there was a degree of consensus between the Council and the Liberal Democrats in relation to warding arrangements in the borough, with the main area of disagreement being proposed ward boundaries in the west of the borough. However, as a consequence of the Conservatives' scheme being based on a different council size, their proposed warding arrangements were substantially different across the borough. Furthermore, given that we had not been persuaded that the existing council size of 63 should be changed, it was generally not possible to adopt the Conservatives' proposed boundaries.

43 Fourth, we noted the arguments put to us about community identities in the borough. We tried to reflect such considerations in our draft recommendations where it would be consistent with our objective of electoral equality, although we noted that there was not consensus locally on the precise boundaries of such communities.

44 Finally, all three borough-wide schemes would provide improved electoral equality, although to varying degrees. Under the proposals of both the Borough Council and the Liberal Democrats, no ward would vary by more than 10 per cent from the average number of electors per councillor for the borough. However, both schemes would provide further improvements to electoral equality by 2003, with the number of electors per councillor forecast to vary by no more than 8 per cent from the borough average. Under the Conservatives' proposals, the number of electors per councillor in all wards would vary by no more than 6 per cent from the borough average. This electoral equality would improve marginally over the next five years.

45 In our draft recommendations we sought to build on the Borough Council's and the Liberal Democrats' proposals in order to put forward electoral arrangements that would achieve further improvements in electoral equality, while also seeking to reflect the statutory criteria. Where it existed, we sought to reflect the consensus among representations for warding arrangements in particular parts of the borough. However, we made additional modifications in order to achieve further improvements in electoral equality. Inevitably, we could not reflect the preferences of all respondents in our draft recommendations.

46 We have reviewed our draft recommendations in the light of further evidence and the representations received during Stage Three, and judge that modifications should be made to a number of our proposed boundaries. The following areas, based on existing wards, are considered in turn:

- (a) Canons, Centenary, Stanmore South and Wemborough wards;
- (b) Harrow Weald and Stanmore Park wards;
- (c) Hatch End, Headstone North, Headstone South and Pinner wards;
- (d) Kenton East and Kenton West wards;
- (e) Greenhill, Marlborough and Wealdstone wards;
- (f) Pinner West, Rayners Lane, Roxbourne and Roxeth wards;
- (g) Harrow on the Hill and Ridgeway wards.

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

Canons, Centenary, Stanmore South and Wemborough wards

48 The wards of Canons, Centenary, Stanmore South and Wemborough are all situated in the east of the borough. Canons ward stretches along the borough's eastern boundary with the adjoining London Borough of Barnet. The area north of London Road is characterised by thinly populated Green Belt, while the area to the south of the road is characterised by suburban development. Centenary, Stanmore South and Wemborough wards predominantly consist of semi-detached housing. Stanmore South ward lies in the south-east corner of the borough, adjoining the London boroughs of Brent and Barnet to the south and east respectively. Currently, while Wemborough ward achieves good electoral equality, with 2 per cent more electors per councillor than the borough average, the number of electors per councillor in Canons, Centenary and Stanmore South wards vary by 13 per cent, 7 per cent and 26 per cent from the average.

49 At Stage One, we received proposals for alternative warding arrangements for the area from the Borough Council, the Conservatives and the Liberal Democrats, all of which involved extensive modifications to ward boundaries in the interests of improving electoral equality. In our draft

recommendations report, we concluded that the Borough Council's proposals offered a better balance between electoral equality and the statutory criteria. While we noted that the Liberal Democrats' proposals were broadly similar, we judged that the Borough Council's scheme utilised clearer boundaries and better reflected communities. Under these proposals, Centenary, Stanmore South and Wemborough wards would be renamed Queensbury, Edgware and Belmont wards respectively.

50 At Stage Three the Council welcomed the draft recommendations for the area, although it proposed several minor ward boundary modifications in the interests of better reflecting communities. The Liberal Democrats supported the draft recommendations for ward names in the area, although they continued to argue that Dale Avenue and Gainsborough Gardens should be included in the proposed Edgware ward. The Conservatives maintained that their proposals would offer a better balance between electoral equality and reflecting local communities. However, they noted that our draft recommendations for the proposed Edgware ward were "not substantially different" from their Stage One proposals. A local resident welcomed our draft recommendations for ward boundaries in the area, although he suggested that the proposed Edgware ward should be named Camrose ward after a main road that traverses the ward.

51 Having given careful consideration to the representations received at Stage Three, we are content to substantially endorse our draft recommendations in this area, subject to minor boundary modifications proposed by the Council, which would not affect electoral equality in the area. We have once more considered the Conservatives' proposals, although note that no further supporting evidence has been provided. As indicated in our draft recommendations report, while we note that these proposals would provide marginally better electoral equality in the area, this has been achieved through a substantial re-configuration of the existing wards, and we have reservations regarding the extent to which these proposed boundaries satisfactorily reflect the interests and identities of communities in the area. We have also considered the proposals to rename Edgware, but have received no evidence that this would command local support. Accordingly, we propose confirming Edgware as the ward name, we are content to confirm it as our final recommendation for this ward.

