

LOCAL
GOVERNMENT
COMMISSION
FOR ENGLAND

FINAL
RECOMMENDATIONS
ON THE FUTURE
ELECTORAL
ARRANGEMENTS FOR
HOUNSLOW

*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 Hounslow.

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A large map illustrating the proposed ward boundaries for Hounslow 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 Hounslow 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 minor boundary modifications have been made (see paragraph 182) in the light of further evidence. This report sets out our final recommendations for changes to electoral arrangements in Hounslow.

We recommend that Hounslow Borough Council should be served by 60 councillors representing 20 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 Hounslow 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 Hounslow:

- **in eight 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;**
- **by 2003 electoral equality is expected to worsen, with the number of electors per councillor forecast to vary by more than 10 per cent from the average in nine wards, and by more than 20 per cent in one ward.**

Our main final recommendations for future electoral arrangements (Figures 1 and 2 and paragraphs 182-183) are that:

- **Hounslow Borough Council should be served by 60 councillors, the same as at present;**
- **there should be 20 wards, one less than at present, and changes should be made to the boundaries of all the existing wards.**

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

- **In 19 of the 20 wards the number of electors per councillor would vary by no more than 10 per cent from the borough average, with Syon ward varying by 11 per cent.**

- **This electoral equality is forecast to improve even further, with the number of electors per councillor in all wards expected to vary by no more than 10 per cent from the average for the borough in 2003, with no ward varying by more than 6 per cent from the average.**

All further correspondence on these recommendations and the matters discussed in this report should be addressed to the Secretary of State for the Environment, Transport and the Regions, who will not make an order implementing the Commission's recommendations before 2 August 1999:

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

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

Ward name	Number of councillors	Constituent areas (existing wards)
1 Bedfont	3	East Bedfont ward (part)
2 Brentford	3	Brentford Clifden ward (part); Gunnersbury ward (part)
3 Chiswick Homefields	3	Chiswick Homefields ward; Chiswick Riverside ward (part); Turnham Green ward (part)
4 Chiswick Riverside	3	Chiswick Riverside ward (part); Gunnersbury ward (part)
5 Cranford	3	Cranford ward (part); Heston West ward (part); Hounslow Heath ward (part)
6 Feltham North	3	Feltham North ward (part); East Bedfont ward (part)
7 Feltham West	3	East Bedfont ward (part); Feltham Central ward (part); Feltham North ward (part); Feltham South ward (part)
8 Hanworth	3	Hanworth ward; Feltham Central ward (part); Feltham South ward (part)
9 Hanworth Park	3	Feltham Central ward (part); Feltham South ward (part)
10 Heston Central	3	Heston Central ward (part); Hounslow Heath ward (part); Hounslow West ward (part)
11 Heston East	3	Heston East ward; Heston Central ward (part); Heston West ward (part); Hounslow Central ward (part); Hounslow West ward (part); Spring Grove ward (part)
12 Heston West	3	Heston West ward (part)
13 Hounslow Central	3	Hounslow Central ward (part); Hounslow South ward (part); Spring Grove ward (part)
14 Hounslow Heath	3	Hounslow Central ward (part); Hounslow South ward (part); Hounslow West ward (part)
15 Hounslow South	3	Hounslow South ward (part); Spring Grove ward (part)
16 Hounslow West	3	Hounslow West ward (part); Cranford ward (part); Hounslow Heath ward (part)
17 Isleworth	3	Isleworth North ward (part); Isleworth South ward
18 Osterley & Spring Grove	3	Isleworth North ward (part); Spring Grove ward (part)
19 Syon	3	Brentford Clifden ward (part); Isleworth North ward (part)
20 Turnham Green	3	Turnham Green ward (part); Gunnersbury ward (part)

Note: The large map at the back of this report illustrates the proposed boundaries.

1. INTRODUCTION

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

2 In broad terms, the objective of this periodic electoral review (PER) of Hounslow 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 the first London borough reviews by the Commission. 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, Hounslow 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 Hounslow

14 This is our first review of the electoral arrangements for Hounslow. The last such review was undertaken by our predecessor, the Local Government Boundary Commission (LGBC), which reported to the Secretary of State in April 1977 (Report No. 193).

15 This review was in four stages. Stage One began on 23 June 1998, when we wrote to Hounslow 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 Hounslow*, 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 The borough of Hounslow is located approximately 11 miles west of central London and has a total population of 204,400 (*Municipal Year Book*). The borough, while predominantly urban in character, includes a number of historic homes and gardens including Osterley Park, Syon House and Gunnersbury Park. The eastern boundary of Hounslow borough follows the northern path of the River Thames at Chiswick with the river also forming approximately half the southern boundary of the borough. The remaining southern boundary extends in a south-westerly direction enclosing the Feltham area. Heathrow Airport is located just beyond the borough's western boundary and the majority of the northern boundary runs a short distance beyond the M4.

18 Within the borough, there are several distinct local areas including Chiswick in the north-east of the borough; Bedfont, Hanworth and Feltham in the south-west; and the communities of Brentford, Isleworth, Heston, Hounslow and Osterley forming a Central Area. The borough includes a number of major roads, including the M4, A4 and A315 and a number of railway lines and above ground sections of the London Underground.

19 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'.

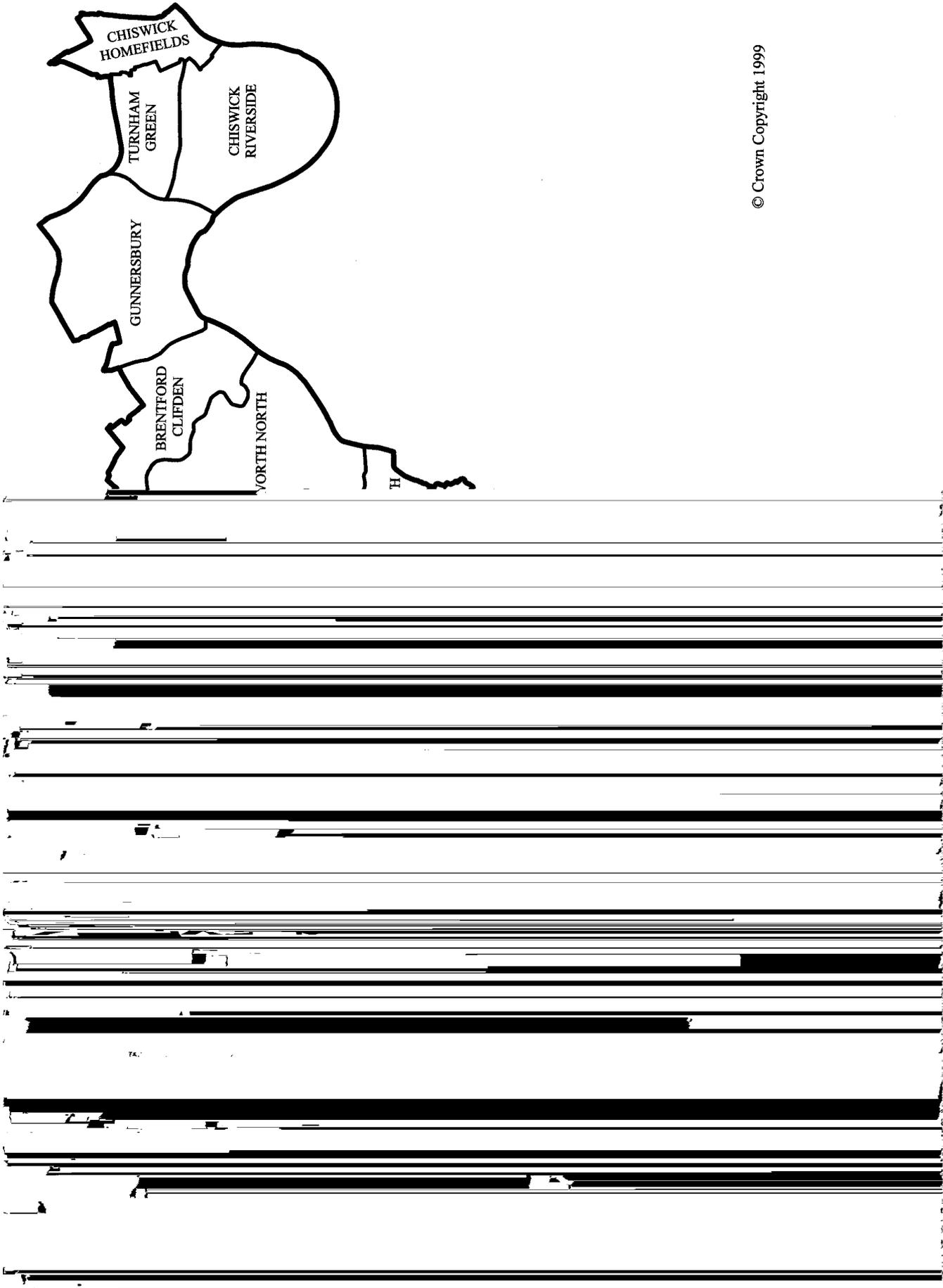
20 The electorate of the borough (February 1998) is 156,338. The Council currently has 60 councillors who are elected from 21 wards (Map 1 and Figure 3). Eighteen of the 21 wards are each represented by three councillors, and three wards

elect two councillors each. As in all London boroughs, the whole council is elected together every four years.