52 Under our final recommendations, the number of electors per councillor in Belmont, Canons and Edgware wards would vary by 2 per cent, 10 per cent and 3 per cent respectively, while the number of electors per councillor in Queensbury ward would be equal to the borough average. This level of electoral equality is expected to improve further, with all wards projected to vary by no more than 1 per cent by 2003.

Harrow Weald and Stanmore Park wards

53 Harrow Weald and Stanmore Park wards comprise sparsely populated Green Belt, with more densely populated areas to the south of Uxbridge Road. Harrow Weald ward contains a large part of the Headstone Lane Estate to the west and suburban development around Harrow Weald Local Centre, while Stanmore Park ward includes the RAF command base of Bentley Priory. Under current arrangements, Harrow Weald and Stanmore Park wards have 4 per cent and 5 per cent more electors per councillor than the borough average, and this is not projected to change significantly over the next five years.

54 In our draft recommendations report, we concurred with the view of the Borough Council and the Liberal Democrats that there should only be minimal change to the existing warding arrangements in this area, and proposed reflecting elements from both schemes. We were not persuaded by the Conservatives' proposals in the area and, in particular, had reservations about extending Stanmore Park ward to the west along Uxbridge Road, on the grounds that this would create a geographically extended ward comprising a number of distinct communities.

55 At Stage Three, the Borough Council broadly supported our draft recommendations in this area, arguing that these proposal would unite properties on both sides of Kenton Lane in one ward. However, it proposed that there should be a minor boundary modification between Harrow Weald and Stanmore Park wards, with Hive Road, which forms part of the Harrow Weald Common area, remaining in Stanmore Park ward. It argued that this would enable residents from a Nursing Home to continue to use the nearby polling station. This proposal was endorsed by the Liberal Democrats.

56 The Conservatives reaffirmed their Stage One proposals, arguing that our draft recommendations

would result in the proposed Harrow Weald ward comprising two distinct communities with "widely differing interests". We also received a submission from a local resident who proposed that the part of Hatch End ward to the south of Uxbridge Road and to the east of the playing fields adjoining Harrow Arts Centre should be combined with the part of Harrow Weald ward to the south of Uxbridge Road in order that the Headstone Lane Estate could be represented within a single ward. As a consequence, he proposed combining the remaining part of Harrow Weald ward with Hatch End ward, to be named Hatch End & Weald ward. Under these proposals the number of electors per councillor in Harrow Weald and Hatch End & Weald wards would vary by 9 per cent and 8 per cent from the borough average respectively. This level of electoral variance is projected to improve over the next five years.

57 Having carefully considered the representations received at Stage Three, we are content to substantially endorse our draft recommendations in this area, although we have been persuaded to modify the proposed boundary between the two wards. We propose that Hive Road should continue to be represented within Stanmore Park ward, as proposed by the Borough Council and the Liberal Democrats, and that Laurimel Close and part of September Way should continue to be represented within Stanmore Park ward to reflect the views of the Borough Council and a local resident. In addition, we propose modifying the boundary between Harrow Weald and Wealdstone wards in order that Harewood Court, on College Avenue, forms part of Wealdstone ward, as proposed by the Borough Council, and that Weald Lane is united in Wealdstone ward, as proposed by a local resident. While we have considered the proposal to combine the part of Harrow Weald ward to the north of Uxbridge Road with adjoining wards, as indicated in our draft recommendations report, we note that this area is predominantly Green Belt, and we are not persuaded that transferring this area to other wards satisfactorily reflect the interests and identities of communities in this part of the borough.

58 Under our final recommendations, the number of electors per councillor in Harrow Weald and Stanmore Park would vary by 7 per cent and 2 per cent from the borough average respectively. By 2003 both wards are expected have an electoral variance equal to the average.

Hatch End, Headstone North, Headstone South and Pinner wards

59 These four wards cover a large area in the west of the borough. Hatch End is a distinct community with Green Belt land to the north, south and north-east. Headstone North is bordered by nine wards and is split into two distinct areas by the dual carriageway of George V Avenue and Pinner Road. The south of the ward is characterised by a residential area of 1930s suburban dwellings while, in contrast, the area in the north of the ward is predominantly Green Belt. Headstone South ward is one of the most densely populated in the borough, and is predominantly characterised by 1930s semi-detached housing. Pinner ward lies in the north-west corner of the borough and borders Hillingdon and Three Rivers to the west and north respectively. It contains the historic village centre of Pinner and its surrounding residential streets, plus the Green Belt areas of Pinner Green, Pinnerwood Park and Pinner Hill. Currently, while Hatch End and Headstone South wards have 3 per cent and 9 per cent fewer electors per councillor than the borough average respectively, Pinner and Headstone North wards have 4 per cent and 6 per cent more electors per councillor than the borough average respectively. This level of electoral variance is not projected to change significantly over the next five years.

60 In our draft recommendations report, while noting that there was similarity between the Borough Council's and the Liberal Democrats' proposals, we substantially endorsed the Borough Council's proposals in this area, which we judged would provide the best balance between electoral equality and the statutory criteria, while causing minimal disruption to the existing warding arrangements. However, we considered that there was merit in a minor boundary change between the proposed Headstone North and Rayners Lane wards in order to provide a better level of electoral equality for these two wards. Accordingly, we proposed that The Close and The Croft should be included with the revised Headstone North ward, together with other properties transferred from Rayners Lane ward to Headstone North ward.

61 At Stage Three the Borough Council proposed transferring Capel Gardens and part of Pinner Road from Pinner ward to Headstone North ward in the interests of electoral equality. This proposal was supported by the Conservatives, the Liberal Democrats, Headstone Residents' Association and

two councillors. As a consequence of the proposed modification to the boundary between Headstone North and Pinner wards, the Council proposed moving away from our draft recommendations for the boundary between Hatch End and Pinner wards, retaining Meredith Close, the whole of Albury Drive, Pinnerwood Cottage and Pinnerwood Farm in Pinner ward. This proposal was endorsed by the Conservatives, while the Liberal Democrats and a local resident proposed to also include the west side of Woodhall Gate in Pinner ward. We also received a submission from a local resident, proposing that part of Pinner Road should be combined with Headstone North ward to improve communication links between Kingsley Road and Melrose Road and the rest of Headstone North ward. The Liberal Democrats and a resident proposed that Pinner ward should be named Pinner North in order to make it consistent with the renamed Pinner South ward.

62 The Borough Council opposed our draft recommendations in respect of the boundary between Headstone North and Rayners Lane wards, and argued that transferring The Close and The Croft from Rayners Lane ward to Headstone North ward would divide an "identifiable community area". It proposed that the boundary between the two wards should follow the backs of houses on The Close and The Croft. This proposal was supported by the Conservatives, Pinner South Residents' Association and three local residents. The Liberal Democrats and two councillors proposed that the boundary between Headstone North and Rayners Lane wards should follow the backs of houses on Farm Avenue and Imperial Close. This proposal was supported by Headstone Residents' Association and a resident, while another two residents supported including Farm Avenue and Park Drive in Rayners Lane ward, as proposed by the Liberal Democrats. Under the Liberal Democrats' proposal for Headstone North and Rayners Lane wards the number of electors per councillor would vary by 7 per cent and 6 per cent from the average respectively.

63 A resident of the borough proposed four further modifications to ward boundaries in this area. First, as discussed earlier, he proposed combining part of Hatch End ward to the east of Headstone Lane and to the south of Uxbridge Road with Harrow Weald ward. Second, he proposed combining part of Harrow Weald ward with Hatch End to form a new Hatch End & Weald ward. Third, he proposed that the boundary

between Hatch End and Headstone North should follow the River Pinn to allow Pinner Park to be wholly represented in Headstone North ward. Fourth, he proposed that the boundary between Headstone North and Headstone South wards should be modified in order that Southfield Park and part of Station Road could continue to be represented in Headstone North ward. Under these proposals, the number of electors per councillor in Headstone North and Headstone South wards would vary by 1 per cent and 6 per cent from the borough average respectively.

64 Having carefully considered the representations received, we note that there is broad agreement in relation to modifications to our draft recommendations. In the light of this consensus we have been persuaded that there is merit in reflecting a number of these proposed ward boundary modifications. First, we propose retaining Capel Gardens and part of Pinner Road in Headstone North ward, which reflects the views of the majority of respondents. This proposal would improve electoral equality, while offering enhanced communication links between Kingsley Road and Melrose Road and Headstone North ward. Second, we propose retaining Meredith Close, the whole of Albury Drive, Pinnerwood Cottage and Pinnerwood Farm in Pinner ward. While we have considered the Liberal Democrats' proposal to further transfer the western side of Woodhall Gate to Pinner ward, we note that this would arbitrarily divide Woodhall Gate, and we consider that this should remain united in a single ward. We have also not been persuaded that the Liberal Democrats' proposal to change the name of Pinner ward to Pinner North ward has merit on the grounds that it does not appear to reflect the historical character of Pinner village, which is contained within the ward.

65 We also note that the proposal to transfer The Close and The Croft from Rayners Lane ward to Headstone North ward has not enjoyed a high degree of local support at Stage Three. However, as a consequence of boundary modifications detailed above, electoral equality would improve in Headstone North ward and this would obviate the need to include these two roads in Rayners Lane ward. However, we note that the proposal to retain Farm Avenue and Park Drive in Rayners Lane ward would adversely impact upon electoral equality in this area, and we have not been persuaded to endorse this.