21 Since the last electoral review, there has been an increase in electorate in the Hounslow borough area, with over 3 per cent more electors than two decades ago.

22 At present, each councillor represents an average of 2,606 electors, which the Borough Council forecasts would increase to 2,670 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 eight 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. That one ward, Hounslow West, has the worst imbalance in the borough, where each councillor represents on average 24 per cent more electors than the borough average.

Map 1:
Existing Wards in Hounslow



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Figure 3:
Existing Electoral Arrangements

Ward name	Number of councillors	Electorate (1998)	Number of electors per councillor	Variance from average %	Electorate (2003)	Number of electors per councillor	Variance from average %
1 Brentford Clifden	3	6,480	2,160	-17	7,088	2,363	-12
2 Chiswick Homefields	2	5,473	2,737	5	5,563	2,782	4
3 Chiswick Riverside	3	7,641	2,547	-2	7,779	2,593	-3
4 Cranford	3	7,242	2,414	-7	7,276	2,425	-9
5 East Bedfont	3	8,833	2,944	13	8,835	2,945	10
6 Feltham Central	3	7,581	2,527	-3	7,690	2,563	-4
7 Feltham North	3	8,950	2,983	14	9,028	3,009	13
8 Feltham South	3	7,013	2,338	-10	7,011	2,337	-12
9 Gunnersbury	3	7,617	2,539	-3	7,971	2,657	-1
10 Hanworth	3	6,981	2,327	-11	7,135	2,378	-11
11 Heston Central	2	5,266	2,633	1	5,311	2,656	-1
12 Heston East	2	5,231	2,616	0	5,231	2,616	-2
13 Heston West	3	8,208	2,736	5	8,216	2,739	3
14 Hounslow Central	3	7,354	2,451	-6	7,766	2,589	-3
15 Hounslow Heath	3	8,278	2,759	6	8,289	2,763	3
16 Hounslow South	3	7,732	2,577	-1	7,743	2,581	-3
17 Hounslow West	3	9,676	3,225	24	10,154	3,385	27
18 Isleworth North	3	8,334	2,778	7	9,129	3,043	14
19 Isleworth South	3	6,937	2,312	-11	7,095	2,365	-11
20 Spring Grove	3	8,759	2,920	12	8,953	2,984	12
21 Turnham Green	3	6,752	2,251	-14	6,966	2,322	-13
Totals	60	156,338	—	—	160,229	—	—
Averages	—	—	2,606	—	—	2,670	—

Source: Electorate figures are based on Hounslow 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 Brentford Clifden ward were relatively over-represented by 17 per cent, while electors in Hounslow West ward were relatively under-represented by 24 per cent. Figures have been rounded to the nearest whole number.

3. DRAFT RECOMMENDATIONS

²³ During Stage One we received three borough-wide schemes – from the Borough Council; the Conservative Group on the Council jointly with the Conservative Associations of Brentford & Isleworth and Feltham & Heston; and the Liberal Democrat Group on the Council jointly with the executive committees of Brentford & Isleworth and Feltham & Heston Liberal Democrats. We also received submissions from Hounslow Labour Party (Local Government Committee), Hounslow Central Branch of the Brentford & Isleworth Labour Party and Heston Residents' Association. 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 Hounslow*.

²⁴ Our draft recommendations were based on the Conservatives' scheme in the Chiswick and Bedfont, Feltham and Hanworth areas of the borough. We based our recommendations for the Central Area of the borough (including Brentford, Isleworth, Heston, Hounslow and Osterley) on the Borough Council's submission, with amendments to seven of their proposed wards. Our draft proposals achieved improved electoral equality while having regard to the statutory criteria and reflected the majority view for a pattern of entirely three-member wards across the borough. We proposed that:

- (a) Hounslow Borough Council should be served by 60 councillors;
- (b) there should be 20 wards, involving changes to the boundaries of all existing wards, each represented by three councillors.

Draft Recommendation

Hounslow Borough Council should comprise 60 councillors serving 20 wards.

²⁵ Our proposals would have resulted in significant improvements in electoral equality, with the number of electors per councillor in 19 of the 20 wards varying by no more than 10 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 3 per cent from the borough average in 2003.

4. RESPONSES TO CONSULTATION

26 During the consultation on our draft recommendations report, 24 representations were received. A list of respondents is available on request from the Commission. All representations may be inspected at the offices of Hounslow Borough Council and the Commission.

Hounslow Borough Council

27 The Borough Council stated that it had “decided to accept the Commission’s draft recommendations”. It added that the Council “does not wish to make further representations in respect of any aspect of the Commission’s proposals”.

The Conservatives

28 The Conservative Group on Hounslow Borough Council and the Conservative Associations of Brentford & Isleworth and Feltham & Heston (‘the Conservatives’) supported 13 of the 20 wards proposed in our draft recommendations, subject to a number of minor modifications. However, the Conservatives stated: “we fundamentally disagree with the proposals for the three Heston wards, Hounslow Central, West and Heath and Cranford”. The Conservatives submitted three alternative warding pattern options for the Central Area to address their concerns, which they ranked in order of preference.

29 First, the Conservatives argued that their original Stage One proposals, with two further boundary modifications, would “provide for wards and boundaries which properly reflect natural ties”. Their second preference option was for a revised warding pattern in the Central Area retaining some of the ward pattern proposed in the draft recommendations which, they suggested, would “only materially affect five wards but achieves significantly better ties of community interest and equally good levels of electoral equality”. Finally, they submitted a third preference option involving four minor boundary amendments to the draft recommendations in the Central Area, affecting the proposed wards of Brentford, Heston East, Heston

West, Isleworth, Osterley & Spring Grove, Syon and Turnham Green. The Feltham & Heston Conservative Association, in addition to supporting the joint Conservatives’ submission, raised a number of objections to the draft recommendations in the Heston area in a separate submission.

Other Representations

30 We received a further 21 representations – from three political groups, one residents’ association, a joint submission from two councillors, a petition from residents in the Osterley area and from 15 local residents.

31 Hounslow Labour Party (Local Government Committee) – referred to in this report as Hounslow Labour Party – proposed an alternative warding pattern to the draft recommendations for the four wards of Chiswick Homefields, Hounslow Central, Hounslow Heath and Osterley & Spring Grove, and alternative ward names for the proposed wards of Feltham West, Hanworth Park and Heston East. Hounslow South Ward Labour Party opposed the draft recommendations for Hounslow South ward, suggesting that the Woodlands Estate area does not share any community links with the rest of the proposed ward. Brentford & Isleworth Labour Party proposed alternative ward names for the proposed Syon and Brentford wards.

32 Heston Residents’ Association opposed our draft recommendations to formulate wards which would include areas south of the Great West Road with areas of Heston to the north which it considered would not reflect community identities. We received individual representations from 10 local residents and a petition signed by 61 residents of Osterley all opposing the proposed boundary between Osterley & Spring Grove and Heston East wards for community identity reasons. One resident of the Woodlands Estate area argued against the inclusion of the Woodlands Estate in Hounslow South ward, citing community identity arguments and suggesting the area should form part of the proposed Osterley & Spring Grove ward or Isleworth ward.

33 Three Chiswick residents proposed minor modifications to the proposed boundaries between the wards of Brentford, Chiswick Riverside and Turnham Green in order to better reflect local ties. One resident of Isleworth considered our draft recommendations had not taken sufficient account of community identities and interests and made some broad suggestions for revised warding patterns in the Chiswick area and parts of the Central Area, although without having regard to electoral equality.

5. ANALYSIS AND FINAL RECOMMENDATIONS

34 As described earlier, our prime objective in considering the most appropriate electoral arrangements for Hounslow 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”.

35 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.

36 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.

37 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

38 At Stage One the Borough Council submitted electorate forecasts for the year 2003, projecting an increase in the electorate of 2.5 per cent from 156,338 to 160,229 over the five-year period from 1998 to 2003. The Council expected much of this growth to occur in the existing Brentford Clifden, Isleworth North and Hounslow West wards. The Council estimated rates and locations of housing development with regard to the unitary development plan for the borough, and the expected rate of building over the five-year period and assumed occupancy rates. Advice from the Borough Council on the likely effect on electorates of changes to ward boundaries was obtained.

39 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.

40 We received no comments on the Council's electorate forecasts during Stage Three, and remain satisfied that they represent the best estimates presently available.

Council Size

41 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.

42 Hounslow Borough Council currently has 60 members. At Stage One, the Borough Council, the Conservatives and the Liberal Democrats all proposed retaining the current council size.

43 In our draft recommendations report we considered the size and distribution of the electorate, the geography and other characteristics of the area, together with the representations received. We concluded that the statutory criteria and the achievement of electoral equality would best be met by a council of 60 members.

44 At Stage Three, no representations were received which proposed a change to the current council size. In view of the general support for a council of 60 members, which would also facilitate a good electoral scheme, we are confirming our draft recommendation for a council size of 60 as final.

Electoral Arrangements

45 As set out in our draft recommendations report, we carefully considered the representations received at Stage One from the Borough Council, the Conservatives, the Liberal Democrats and the other three respondents. We expressed gratitude for the positive approach taken by respondents who had all made proposals for change to the present electoral arrangements. From these representations some considerations emerged which helped to inform us when preparing our draft recommendations.

46 In particular, there was consensus among those submitting detailed proposals for no change to the current council size of 60. Furthermore, the current electoral arrangements provide for predominantly three-member wards in Hounslow, although there are also three two-member wards. All three comprehensive schemes were based on a pattern of entirely three-member wards for the borough resulting in a reduction in the number of wards from 21 to 20. The issues of council size and the number of councillors per ward have continued to receive support during Stage Three.

47 In our draft recommendations report we also identified consensus between the three comprehensive schemes that the borough can be divided into three discrete areas for borough warding purposes. The Borough Council, the Conservatives and the

Liberal Democrats broadly agreed that the warding pattern for the Chiswick area in the east of the borough is bounded to its west by the Chiswick High Road (A205) and Gunnersbury Avenue (A406). The area west of the River Crane comprising Bedfont, Feltham and Hanworth forms a further discrete area and the large Central Area of the borough (comprising Brentford, Isleworth, Heston, Hounslow and Osterley) forms a single block. The consensus between proposals on these three areas and some prominent features that provide clearly understood boundaries assisted us in identifying 'building blocks' upon which we based our draft recommendations.

48 All three comprehensive borough-wide schemes received at Stage One achieved significantly improved electoral equality. Initially, the Council's proposal would have reduced the number of wards with an electoral variance over 10 per cent to one (zero in 2003) and both the Conservatives' and the Liberal Democrats' proposals would have resulted in no wards being over 10 per cent (unchanged in 2003).

49 In our draft recommendations we sought to build on both the Council's and the Conservatives' proposals in order to put forward electoral arrangements which would achieve good electoral equality while having regard to the statutory criteria. While adopting some features from the Liberal Democrats' proposals, we were not able to adopt their proposed warding patterns, in part as a result of a number of significant calculation inaccuracies in their scheme. Where it existed, we tried to reflect the consensus between the three schemes for warding arrangements in particular parts of the borough. This was most notable in the Chiswick area, although less consensus existed elsewhere, particularly in the Central Area. We made modifications to the Council's proposals in the Central Area in order to put forward electoral arrangements which would achieve yet further improvements in electoral equality, while also seeking to reflect the statutory criteria. Inevitably, we could not reflect the preferences of all respondents in our draft recommendations.

50 In response to our draft recommendations report, a number of respondents expressed the view that our proposed boundary between Heston East and Osterley & Spring Grove wards would adversely affect community identity in the Osterley area. We also received a number of submissions commenting on the location of the Woodlands

Estate in our proposed Hounslow South ward, which many considered would not reflect existing community ties. These comments, along with others making suggestions across the borough, have helped inform us in our deliberations before finalising our recommendations.

51 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 ward boundaries. The following areas, based on existing wards, are considered in turn:

- (a) The Chiswick Area
 - Chiswick Homefields, Chiswick Riverside and Turnham Green wards;
- (b) The Central Area
 - Brentford Clifden and Gunnersbury wards
 - Isleworth North, Isleworth South and Spring Grove wards
 - Hounslow Central, Hounslow Heath, Hounslow South and Hounslow West wards
 - Cranford ward
 - Heston Central, Heston East and Heston West wards;
- (c) The Bedfont, Feltham and Hanworth Area
 - East Bedfont and Feltham North wards
 - Feltham Central, Feltham South and Hanworth wards.

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

The Chiswick Area

53 The Chiswick area currently has two three-member wards, Chiswick Riverside and Turnham Green wards, and one two-member ward, Chiswick Homefields. All three wards are bounded, in part, by the borough boundary. At Stage One, there was agreement among the representations received that the proposed western boundary of the Chiswick area should be formed by Gunnersbury Avenue (North Circular Road) and Chiswick High Road, further west than the existing boundary, which broadly follows the London Underground District line.

54 At Stage Three, we received some comments on our draft proposals for the Chiswick area. Generally, respondents were satisfied with the draft recommendations, although two small modifications to the western boundary of Turnham Green ward were proposed by three local residents and two respondents made broad suggestions for a revised warding pattern in the area. Two local councillors proposed a modified Turnham Green & Gunnersbury ward name.

Chiswick Homefields, Chiswick Riverside and Turnham Green wards

55 The three wards of Chiswick Homefields, Chiswick Riverside and Turnham Green are situated in the east of the borough. Chiswick Riverside and Turnham Green wards are each represented by three councillors and Chiswick Homefields is represented by two councillors. The number of electors per councillor in the wards is 2 per cent below, 14 per cent below and 5 per cent above the borough average respectively (3 per cent below, 13 per cent below and 4 per cent above in 2003).

56 There were a number of similarities between the three Stage One schemes submitted by the Borough Council, the Conservatives and the Liberal Democrats. Each scheme proposed three wards, each to be represented by three councillors and they all proposed using Gunnersbury Avenue (A406) and part of the Chiswick High Road (A205) as the boundary between this area and the rest of the borough. The Conservatives and Liberal Democrats proposed using the Great West Road as the boundary between Turnham Green and Chiswick Riverside wards and the Borough Council proposed using it for the majority of its proposed boundary, except in the Strand on the Green area, where it used the Chiswick mainline railway.

57 The three schemes proposed different western boundaries for Chiswick Homefields ward. The Council proposed enlarging the existing Chiswick Homefields ward (which is currently served by two councillors) to include an area which lies east of, and including, Duke's Road, as far as the existing boundary of Brackley Road, Brackley Terrace and Devonshire Road, and is currently in Turnham Green ward. The Council proposed retaining most of the existing Chiswick Homefields ward boundary. The Liberal Democrats and the Conservatives proposed maintaining the majority

of the existing boundary between Chiswick Homefields and Turnham Green wards, but proposed an alternative boundary between Chiswick Homefields and Chiswick Riverside wards. To the south of the Hogarth roundabout, the Liberal Democrats' proposed boundary followed Burlington Lane as far as the Chiswick mainline station, going east along the railway line and south along Great Chertsey Road (A316). The Conservatives' proposed boundary lay to the west of Paxton Road, turning southwards generally along the Great Chertsey Road to the borough boundary at Chiswick Bridge. Hounslow Labour Party (Local Government Committee) broadly agreed with the Council's warding proposals in the Chiswick area.

58 The Liberal Democrats proposed renaming Chiswick Homefields ward as Chiswick East, Chiswick Riverside ward as Chiswick South and Turnham Green ward as Chiswick North. The Council proposed renaming Chiswick Riverside ward as simply Riverside, while otherwise retaining the existing ward names. The Conservatives proposed no change to the existing ward names in this area.

59 All three comprehensive Stage One schemes improved on the current electoral imbalance in the Chiswick area. In each ward, the number of electors per councillor would have been no more than 4 per cent from the average under the Council's proposals, and no more than 3 per cent under both the Conservatives' and Liberal Democrats' proposals. By 2003, the electoral variance in all three wards was expected to be within 2 per cent of the average under each of the three schemes.

60 We noted that the Borough Council's and Liberal Democrats' Stage One proposals included a forecast of 109 electors in an anticipated new housing development, Parson's House on Kew Bridge Road, in their ward covering the Brentford area, west of Chiswick. The Conservatives had included these additional electors in their revised Chiswick Riverside ward. All three schemes broadly used the same western boundary along the centre of Chiswick High Road (south of Chiswick roundabout) and Kew Road to the borough boundary. We sought advice from the Borough Council on the precise location of the development, who confirmed to us that the

development of 68 dwellings with a projected electorate of 109 would indeed fall to the east of the boundary proposed by all three schemes and was therefore only correctly allocated under the Conservatives' submission. Each scheme would result in comparable levels of electoral equality in the area, although the reallocation of the Parson's House development would adversely affect the electoral equality forecast for 2003 under the Liberal Democrats' and Borough Council's proposals.

61 In our draft recommendations report, we recognised that the Great West Road would form a suitable ward boundary between Turnham Green and Chiswick Riverside, facilitating good electoral equality and reflecting local ties. Furthermore, we considered that the Conservatives' proposal to utilise the Great Chertsey Road (A316) as the boundary between Chiswick Homefields and Chiswick Riverside wards would provide a more easily identifiable boundary and better electoral equality. We therefore adopted both these boundaries as part of our draft recommendations. We also consulted on the boundary between Chiswick Homefields and Turnham Green wards as proposed by the Conservatives. Our proposals differed from the Conservatives' in only one area, by following the centre of Gunnersbury Avenue as the western boundary of Turnham Green ward.