66 We have also considered the proposals put forward by a local resident, and have been persuaded that there is merit in following the River Pinn as a boundary between Hatch End and Headstone North wards on the grounds that this forms a strong and natural boundary. However, we have not been persuaded by his proposals to modify the boundaries between Hatch End and Harrow Weald wards and Headstone North and Headstone South wards as we do not consider that these proposals would provide a better balance between electoral equality and the statutory criteria than our draft recommendations. Furthermore, we note that our draft recommendations have enjoyed a measure of local support.

67 Under our final recommendations, which are shown in the large map at the back of the report, the number of electors per councillor in Hatch End, Headstone North, Headstone South and Pinner wards would vary by 6 per cent, 2 per cent, 1 per cent and 3 per cent from the borough average respectively. By 2003, all wards are projected to vary by less than 2 per cent.

Kenton East and Kenton West wards

68 Kenton East and Kenton West are situated in the south-east of the borough, and are bordered by the London Borough of Brent. Kenton East is the second most densely populated ward in the borough, and comprises predominantly terraced and semi-detached houses. The Kenmore Park Estate houses around 2,700 people, and forms a community in the middle of the ward. Similarly, Kenton West ward comprises predominantly semi-detached housing, concentrated in the roads leading off Kenton Lane and Kenton Road. Belmont and Kenton Local Centres are focal points in the north and south of the ward. Under current arrangements, Kenton East and Kenton West wards have 5 per cent and 8 per cent more electors per councillor than the borough average (11 per cent and 8 per cent from the borough average by 2003).

69 At Stage One, the Borough Council proposed transferring part of Kenton East ward to Kenton West ward, with part of Kenton West ward being combined with Marlborough ward. This proposal was supported by the Liberal Democrats. The Conservatives proposed more significant change. In our draft recommendations report, we proposed

endorsing the Borough Council's proposals, which we considered would offer the best balance between electoral equality and the statutory criteria. In particular, we noted that accepting the Conservatives' proposals in this area would be dependant on endorsing the majority of their proposals for radical change throughout the east of the borough and, as indicated earlier, we were not persuaded that the level of proposed change was justified.

70 At Stage Three the Borough Council and the Liberal Democrats supported our draft recommendations in this area. The Conservatives maintained that their Stage One proposals would represent a better balance between electoral equality and the statutory criteria. In particular, they opposed transferring polling district HC from Kenton West ward to Marlborough ward on the grounds that this proposal would not satisfactorily reflect community ties in the area.

71 Having given careful consideration to representations received at Stage Three, we are content to endorse our draft recommendations as final. While we have reconsidered the Conservatives' proposals to combine parts of the existing Centenary, Kenton East and Kenton West wards to form three revised wards, we have not been persuaded that their proposals would better reflect the interests and identities of communities in the area or that it would utilise strong and identifiable ward boundaries.

72 Under our final recommendations the number of electors per councillor in Kenton East and Kenton West wards would vary by 4 per cent and 3 per cent from the borough average respectively.

Greenhill, Marlborough and Wealdstone wards

73 Wealdstone is the most densely populated ward and lies at the heart of the borough surrounded by the wards of Harrow Weald to the north and Wemborough and Kenton West to the east. Its western and southern boundaries run along the West Coast main line from London Euston and Locket Road respectively, adjoining the wards of Headstone North and Marlborough. Marlborough ward is situated in the centre of the borough, comprising a large number of industrial buildings, Byron Recreation Ground, Civic Centre Complex and a number of residential areas. Greenhill ward

comprises the town centre and is bounded to the south by the London Borough of Brent and Harrow on the Hill ward. Currently, the number of electors per councillor in Greenhill, Marlborough and Wealdstone wards varies by 15 per cent, 6 per cent and 7 per cent from the borough average respectively (10 per cent, 5 per cent and 1 per cent by 2003).

74 In our draft recommendations report, we endorsed the proposals put forward by the Borough Council and the Liberal Democrats, which we considered represented the best balance between electoral equality and the statutory criteria. We noted that this scheme would minimise change to existing ward boundaries in the area, would secure the best level of electoral equality and would provide a satisfactory reflection of the interests and identities of communities in the area. In addition, we noted that the Conservatives' proposed warding arrangements would require the endorsement of their proposals elsewhere in the borough.

75 At Stage Three the Borough Council supported our draft recommendations in this area. The Liberal Democrats also supported the proposed warding arrangements, although they proposed that Marlborough ward should be named Wealdstone South ward and that, as a consequence, Wealdstone ward should be renamed Wealdstone North ward. We also received representations from three residents; two residents endorsed Wealdstone ward being renamed Wealdstone North ward; one endorsed Marlborough ward being renamed Wealdstone South ward; and two proposed that Marlborough ward should be named Marlborough & Wealdstone South.