62 Under our draft recommendations, the number of electors per councillor would be 3 per cent above the average in Chiswick Homefields (2 per cent above in 2003), 1 per cent above in Chiswick Riverside (unchanged in 2003) and 2 per cent above in Turnham Green (unchanged in 2003).

63 At Stage Three we received comments on our draft recommendations for the Chiswick area from the Council, the Conservatives, Hounslow Labour Party (Local Government Committee), Councillors Lee and Davies, members for Turnham Green ward, three residents of Chiswick and a resident of Isleworth.

64 The Borough Council agreed with our proposed wards in Chiswick, as it did with all of our draft recommendations for the borough. The Conservatives supported our draft recommendations in the Chiswick area, proposing only one minor amendment under all three of its preference options at Stage Three: that the

proposed western boundary of Turnham Green ward should run to the rear of properties on the west side of Gunnersbury Avenue (affecting only 28 electors) which, they considered, would better reflect community ties in the area. Hounslow Labour Party (Local Government Committee) proposed a modified Chiswick Homefields ward based on existing polling districts V, X and XD with a small part of WD which, by extending the western boundary to Duke's Avenue and the southern boundary along the south side of Paxton Avenue and Corney Road to the River Thames would, it argued, "represent a natural community". It did not supply electorate data with its submission.

65 Councillors Lee and Davies, members for Turnham Green ward, supported the proposed ward boundaries for the three wards in the Chiswick area, although they suggested that Turnham Green ward should be renamed Turnham Green & Gunnersbury thereby reflecting the modified ward boundaries in the area and in particular the inclusion of the "Gunnersbury Park Garden Estate" area within the proposed Turnham Green ward. Three Chiswick residents proposed a minor amendment to the western boundary of Chiswick Riverside and Turnham Green wards to follow the railway line from Gunnersbury Avenue to the M4 motorway which, they argued, would better reflect local links with the B&Q superstore while not affecting electoral variances. Under these proposals, the boundary between Chiswick Riverside and Turnham Green wards would also be modified following the elevated section of the M4 motorway.

66 A resident of Isleworth proposed a revised warding pattern for the Chiswick area: including much of the existing Chiswick Homefields and Turnham Green wards in a new single ward; proposing minimal change to the boundaries of the existing Chiswick Riverside ward; and suggesting a new ward formed from the eastern area of the existing Gunnersbury ward. The resident did not provide electorate data or detailed mapping.

67 We have carefully considered the representations received. We recognise the rationality of modifying the western boundary of Turnham Green ward to include properties on both sides of Gunnersbury Avenue in the same ward. In fact, following further analysis, we ascertained that the figures in our draft recommendations report already included the 28

electors on the western side of Gunnersbury Avenue and therefore no recalculation was required. In order to reflect the locally expressed view that the area surrounding the B&Q superstore should form part of the Chiswick area warding pattern, we propose amending the boundary between Chiswick Riverside, Brentford and Turnham Green wards to follow the railway line from Gunnersbury Avenue to the M4 motorway and the boundary between Chiswick Riverside and Turnham Green wards would extend west along the elevated section of the M4 motorway. The affected area contains no electors and therefore does not impact on electoral equality. We concluded that the proposals from Hounslow Labour Party for a revised Chiswick Homefields ward and the broad proposals from an Isleworth resident would neither achieve as good electoral equality as our draft recommendations nor be compatible with our proposed warding pattern in adjacent wards, which received broad local support at Stage Three.

68 We are not adopting the proposal to rename Turnham Green ward as Turnham Green & Gunnersbury ward, as we judge that much of the Gunnersbury area, notably Gunnersbury Park, would actually fall within the proposed Brentford ward, and we do not consider that it would be appropriate to associate the name Gunnersbury with the Turnham Green ward only. We conclude that the name Turnham Green provides a more concise name and confirm it as part of our final recommendations.

69 To conclude, we are confirming our draft recommendations for Chiswick Homefields, Chiswick Riverside and Turnham Green subject to two minor boundary modifications to the western boundary of Turnham Green ward, which would not affect the electoral equality in any of the wards. Under our final recommendations, the electoral variances in the three wards would be no more than 3 per cent (2 per cent in 2003).

The Central Area

70 The Central Area comprises 12 wards covering the communities of Brentford, Cranford, Heston, Hounslow, Isleworth, Osterley and Spring Grove. There was broad agreement among Stage One respondents for the boundaries between the Chiswick and Bedfont, Feltham and Heston areas (broadly the River Crane and Chiswick High Road/Gunnersbury Avenue respectively) and we

have referred to these communities in the centre of the borough as “The Central Area” for the purpose of describing ward patterns. In formulating our draft proposals for the central 12 wards, we were guided by the same principles as elsewhere in the borough, namely achieving electoral equality while having regard to the statutory criteria. The three schemes we received from the Council, the Liberal Democrats and the Conservatives all proposed ward patterns in the Central Area which would achieve good, and comparable, levels of electoral equality. There was, however, greater divergence between the three schemes on the most appropriate ward boundaries for the Central Area than in either the Chiswick or the Feltham, Bedfont and Hanworth areas of the borough. Nevertheless, in broad terms, each scheme proposed ward boundaries along major roads, railways or natural features.

71 We considered that each comprehensive Stage One scheme for the Central Area had some merits. We therefore sought to formulate a scheme which would achieve the best electoral equality across the 12 wards, having regard to local communities. In considering the different proposals which we received, we recognised in our draft recommendations report that the dense urban character of the Central Area meant it was difficult to adopt part of a scheme for one area and adopt alternative proposals in adjacent wards, as the warding patterns proposed under each scheme were not compatible across the whole area. We also proposed further modifications to ward boundaries, where we believed that better electoral arrangements could be achieved.

72 At Stage Three, the majority of respondents commented on our draft recommendations for the Central Area. In particular, the Council supported our draft recommendations, although we received revised warding proposals from the Conservatives and three other respondents who made broad suggestions for revised warding patterns in parts of the Central Area. The following sections describe our proposals and the representations received in more detail. The large map in the back of the report illustrates our final recommendations.

Brentford Clifden and Gunnersbury wards

73 The two wards of Brentford Clifden and Gunnersbury are situated to the west of the Chiswick area and each is currently represented by three councillors. The number of electors per

councillor in the wards is 17 per cent below and 3 per cent below the borough average respectively (12 per cent below and 1 per cent below in 2003).

74 At Stage One, the three borough-wide schemes from the Borough Council, the Conservatives and the Liberal Democrats all proposed transferring part of the current Gunnersbury ward into the Chiswick area for borough warding purposes, using Gunnersbury Avenue and Chiswick High Road as a boundary. Each of the three schemes also proposed transferring an area of Brentford Clifden ward into a revised ward covering the Isleworth North area. The remaining areas of Gunnersbury and Brentford Clifden wards formed a new three-member ward under each of the three schemes. The Council and the Conservatives proposed that the new ward should be called Brentford and the Liberal Democrats suggested Brentford East.

75 The Council’s Stage One submission proposed that the western boundary of the new Brentford ward should generally follow the Grand Union Canal from the north of the borough, turning east along the Great West Road, south along Windmill Road and Half Acre Road, and eastwards again generally along St Paul’s Road and the north side of Albany Road, before rejoining the existing boundary. Alternatively, the Conservatives proposed that the western boundary of Brentford ward should run to the west of Windmill Road, then generally west through the trading estate, south along Boston Manor Road, and then through the dock area to the borough boundary. The Liberal Democrats proposed using Enfield Road as the western boundary of the ward, before generally following Windmill Road and Half Acre Road as in the Council’s proposals, then the existing ward boundary to the west of The Ham and along Augustus Close to the borough boundary. Under each scheme, the northern and southern boundaries of the proposed ward would be the borough boundary.

76 Hounslow Labour Party (Local Government Committee) also proposed a revised Brentford ward at Stage One, following similar boundaries to those proposed by the Borough Council, with only minor modifications.

77 Under the Borough Council’s Stage One proposals, the number of electors per councillor in the proposed Brentford ward would have been 1 per cent above the average (3 per cent above in 2003); under the Conservatives’ proposals 7 per

cent below (1 per cent above in 2003); and under the Liberal Democrats' proposals Brentford East ward would have been 10 per cent below the borough average (equal to the average in 2003).

78 We carefully considered the alternative proposals we received for this area. In our draft recommendations report, we noted there was general consensus that parts of the existing Gunnersbury and Brentford Clifden wards should be combined to form a new ward. There was also general agreement that the eastern boundary of the proposed new ward should follow the clear boundary of Gunnersbury Avenue and Chiswick High Road, although there was less agreement on the western boundary.

79 We concluded that the Borough Council's proposals for this area would achieve a high degree of electoral equality and that its boundary along the Grand Union Canal formed an easily identifiable western boundary and best reflected existing community ties in the area. We consulted on the ward name of Brentford, as submitted by the Council and the Conservatives. Under our draft recommendations, the number of electors per councillor in Brentford ward would be 1 per cent above the borough average (unchanged in 2003).