76 The Conservatives opposed the proposed warding arrangements in this area, and maintained that their Stage One proposals would represent a better balance between electoral equality and the statutory criteria than our draft recommendations. They noted that our proposals largely reflected the existing arrangements, but argued that the existing boundaries do not reflect community identities in the area. However, they indicated that if we were not persuaded by their original "more radical alteration", we should consider two boundary modifications between the proposed Greenhill and Marlborough wards to better reflect community interests in the area. They proposed that Hamilton Road, Radnor Avenue, Radnor Road, Warrington

Road, part of the eastern side of Harrow View and part of the western side of Station Road should be combined with Greenhill ward. Alternatively, they proposed transferring parts of Harrow View, Nibthwaite Road, Radnor Road, Station Road, together with Hamilton Road and Warrington Road to Greenhill ward. Under the Conservatives' first option, the number of electors per councillor in Greenhill and Marlborough wards would vary from the borough average by 5 per cent and 2 per cent respectively. Under their second option, the number of electors per councillor in Greenhill and Marlborough wards would vary from the borough average by 6 per cent and 1 per cent respectively.

77 We also received a proposal from a resident who suggested that the part of Weald Lane currently in Harrow Weald ward should be transferred to Weald ward in order that Weald Lane would be represented in a single ward.

78 Having carefully considered the representations received at Stage Three, we note that our draft recommendations in this area have been broadly supported. We have once more considered the Conservatives' proposals, but have not been persuaded that they would represent the best balance between electoral equality and the statutory criteria. We have also examined their two options for boundary modifications between Greenhill and Marlborough wards. However, we note that our draft recommendations utilise the A409 Station Road and the West Coast mainline railway line as boundaries between Greenhill and neighbouring wards, and we do not consider that their boundaries would be more identifiable. However, having considered the proposal put forward by a resident to include the whole of Weald Lane in Wealdstone ward, we have been persuaded that this proposal has merit, and are therefore modifying the proposed boundary between Harrow Weald and Wealdstone wards in order that Weald Lane is represented in a single ward.

79 We have considered alternative ward names in this area. However, we have not been persuaded that proposals put forward would necessarily command widespread local support, and are therefore endorsing the proposed ward names put forward in our draft recommendations report.

80 Under our final recommendations the number of electors per councillor in Greenhill, Marlborough and Wealdstone wards would vary by 6 per cent, 1 per

cent and 7 per cent. This level of electoral equality is expected to improve, with no ward varying by more than 1 per cent from the average by 2003.

Pinner West, Rayners Lane, Roxbourne and Roxeth wards

81 Pinner West, Rayners Lane, Roxbourne and Roxeth wards are all situated to the west side of the borough. Pinner West ward forms a long boundary with the London Borough of Hillingdon. Rayners Lane ward is an area dating wholly from the late 1920s and 1930s, comprising several large private estates (notably Harrow Garden Village) centred on the station and district centre. Roxbourne ward consists of areas either side of Alexandra Avenue between Eastcote Lane and the current boundary with Rayners Lane ward to its north. Roxeth ward is situated at the south-western corner of the borough, bounded by the London Boroughs of Hillingdon and Ealing to the west and south respectively. Under current arrangements, Pinner West and Rayners Lane wards have 2 per cent and 7 per cent fewer electors per councillor than the borough average respectively, while Roxbourne and Roxeth wards have 3 per cent and 2 per cent more electors per councillor than the borough average.

82 Our draft recommendations substantially endorsed the Borough Council's scheme for this area, which we considered would achieve the best possible balance of electoral equality and the statutory criteria. We had reservations over the Liberal Democrat's proposal to split Torbay Road between two wards. However, we proposed departing from the Borough Council's scheme in Rayners Lane ward. First, we concurred with the Liberal Democrats that Yeading Brook would form a more natural boundary between Pinner West and Rayners Lane wards. In addition, as discussed in relation to Headstone North ward, we proposed modifying the boundary between Rayners Lane and Headstone North wards.

83 At Stage Three the Borough Council broadly supported our draft recommendations, although it opposed our draft recommendations for the boundary between Headstone North and Rayners Lane ward. It indicated that transferring The Close and The Croft from Rayners Lane ward to Headstone North ward divides an "identifiable community area", and proposed that the boundary between the two wards should follow the backs of houses on The Close and The Croft. The

Conservatives, Pinner South Residents' Association and three local residents also proposed that this should form the boundary. The Liberal Democrats and two councillors proposed that the boundary between Headstone North and Rayners Lane wards should follow the backs of houses on Farm Avenue and Imperial Close. This view was supported by Headstone Residents' Association and a resident, while another two residents supported including Farm Avenue and Park Drive in Rayners Lane ward, as proposed by the Liberal Democrats. Under the Liberal Democrats' proposal for Headstone North and Rayners Lane wards the number of electors per councillor would vary by 7 per cent and 6 per cent from the average respectively.