80 At Stage Three, the Council supported our proposals for these two wards. The Conservatives supported the proposed Brentford ward, subject to a minor modification to the eastern boundary along Gunnersbury Avenue, affecting 28 electors who would form part of Turnham Green ward as detailed earlier. The electoral variance would be unaffected. Additionally, three Chiswick residents proposed a revised eastern boundary to follow the railway line, which would not affect any additional electors and which we are adopting, as detailed earlier. A resident of Isleworth proposed a modified western boundary of Brentford ward, to follow the entire length of the Grand Union Canal/River Brent from the north to the south of the borough, although without supplying supporting electorate data. Brentford & Isleworth Labour Party proposed renaming the proposed Brentford ward as Brentford East to reflect the inclusion of part of Brentford in an adjacent ward to the west. It also proposed a minor boundary modification to follow the rear of properties along the north side of Albany Road, which we noted had formed part of the Council's Stage One proposals, but had not been accurately reflected in the draft recommendations.

81 We propose retaining the ward name Brentford, as proposed by the Council and the Conservatives, rather than Brentford East as we consider the name accurately reflects the composition of the ward and has received some support locally. Furthermore, we are retaining the name of the adjacent ward of Syon. We received no other proposals for change to Brentford ward and we are therefore confirming our draft recommendations in this area as final, subject to the boundary modifications around Albany Road, Gunnersbury Avenue and the railway line as detailed above.

Isleworth North, Isleworth South and Spring Grove wards

82 The three wards of Isleworth North, Isleworth South and Spring Grove are located in the centre of the borough and each ward is currently represented by three councillors. The number of electors per councillor in Isleworth North ward is 7 per cent above the borough average (14 per cent above in 2003), in Isleworth South ward 11 per cent below (unchanged in 2003) and in Spring Grove ward 12 per cent above (unchanged in 2003).

83 At Stage One, all three comprehensive borough-wide schemes proposed changes to the existing ward boundaries in this area. The Borough Council proposed that the existing Isleworth North ward be divided broadly into two parts, with the area generally north of the Chiswick main railway line forming part of a new Osterley ward, and the area south of the railway line forming part of a new Syon ward.

84 Alternatively, the Liberal Democrats proposed that Isleworth North ward should continue to extend from the north to the south of the borough, although the ward's eastern boundary would be modified to include the area west of Windmill Road and Enfield Road. They also proposed transferring an area north of the Great West Road and generally west of Syon Lane into a revised Heston East ward, and an area west of Park Road and south of London Road (including the West Middlesex Hospital) into a revised Spring Grove ward. The Conservatives' proposal had some similarities to the Liberal Democrats', although the Conservatives further proposed transferring the area east of Wood Lane and west of Spur Road (bounded in the south by the railway line and in the north by the Great West Road) from Isleworth North into a modified Spring Grove ward, but not the area around the West Middlesex Hospital, as under the Liberal Democrats' proposals. The

Conservatives' proposed boundary between Isleworth North and Brentford wards would broadly follow Boston Manor Road as far as the M4 flyover, then follow a line east to the borough boundary.

85 In the area covered by the existing Isleworth South ward, there was a greater degree of consensus between the three schemes at Stage One. All three proposed maintaining the existing western boundary, which generally follows the Duke of Northumberland's River and a route through the Mogden Sewage Purification Works to the borough boundary. The southern and eastern boundaries of the ward are formed by the borough boundary. Therefore, the difference of opinion concerned the ward's northern boundary.

86 The Borough Council proposed that the northern boundary of Isleworth South ward should be extended to include an area between Linkfield Road and St John's Road, west of St John's Gardens, then follow part of St John's Road and Mill Plat. Its proposals retained the existing boundary along St John's Road from Grainger Road to Twickenham Road only. The Conservatives' proposals were broadly similar. However, the Liberal Democrats proposed utilising the existing ward boundary along St John's Road to the junction with Twickenham Road, but then following a boundary to the rear of Hepple Close and Park Road to the borough boundary.

87 At Stage One, the Council proposed enlarging the existing Spring Grove ward eastwards, to include the northern part of the existing Isleworth North ward (north of the railway line as far as the Grand Union Canal). It proposed utilising the current boundary along this railway line as the entire southern boundary for the revised Spring Grove ward. The Council proposed modifying the western boundary of Spring Grove ward: in the north it would follow the existing boundary along the edge of Osterley Park, turning east along the park boundary, southwards between Penwerris Avenue and Cranmore Avenue, then along the London Underground Piccadilly line south from the Great West Road, east along Spring Grove Road and south on Thornbury Road.

88 In comparison, the Conservatives' Stage One proposals for Spring Grove ward did not include the industrial developments around the West Cross Centre (which would form part of a revised Isleworth North ward under their proposals), and

the ward boundary followed Spring Grove Road and Gresham Road in the south. North of the Great West Road, their proposed boundary followed a line to the west of Lulworth Avenue.

89 The Liberal Democrats submitted proposals at Stage One which substantially differed from both the Council's and the Conservatives'. They proposed utilising the Great West Road as a northern boundary for a revised Spring Grove ward, thereby transferring the Osterley area (including the park) into an enlarged Heston East ward. The area to the south of the Great West Road was combined with the area around the West Middlesex Hospital, south of the railway line (currently in Isleworth North ward), to form a reconfigured Spring Grove ward.

90 Stage One respondents submitted different proposals for ward names in the area. The ward comprising Syon Park and Brentford End was renamed Syon by the Borough Council, and the reconfigured ward, similarly oriented to the existing Isleworth North ward, was renamed Brentford West by the Liberal Democrats and Syon Park by the Conservatives. The area covered by the existing Isleworth South ward, whose boundaries would remain largely unchanged under each scheme, was renamed Isleworth under all three schemes. The ward comprising the Spring Grove and Osterley areas was renamed Osterley by the Borough Council, and Spring Grove & Osterley by the Conservatives. The Liberal Democrats' proposed ward, including part of the existing Spring Grove ward south of the Great West Road, retained the name Spring Grove (its modified ward north of the Great West Road was called Heston & Osterley).

91 The number of electors per councillor in the Borough Council's proposed Syon ward was 13 per cent below the borough average, in the Conservatives' proposed Syon Park ward 6 per cent below, and in the Liberal Democrats' proposed Brentford West ward, equal to the borough average (no ward was expected to vary by more than 2 per cent from the borough average under all three schemes by 2003 as a result of housing development). The electoral variance in the proposed Isleworth ward was no more than 3 per cent (unchanged in 2003) under each of the three schemes. In the Borough Council's proposed Osterley ward, the Conservatives' proposed Spring Grove & Osterley ward and the Liberal Democrats' proposed Spring Grove ward, the number of electors per councillor

was no more than 3 per cent from the borough average (1 per cent in 2003).

92 The Liberal Democrats' electorate forecasts for its Stage One proposals did not include an additional 1,022 electors expected to fall within the borough under the five-year electorate forecasts. The majority of the expected development would in fact fall within the Liberal Democrats' proposed Brentford West and Spring Grove wards, thereby worsening electoral equality in the area by 2003. The Borough Council's submission included an additional 86 electors in its current electorate data in its proposed Osterley ward, although this would have a marginal effect on the electoral variances in the ward.

93 In our draft recommendations report, we noted that there was general consensus regarding the existing Isleworth South ward which would be subject to modifications along its northern boundary only. Only Hounslow Labour Party proposed substantially different ward boundaries in this area, suggesting a transfer of the southern part of the existing ward into a modified Hounslow South ward. There was also a degree of agreement between the Council's and the Conservatives' proposals for the area covered by the existing Isleworth North and Spring Grove wards, particularly in proposing the utilisation of the Chiswick mainline railway as an identifiable boundary. We noted that the Great West Road is not used as a ward boundary under existing arrangements in this area and only the Liberal Democrats proposed using it significantly under future arrangements.

94 We concluded that the Borough Council's proposed Osterley ward would achieve a high degree of electoral equality and use identifiable ward boundaries which reflect community links in the area, and we therefore consulted on this proposal as part of our draft recommendations.

95 We welcomed the consensual view at Stage One that the existing Isleworth South ward should remain largely unchanged, except for its northern boundary, where we proposed adopting the majority of the Liberal Democrats' northern ward boundary along Hepple Close, turning south along Park Road to the borough boundary, as it would provide a clear boundary for the ward. We proposed, however, that the boundary should follow the centre of these roads, apart from the rear of The Ferry House on Park Road. All three Stage

One schemes utilised St John's Road as part of their proposed ward boundaries for Isleworth ward and we recommended the Liberal Democrats' approach to this boundary, which would be easily identifiable, although we proposed extending the boundary west along St John's Road as far as the railway line.

96 Our draft recommendations adopted the ward names submitted by the Council for Syon and Isleworth as we considered that they reflect identities in the area. However, we proposed renaming Osterley ward as Osterley & Spring Grove ward in order to better reflect community identities. Under our draft recommendations, the number of electors per councillor would be 11 per cent below the borough average in Syon (3 per cent above in 2003), equal to the average in Osterley & Spring Grove (1 per cent below in 2003) and 1 per cent above the average in Isleworth (unchanged in 2003).

97 At Stage Three, the Council supported our recommendations for these wards. The Conservatives supported all the proposed names for the wards and all but one of the proposed boundaries between Osterley & Spring Grove ward and Heston East. They opposed the proposed western boundary for these wards, stating that the "recommended ward boundaries will split the community of Osterley by transferring the area north of the Great West Road, west of Cranmore Avenue into Heston East".

98 The Conservatives, as part of their first preference option, proposed the same ward boundaries for Osterley as contained in their Stage One submission. Their second preference option supported our proposed Osterley & Spring Grove ward with only a minor boundary amendment, to follow the rear of properties on Bassett Gardens.

99 The Conservatives also proposed an alternative boundary between the proposed Isleworth and Syon wards to the south side of properties on Linkfield Road and part of St John's Road and along the Duke of Northumberland's River, which they considered would improve electoral equality in the wards, better reflect existing local ties, and utilise clearer boundaries. In particular, the Conservatives commented that the proposed boundary along Hepple Close contained in the draft recommendations did not reflect the fact that Hepple Close was a cul-de-sac with properties in close proximity on either side of the road. This

modification to the boundary between Isleworth and Syon wards was included as the Conservatives' third preference option at Stage Three. Brentford & Isleworth Labour Party proposed renaming our proposed Syon ward as Brentford Syon to reflect the location of an area of Brentford within the ward.

¹⁰⁰ At Stage Three, Hounslow Labour Party proposed a new Spring Grove ward, which would retain our proposed western boundary of Osterley & Spring Grove ward along the edge of Osterley Park and the railway line to Spring Grove Road. Elsewhere, it proposed retaining the existing boundaries of the current Spring Grove ward, apart from taking an alternative route from the railway line to Wood Lane along College Road. One resident of Isleworth proposed a similarly modified Spring Grove ward although the Woodlands Estate area would form part of a modified adjacent ward. The resident also proposed a modified Isleworth South ward utilising the existing northern boundary and including the Woodlands Estate area. Heston Residents' Association, as part of its Stage Three proposals for the Heston area, proposed modifying the boundary between Heston East and Osterley & Spring Grove wards to include an area of Osterley Park and Cranmore Avenue, all of Bassett Gardens and part of Jersey Road in an enlarged Heston East ward. The Residents' Association did not include electorate data or detailed mapping in its submission.

¹⁰¹ We received a petition signed by 61 residents of Jersey Road, Lulworth Avenue and Penwerris Avenue (all within the current Spring Grove ward) proposing no change to the existing boundary between the existing Heston East and Spring Grove wards (Heston East and Osterley & Spring Grove wards under the draft recommendations) for community identity reasons. We also received a further 10 representations at Stage Three from residents in Spring Grove ward, which opposed the draft proposals to include their area in a modified Heston East ward, arguing that it would adversely affect existing community ties in Osterley, an area which shared no community identity with Heston.

¹⁰² In light of the responses received and evidence available to us, we have reconsidered our draft recommendations for this area. We concluded that our proposed Osterley & Spring Grove ward boundary to the rear of Penwerris Avenue did not reflect community ties in the Osterley area. We noted the representations from local residents and

the Conservatives' first preference option, which all proposed modifying the boundary between Osterley & Spring Grove ward and Heston East ward. We are adopting the modified boundary submitted by the Conservatives, which also formed part of their Stage One submission, following a line to the east of properties along the western end of Jersey Road to the Great West Road. We then propose following the Great West Road to the railway line and rejoining the proposed boundary going south to Spring Grove Road. Although this proposal would not achieve as good electoral equality as would have resulted under our draft recommendations, we judge in this case that a slight reduction in electoral equality is justifiable in order to respect community ties in the area. Our modified boundary is illustrated on the large map at the back of this report. This modification would respect local communities, while still recognising the need for reasonable electoral equality.

¹⁰³ We do not agree with the view that our proposed boundary between Isleworth and Syon wards along Hepple Close fails to provide a convenient and clear ward boundary. We believe that the housing on the east side of this proposed boundary is separated from the residential developments to the west. We also remain of the view that our proposed boundary along St John's Road, Mill Plat, Hepple Close and Park Road forms a suitable boundary, which it is anticipated would facilitate good electoral equality taking into account the considerable projected development over the five-year period. The proposals received from Hounslow Labour Party were based substantially on the existing Spring Grove ward and would not form a warding pattern which would be compatible with our proposals elsewhere in the borough. We judge that the ward name Syon, as proposed by the Council, provides an appropriate name which reflects the prominence of Syon Park in the ward and we believe has local support and we are retaining it in our final recommendations. We are therefore confirming our draft recommendations for Isleworth and Syon wards as final, subject to amending a minor miscalculation contained in our draft recommendations in polling district RC, thereby correctly allocating an additional 42 electors to Syon ward. This would not significantly affect the electoral variances in the two wards. Under our final recommendations, the average number of electors per councillor would be 1 per cent above the average in Isleworth ward (unchanged in 2003) and 11 per cent below in Syon ward (4 per cent above in 2003).

104 We noted three further minor calculation errors affecting our proposed Osterley & Spring Grove ward and the adjoining wards of Heston East, Hounslow Central and Syon. Having taken account of these changes (affecting polling districts O and OA), our proposed Osterley & Spring Grove ward would lose 66 electors, Heston East would gain 29 electors and Hounslow Central ward would gain 37 electors. These recalculations would have a minimal impact upon electoral variances.

105 Under our final recommendations, the average number of electors per councillor would be 8 per cent above the average in Osterley & Spring Grove ward (6 per cent above in 2003).

Hounslow Central, Hounslow Heath, Hounslow South and Hounslow West wards

106 The four wards of Hounslow Central, Hounslow Heath, Hounslow South and Hounslow West are situated in the centre of the borough. Each ward is currently represented by three councillors and the number of electors per councillor is 6 per cent below the borough average (3 per cent below in 2003), 6 per cent above (3 per cent above in 2003), 1 per cent below (3 per cent below in 2003) and 24 per cent above (27 per cent above in 2003) respectively. Hounslow West ward currently has the worst electoral imbalance in the borough.

107 At Stage One, there was a degree of consensus between the Borough Council, the Conservatives and the Liberal Democrats in a number of areas. Each proposed broadly similar ward boundaries in the Central Area of Hounslow. The Borough Council and Conservatives proposed substantially similar ward boundaries for Hounslow South ward and there was a measure of comparability between the Liberal Democrats and Conservatives for proposals in the area of the existing Hounslow West ward. There was less agreement between the three schemes on the proposed ward boundaries in the area of the existing Hounslow Heath ward.

108 For the existing Hounslow Central ward, as part of its Stage One proposals, the Borough Council proposed including an area east of the existing ward boundary on Worton Way, as far as Thornbury Road and south of Spring Grove Road (currently in Spring Grove ward) in a revised ward. For the rest of the ward, the Council proposed broadly retaining the existing boundaries, although

it proposed utilising Spring Grove Road for much of the northern ward boundary, thereby transferring electors in the Spring Grove Crescent area into a revised Heston East ward. Similarly, the Liberal Democrats' proposals broadly followed existing ward boundaries, except where they proposed an alternative boundary east of Worton Way and Bridge Road. The Conservatives proposed extending the existing Hounslow Central ward further east as far as St John's Road, utilising Spring Grove Road as a boundary to a greater extent. The Conservatives also moved away from the existing western boundary of Lampton Road, instead following an alternative boundary along Alexandra Road and Douglas Road.

109 Both the Council and the Conservatives proposed transferring the Woodlands Estate area, between the railway line and the Duke of Northumberland's River (currently in Spring Grove ward), into a modified Hounslow South ward. Both schemes proposed maintaining the existing ward boundary in the east at the Mogden Sewage Purification Works and broadly extending the western ward boundary along the railway line to the borough boundary. The Conservatives proposed renaming the existing Hounslow Central ward as Hounslow East, but retaining the current ward name of Hounslow South. The Liberal Democrats alternatively proposed retaining the existing northern ward boundary along Bridge Road and the existing western ward boundary along Hanworth Road, as opposed to utilising the railway line as proposed by the Council and the Conservatives. The Borough Council and the Liberal Democrats proposed retaining the existing ward names of Hounslow Central and Hounslow South.

110 At Stage One, Hounslow Labour Party also proposed maintaining the existing northern boundary of Hounslow South ward, but proposed extending the existing ward to the east and broadly following the railway line as the ward's western boundary.

111 Hounslow West ward is significantly under-represented under the current arrangements. Broadly, the Conservatives' and Liberal Democrats' Stage One proposals divided the existing Hounslow West ward on a north – south line. The Liberal Democrats proposed dividing the ward along Sutton Lane and Wellington Road (North and South), transferring the western portion of the ward into a modified ward to be called Hounslow

Heath. The remaining (eastern) part formed a modified three-member ward, to be called Lampton under the Liberal Democrats' proposals. The Conservatives proposed a similar division along Sutton Lane, but then generally following Cromwell Road to the borough boundary rather than Wellington Road South. The Conservatives' modified ward, containing the western part of the current Hounslow West ward, was renamed Hounslow Heath. The Conservatives' modified ward, containing the eastern part of the existing Hounslow West ward, was renamed Hounslow Central.