84 The Liberal Democrats further proposed modifying the south-eastern boundary between Rayners Lane and Roxbourne ward in order that council-built houses in the area could be united in Rayners Lane ward. They also reiterated their Stage One proposal that the south-western boundary between the two wards should utilise the road closure barrier in Torbay Road. As a consequence of these proposals, the Liberal Democrats proposed that the existing boundary between Roxbourne and Harrow on the Hill wards should be retained. These proposals were supported by two councillors and a resident.

85 South Harrow & Roxeth Residents' Association stated that our draft recommendations for Roxeth ward were "sensible and practicable". Pinner South Residents' Association stated that the proposed Pinner South ward should continue to be known as Pinner West ward, as there may be confusion between the area covered by the Residents' Association and the ward.

86 Having considered the representations received at Stage Three, we note that our proposal to include The Close and The Croft in Headstone North ward has not attracted local support. As indicated previously, modifications proposed by the Council in this area improve electoral equality and obviate the need to transfer these roads to Headstone North ward. However, we do not believe that we have received sufficient evidence to persuade us to adopt the proposal to retain Farm Avenue and Park Drive (in addition to The Close and The Croft) in Rayners Lane ward, which as detailed above, would result in a higher level of electoral variance than the Borough Council's proposal.

87 We have carefully considered the Liberal Democrats' proposals for Rayners Lane and Roxbourne wards, and note that under their proposals the number of electors per councillor in Rayners Lane and Roxbourne wards would vary by 6 per cent and 4 per cent respectively. Furthermore, we have not been persuaded that the Liberal Democrats' proposed boundary between Rayners Lane and Roxbourne wards offers a better balance between electoral equality and the statutory criteria than our draft recommendations, which have enjoyed broad support at Stage Three, including from the Borough Council and the Conservatives.

88 We are also content to broadly endorse our draft recommendations for Roxeth ward (subject to a minor amendment detailed below) which appear to enjoy a measure of local support. We propose modifying the boundary between Rayners Lane and Pinner South wards, utilising the Yeading Brook as a boundary, thus ensuring that Southbourne Close is represented in Pinner South ward, to reflect the views of several respondents. In addition we consider that the boundary between Rayners Lane and Roxbourne wards should be modified so that Newquay Crescent can be united in Rayners Lane ward, to reflect the Borough Council's representation. We also propose retaining numbers 397 to 405 Eastcote Lane in Roxeth ward, as proposed by the Borough Council. However, we have not been persuaded to change the name of Pinner South ward as this enjoys the support of the Borough Council, the Conservatives and the Liberal Democrats.

89 Under our final recommendations the number of electors per councillor in Roxbourne and Roxeth wards would vary by 1 per cent and 4 per cent respectively, while the number of electors per councillor in Pinner South and Rayners Lane wards would be equal to the average. By 2003 this level of electoral equality is projected to improve further, with the number of electors per councillor varying by no more than 1 per cent in all four wards.

Harrow on the Hill and Ridgeway wards

90 Harrow on the Hill is the historic heart of the borough. It contains significantly contrasting areas, ranging from St Mary's Church and Harrow School at the top of the Hill to Shaftesbury Circle at the western end of the ward and Wood End Road and Cavendish Avenue in the extreme south. Ridgeway ward is in the west of the borough and

is bounded by five other wards. It comprises several distinct residential areas, including late Victorian and Edwardian terraces, 1930s semi-detached housing and 1970s properties. Currently, Harrow on the Hill ward contains 5 per cent more electors per councillor than the borough average, while Ridgeway ward contains 4 per cent fewer electors per councillor than the average. This level of electoral equality is not projected to change significantly over the next five years.

91 At Stage One, the Borough Council and the Liberal Democrats proposed that there should be only minimal change to the existing warding arrangements in the area. They proposed joining part of Harrow on the Hill ward with Roxbourne ward, and they additionally proposed two minor modifications to Harrow on the Hill's ward boundary. We were content to endorse these proposals as our draft recommendations, as they achieved a good balance between electoral equality and the statutory criteria. We noted that the Conservatives' proposals would provide for a greater degree of change in the area, and would require the endorsement of their proposals elsewhere in the borough.

92 At Stage Three, the Borough Council supported our draft recommendations in this area. The Liberal Democrats proposed retaining the existing boundary between Harrow on the Hill and Roxbourne wards, as described previously. They also proposed transferring Whitmore Road from Harrow on the Hill ward to Ridgeway ward.

93 We also received three representations (from the Liberal Democrats and two residents) regarding alternative ward names for Ridgeway ward. The Liberal Democrats proposed that the ward be named West Harrow or West Harrow & Ridgeway. These proposals were supported by a resident. Another member of the public proposed that the ward be known as Ridgeway & West Harrow.

94 We have carefully examined the evidence received during Stage Three, and are content to endorse our draft recommendations for ward boundaries for Harrow on the Hill and Ridgeway wards without modification. However we propose renaming Ridgeway ward to reflect concerns expressed by the Liberal Democrats that a large number of people living on the road that lends its

name to the ward do not live in Ridgeway ward, and that this may lead to unnecessary confusion. We therefore propose adopting the Liberal Democrats' proposed West Harrow ward name, which reflects local landmarks such as West Harrow Station, West Harrow Recreation Ground and West Harrow Allotments. West Harrow was the name for much of the area covered by this ward between 1934 and 1978.

95 Under our final recommendations, the number of electors per councillor in West Harrow ward would vary by 4 per cent, while the number of electors per councillor in Harrow on the Hill ward would be equal to the average. This level of electoral variance is not expected to change significantly over the next five years.

Conclusions

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

- (a) we propose retaining The Close and The Croft in Rayners Lane ward, as proposed by the Council, the Conservatives, Pinner South Residents' Association and three local residents;
- (b) we propose that Hive Road should remain in Stanmore Park ward, as proposed by the Council and the Liberal Democrats;
- (c) we propose that the River Pinn should form the boundary between Hatch End and Headstone North wards, as put forward by a resident of the borough;
- (d) we propose that Meredith Close and the whole of Albury Drive should remain in Pinner ward, as supported by the Council and the Conservatives. The Liberal Democrats and a member of the public also put forward a broadly similar boundary between Hatch End and Pinner wards;
- (e) we propose transferring that part of Weald Lane that is in Harrow Weald ward to Wealdstone ward, as proposed by a resident;
- (f) we propose that Ridgeway ward should be renamed West Harrow ward, as proposed by the Liberal Democrats and a resident.

97 We conclude that, in Harrow:

- (a) there should be no change to the council size of 63 members;
- (b) there should be 21 wards, as at present;
- (c) the boundaries of all of the existing 21 wards should be modified.

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

99 As shown in Figure 4, our final recommendations for Harrow Borough Council would result in the number of electors per councillor varying by less than 10 per cent in all 21 wards. This improved balance of representation is expected to improve further with all wards expected to vary by less than 4 per cent by 2003. Our final recommendations are set out in more detail in Figures 1 and 2, and illustrated on Map 2 and the large map at the back of this report.