112 The Borough Council proposed dividing the existing Hounslow West ward on an east – west line along the south side of Staines Road, to form a revised ward pattern for the current Hounslow Heath, Heston Central and Heston East wards. Hounslow Labour Party also proposed a east – west split to form revised Hounslow West and Heston Central wards.

113 As part of its Stage One proposals the Council proposed transferring an area from the existing Hounslow West ward, north of the Staines Road and south of the London Underground Piccadilly line (which runs overground in this area) into the existing Hounslow Heath ward, and renaming this ward Hounslow Heath. Broadly, the area south of the Staines Road formed a revised ward which the Council proposed renaming Hounslow West. It also proposed transferring an area from the existing Hounslow Heath ward (north of Bath Road, west of Lampton Park and south of the Great West Road) into a revised Heston Central ward.

114 The Liberal Democrats proposed an alternative warding pattern for the area of the existing Hounslow Heath ward at Stage One. Their proposals utilised Beavers Lane as a southern boundary; an alternative western and northern boundary to include areas of the existing Heston Central and Heston West wards; and generally maintained the existing eastern boundary of Hounslow Heath ward between the Great West Road and Bath Road. This modified ward was called Hounslow West under their proposals.

115 The Conservatives also proposed using Beavers Lane as a southern boundary, then proposed a boundary west along Salisbury Road, continuing west to a point at the River Crane. The Conservatives generally maintained the existing eastern boundary and part of the northern boundary of Hounslow Heath ward along Sutton

Lane and the Great West Road respectively. For the northern boundary, the Conservatives proposed following the Great South-West Road to the River Crane, thereby transferring an area of the existing Cranford ward into a modified three-member ward, to be called Hounslow West.

116 We received a submission at Stage One from Hounslow Central Branch of the Brentford & Isleworth Labour Party which limited its comments to the Central Area of the borough. It stated that regard should be had to community identities in the area when revising ward boundaries and that if the ward boundaries are to be modified, the ward should be extended westwards to include an area around the Civic Centre, to the east of Lampton Park and west of Lampton Road.

117 The number of electors per councillor in the four wards that lie wholly within the area proposed at Stage One by the Borough Council, or under the five wards proposed by the Liberal Democrats and Conservatives, was no greater than 4 per cent from the borough average, with the exception of the Council's proposed Hounslow Central ward at 6 per cent. By 2003, no ward was expected to vary by more than 2 per cent from the borough average under each of the three schemes. The Council's proposed four wards provide an appropriate level of representation in the area when compared to the five wards proposed by the Conservatives and Liberal Democrats, since under the Council's proposals, parts of the current Hounslow Heath, Hounslow West and Hounslow Central wards would form part of reconfigured wards in the Heston area.

118 We carefully considered the representations received. In our draft recommendations report we noted that for Hounslow Central ward, the Borough Council, the Conservatives and the Liberal Democrats each proposed schemes extending the eastern ward boundary to include areas currently in Spring Grove ward, while only the Hounslow Central Branch of Brentford & Isleworth Labour Party proposed enlarging the Hounslow Central ward westwards. In Hounslow South ward, there was greater consensus between the three schemes, with only the Liberal Democrats differing substantially, by proposing the use of Bridge Road as the northern boundary of the ward.

119 As part of our draft recommendations, we adopted the Borough Council's proposals for Hounslow South ward, with a minor boundary

modification in order to utilise the railway line as the ward's entire western boundary, as proposed by the Conservatives. In Hounslow Central ward, we concluded that the Council's proposals ensured good electoral equality and used clear ward boundaries. As a consequence of our revision to Hounslow South ward, the Council's proposed southern boundary for Hounslow Central ward would follow the entire length of the railway line. We proposed retaining the existing ward names of Hounslow Central and Hounslow South, which reflected the majority of Stage One views.

120 Under our draft recommendations, the number of electors per councillor would be 4 per cent below the borough average in Hounslow Central ward (equal to the average in 2003) and 1 per cent above in Hounslow South ward (1 per cent below in 2003).

121 The proposals we received at Stage One for Hounslow West and Hounslow Heath wards differed more substantially. Under the Borough Council's east – west division of the existing Hounslow West ward, the southern part of the existing ward (south of Staines Road) and an area bounded by Hanworth Road, the railway line and Whitton Road (currently in Hounslow South ward) would form a modified three-member Hounslow West ward. North of Staines Road, the Council proposed a modified Hounslow Heath ward. We judged that these proposals achieved improved electoral equality, reflected local identities and, with a minor modification to follow the centre of Staines Road, formed a clearly identifiable boundary. We considered that a north – south split of the ward as proposed by the Conservatives and Liberal Democrats achieved a comparable level of electoral equality; however, these proposals were not compatible with our proposals for adjacent wards.

122 We therefore consulted on the Council's proposed boundaries in this area subject to three minor boundary modifications: utilising the centre of the Staines Road as noted above; following a line to the rear of properties along the western side of Sutton Lane between the railway line and Bath Road; and following the centre of Basildene Road for its entire length. We also proposed transposing the ward names so that the ward covering the area north of the Staines Road would be called Hounslow West and the ward south of the Staines Road, including the Heath itself, would be called Hounslow Heath. We considered this would better reflect the respective areas.

123 Under our draft recommendations, the number of electors per councillor in Hounslow Heath ward would be 1 per cent below the borough average (2 per cent above in 2003) and in Hounslow West ward, 1 per cent below (3 per cent below in 2003).

124 At Stage Three, the Council supported our draft recommendations for the four wards of Hounslow Central, Hounslow Heath, Hounslow South and Hounslow West, which broadly reflected its Stage One submissions. The Conservatives argued that its Stage One proposals (resubmitted as its first preference option at Stage Three), which utilised the Great West Road as a ward boundary, "more genuinely reflects the ties of community interest in the area". The Conservatives stated that its first preference option included a Hounslow Heath ward that would create "a ward which comprises those communities living closest to the Heath". The Conservatives argued that their proposed Hounslow Central and Hounslow East wards, based substantially on their Stage One submission, although following an alternative western boundary for its proposed Hounslow East ward along Staines Road from the junction with Lampton Road and then south along Gilbert Street and Inwood Road to the railway line, would utilise clear boundaries and existing polling districts. The Conservatives supported our draft recommendations for Hounslow South ward.

125 Hounslow Labour Party proposed a reconfigured Hounslow Heath ward at Stage Three which would retain the existing northern, southern and eastern ward boundaries, although utilising our draft recommendations for a modified western boundary of Hounslow West ward along Basildene Road. It also proposed a modified Hounslow Central ward which would largely reflect the existing boundaries of Hounslow Central ward but also include an area west of Lampton Road around the Civic Centre. Hounslow Labour Party argued that its wards would better reflect local ties in the areas, adding that the draft recommendations for Hounslow Central ward would "cross natural boundaries, i.e the London Road."

126 At Stage Three, Hounslow South Ward Labour Party argued that the Woodlands Estate area does not share a local identity with the rest of the proposed Hounslow South ward and that the railway line is not a "natural boundary". One resident of the Woodlands Estate area argued that the area looked towards the "Isleworth part of the borough and not the Hounslow South area", and has no links with communities forming the existing

Hounslow South ward. He proposed that the estate should form part of the proposed Isleworth ward, if it could not remain in the existing Spring Grove ward.

127 We have carefully considered the representations received for this area. We calculated that if the Woodlands Estate area (comprising over 1,400 electors) was included in the proposed Osterley & Spring Grove ward as in our draft recommendation, the electoral variance would be 16 per cent in 2003, or if the estate formed part of Isleworth ward, the electoral variance would be 18 per cent in 2003 (both under-represented). Consequently, Hounslow South ward would have an electoral variance of 19 per cent in 2003 (over-represented) under either configuration. We considered that this level of electoral inequality could not be justified and that our proposed ward boundaries in the area, along the river and the railway line form easily identifiable ward boundaries. We are therefore confirming our draft recommendations for Hounslow South ward as final.

128 Furthermore, we were not persuaded that the Conservatives' alternative proposals for Hounslow Central, Hounslow Heath and Hounslow West wards would provide a better electoral scheme. Their proposals reflected their original Stage One submission and did not provide any compelling, or new, evidence. We are therefore confirming our proposals for Hounslow Central, Hounslow Heath and Hounslow West wards as final.

129 We noted an incorrect allocation of electors between Hounslow West and Cranford wards (polling district H) contained in our draft recommendations report, which we are correcting. An additional 35 electors have therefore been allocated to Hounslow West ward under our final recommendations, which would have a minimal impact on electoral variances.

Cranford ward

130 Cranford ward is located in the west of the Central Area of the borough and its western boundary is also the borough boundary. The number of electors represented by each of the three councillors in Cranford ward is 7 per cent below the borough average (9 per cent below in 2003).