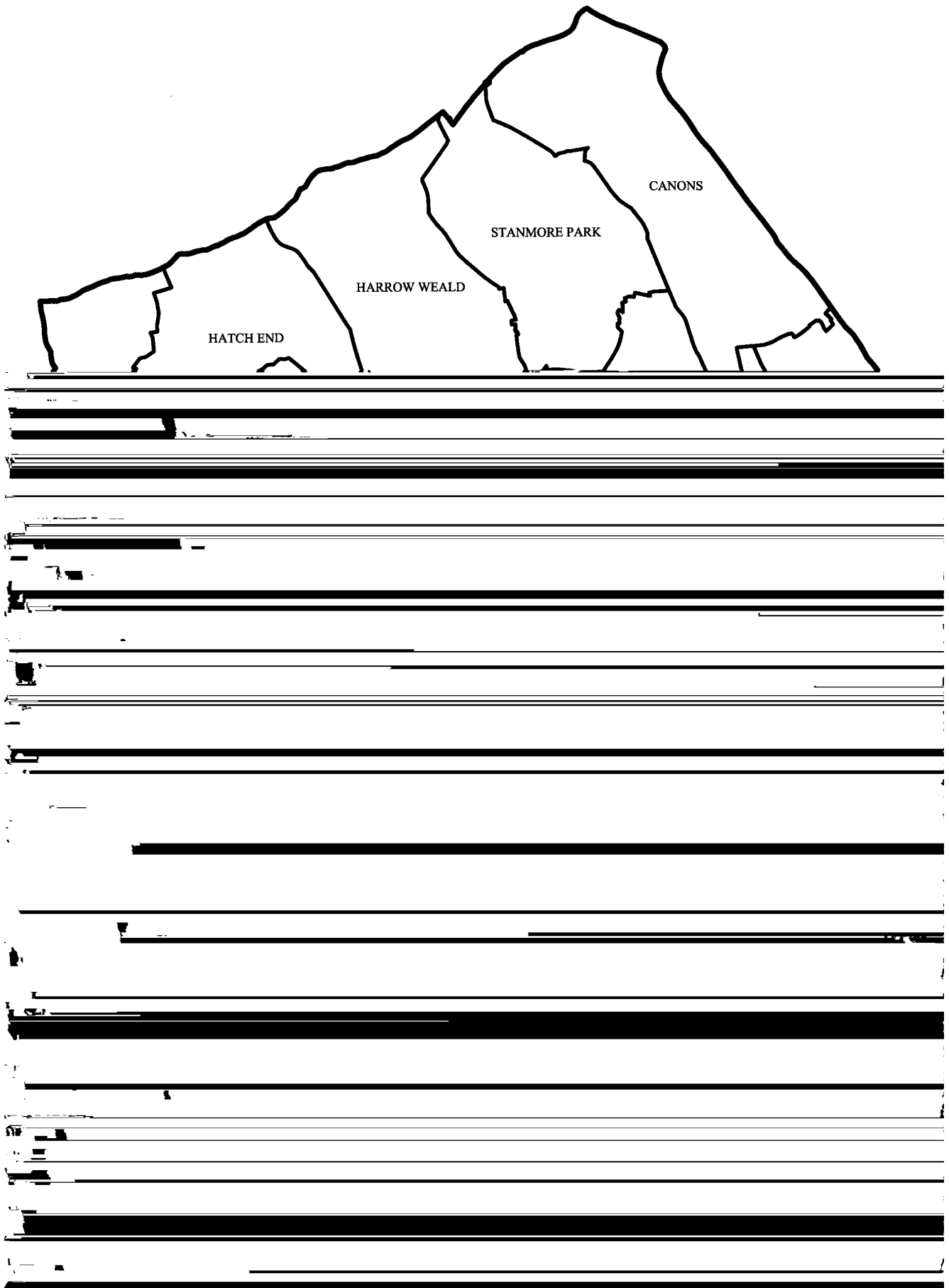
Final Recommendation

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

Figure 4 :
Comparison of Current and Recommended Electoral Arrangements

	1998 electorate		2003 forecast electorate	
	Current arrangements	Final recommendations	Current arrangements	Final recommendations
Number of councillors	63	63	63	63
Number of wards	21	21	21	21
Average number of electors per councillor	2,483	2,483	2,504	2,504
Number of wards with a variance more than 10 per cent from the average	3	0	3	0
Number of wards with a variance more than 20 per cent from the average	1	0	2	0

Map 2:
The Commission's Final Recommendations for Harrow



6. NEXT STEPS

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

101 It now falls to the Secretary of State to decide whether to give effect to our recommendations, with or without modification, and to implement them by means of an order. Such an order will not be made earlier than six weeks from the date that our recommendations are submitted to the Secretary of State.

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

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

APPENDIX A

Draft Recommendations for Harrow

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

*Figure A1:
The Commission's Draft Recommendations: Number of Councillors and Electors by Ward*

Ward name	Number of councillors	Electorate (1998)	Number of electors per councillor	Variance from average %	Electorate (2003)	Number of electors per councillor	Variance from average %
1 Belmont	3	7,602	2,534	2	7,540	2,513	0
2 Canons	3	8,158	2,719	10	7,537	2,512	0
3 Edgware	3	7,210	2,403	-3	7,539	2,513	0
4 Greenhill	3	7,012	2,337	-6	7,480	2,493	0
5 Harrow on the Hill	3	7,423	2,474	0	7,661	2,554	2
6 Harrow Weald	3	8,013	2,671	8	7,568	2,523	1
7 Hatch End	3	8,190	2,730	10	7,670	2,557	2
8 Headstone North	3	7,180	2,393	-4	7,297	2,432	-3
9 Headstone South	3	7,338	2,446	-1	7,522	2,507	0
10 Kenton East	3	7,182	2,394	-4	7,642	2,547	2
11 Kenton West	3	7,703	2,568	3	7,792	2,597	4
12 Marlborough	3	7,376	2,459	-1	7,483	2,494	0
13 Pinner	3	7,543	2,514	1	7,301	2,434	-3
14 Pinner South	3	7,371	2,457	-1	7,416	2,472	-1

continued overleaf

Figure A1 (continued):

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

Ward name	Number of councillors	Electorate (1998)	Number of electors per councillor	Variance from average %	Electorate (2003)	Number of electors per councillor	Variance from average %
15 Queensbury	3	7,498	2,499	1	7,483	2,494	0
16 Rayners Lane	3	7,445	2,482	0	7,531	2,510	0
17 Ridgeway	3	7,155	2,385	-4	7,295	2,432	-3
18 Roxbourne	3	7,345	2,448	-1	7,544	2,515	0
19 Roxeth	3	7,185	2,395	-4	7,423	2,474	-1
20 Stanmore Park	3	7,562	2,521	2	7,471	2,490	-1
21 Wealdstone	3	6,929	2,310	-7	7,570	2,523	1
Totals	63	156,420	—	—	157,765	—	—
Averages	—	—	2,483	—	—	2,504	—

Source: Electorate figures are based on Harrow Borough Council's Stage One submission.

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