131 At Stage One, the three comprehensive borough-wide schemes all proposed alternative

boundaries for a revised Cranford ward, in order to address the relative over-representation in the area. The Council proposed maintaining the majority of the existing ward boundaries, only substantially departing from the existing boundary to the south of Bath Road, where it proposed that the boundary should follow Basildene Road, thereby incorporating 700 electors from the existing Hounslow Heath ward. The Conservatives and the Liberal Democrats proposed that part of the existing Cranford ward south of the Great South-West Road should form part of a modified Hounslow Heath ward. The Liberal Democrats proposed including areas around the Western International Market, Parkway Trading Estate and the Heston Service area (south of the M4 motorway) in a modified Cranford ward.

132 The Conservatives' Stage One proposals for Cranford included following Cranford Lane as a northern boundary and Springwell Road as an eastern boundary. Under their proposals, the area of the existing Cranford ward south of the Great South-West Road would form part of reconfigured wards of Hounslow West and Hounslow Heath. The Conservatives and the Liberal Democrats proposed that the Great South-West Road should form the southern boundary of a revised Cranford ward.

133 Both the Conservatives and the Liberal Democrats proposed extending Cranford ward to the north-east, moving away from the existing boundary of The Parkway and Bath Road, to include part of the existing Heston West ward. The Conservatives' proposals transferred properties generally to the south of Cranford Lane while the Liberal Democrats proposed an alternative transfer of broadly half those properties south of the Cranford Lane, and a number of properties, including the Western International Market, to the north.

134 Under the Borough Council's and Liberal Democrats' proposals, the number of electors per councillor in Cranford ward would be no more than 2 per cent from the borough average, and no more than 4 per cent from the average under the Conservatives' proposals (no more than 2 per cent in 2003 under each scheme).

135 In our draft recommendations, we concluded that the existing boundary along The Parkway and Bath Road provides a clear, easily identifiable

boundary which was retained under the Borough Council's proposals. The Council's proposed Cranford ward also provided a high degree of electoral equality, without substantially moving away from the existing ward structure in this area. We therefore consulted on the Council's proposed Cranford ward, subject to minor boundary modifications to follow the centre of Staines Road and the centre of Basildene Road for its whole length. Under our proposals, the number of electors per councillor would be 1 per cent above the borough average (1 per cent below in 2003).

136 At Stage Three, the Council supported our draft recommendations for Cranford ward. The Conservatives' resubmitted their Stage One proposal for Cranford ward as their first preference option. They argued that this option "has the advantage of very clear boundaries and geographic cohesion". Their second preference option included modifications to this ward to include the Redwood Estate area north of The Parkway in a modified Cranford ward and to exclude an area to the south of properties on Clifford Road, Salisbury Road and a line south of Heathrow International Trading Estate to the River Crane.

137 The Heston Residents' Association proposed a number of boundary modifications to the proposed Cranford ward as part of a modified warding pattern in the Heston area. Its proposals included transferring a small area, broadly east of Haslemere Avenue, south of Bath Road and north of the Great South-West Road into a modified Heston West ward, and utilising a revised boundary east of Basildene Road. A resident of Isleworth proposed modifying Cranford ward to include an area of our Hounslow West ward (broadly polling district H containing over 1,000 electors) in Cranford ward. Neither of these two respondents included electorate data in their submissions.

138 We conclude that our proposed northern boundary of Cranford ward along The Parkway and part of Bath Road is a clearly defined boundary in the area and we have not been persuaded that we should move away from it. We also consider that alternative proposals would not achieve as good a level of electoral equality in Cranford and surrounding wards, nor utilise as clear ward boundaries as contained in our draft recommendations. We are confirming our draft recommendations for Cranford ward as final.

Heston Central, Heston East and Heston West wards

139 The three wards of Heston Central, Heston East and Heston West are situated in the north-west of the Central Area of the borough. Heston West is currently represented by three councillors, and Heston Central and Heston East are each represented by two councillors. The number of electors per councillor is 1 per cent above the borough average (1 per cent below in 2003), equal to the average (2 per cent below in 2003) and 5 per cent above (3 per cent above in 2003) respectively.

140 At Stage One, the Borough Council, the Conservatives and the Liberal Democrats all proposed different warding patterns for the Heston area. However, each scheme proposed that the current two-member wards in Heston Central and Heston East should be revised to enable a three-member ward pattern across the whole borough.

141 The Council proposed, broadly, retaining the existing Heston West ward, except in the far north of the borough where it proposed transferring the Raleigh Estate into a revised Heston East ward. Heston Central ward would also retain many of its existing ward boundaries under the Council's proposals, with the only major revision being the extension of the southern boundary as far as Bath Road and east of Sutton Lane, thereby incorporating part of the current Hounslow Heath ward. In Heston East, the Council proposed a more substantial revision by enlarging the existing ward in three directions, to include the Raleigh Estate in the far north, as noted above; an area south of the Great West Road, bounded by Lampton Road and Lampton Park, and including the Civic Centre (currently in Hounslow West ward); and an area to the east bounded by Spring Grove Road, the London Underground Piccadilly line and Penwerris Avenue, and the southern boundary of Osterley Park (currently parts of Spring Grove and Hounslow Central wards). The Council proposed maintaining the existing ward names in the area.

142 At Stage One, the Liberal Democrats proposed transferring part of the existing Heston West ward into an enlarged Cranford ward and part into a reconfigured Hounslow Heath ward. The remaining part of Heston West ward, together with the majority of the existing Heston Central ward, would form part of a reconfigured, three-member

ward, to be named Heston West. They proposed maintaining the existing western boundary of Heston East ward, but extending the eastern boundary to include the whole of Osterley Park, using Windmill Lane and part of Syon Lane as a new boundary. The southern boundary of the ward would follow the Great West Road to the junction with Syon Lane. This reconfigured ward was to be called Heston & Osterley.

143 The Conservatives' Stage One proposals included part of the current Heston West ward (south of Cranford Lane and west of Springwell Road) in a modified Cranford ward. A new Heston North ward would comprise the rest of Heston West ward (north of Cranford Lane), a small part of the current Heston Central ward (north of New Heston Road) and part of Heston East ward (generally north-west of Church Road from the junction with New Heston Road). The Conservatives proposed a new Heston South ward comprising parts of the existing Heston Central and Heston East wards, north of the Great West Road and south of their proposed southern boundary of Heston North ward, together with electors on Alderney Avenue, Lime Tree Road and the western end of Jersey Road.

144 The Heston Residents' Association commented that the Heston name should be preserved in the ward names as it reflects the history of the area. It also stated that the area has a strong "community spirit".

145 The number of electors per councillor in the three wards that lie wholly within the area proposed by the Borough Council and in the two wards proposed by the Conservatives and Liberal Democrats was no more than 2 per cent from the average in 2003. The Council's proposed three wards would provide an appropriate level of representation in the area when compared to the two wards proposed by the Conservatives and Liberal Democrats, as some of this area formed parts of neighbouring wards under their alternative configurations.

146 We carefully considered the alternative Stage One proposals for this area which differed substantially from one another. In our draft recommendations we recognised that since the Heston area currently contains two two-member wards in order to achieve a pattern of three-member wards throughout the borough, the ward boundaries in a number of areas would be subject

to significant change. We noted that the current Heston West ward is located in the north-west corner of the borough with its northern and western boundaries formed by the borough boundary, and it includes some relatively large open spaces, which together restrict the possibilities for change. In seeking the best electoral scheme for the area, we considered numerous configurations of wards, including formulating our own proposals to try to achieve the best electoral equality, while having regard to the statutory criteria. However, we concluded that we were unable to improve substantially upon the electoral equality which would result under any of the borough-wide schemes we received, without adversely affecting the proposed pattern of wards in neighbouring areas.

147 In the area of the current Heston West ward, we considered that the Borough Council's proposals would ensure good electoral equality, while having regard to existing local ties. As detailed earlier, we judged that The Parkway and part of Bath Road provide a clearly defined boundary between Cranford and Heston West wards. We considered that proposals to move away from this boundary may not best reflect community ties in this area.

148 In the Heston Central Area, the Conservatives and the Liberal Democrats proposed using the Great West Road as a ward boundary, although it did not form a boundary under the Borough Council's scheme. We identified that it is not possible to consider one area in isolation and, in looking for the best scheme for the borough as a whole, we adopted the Council's Heston Central and Heston East wards, but with two minor modifications to the western boundary of Heston East ward, to include the whole of Walnut Tree Road and to follow a line to the east of properties on Sutton Lane. These proposals would achieve improved electoral equality, both in the Heston area and as part of the integrated ward pattern across the central 12 wards. We also adopted the Council's suggested ward names in this area, which we considered reflected both the existing ward names and communities.

149 Under our draft recommendations, the number of electors per councillor would be equal to the borough average in Heston Central ward (2 per cent below in 2003), 3 per cent above in Heston East ward (2 per cent above in 2003) and equal to the average in Heston West ward (2 per cent below in 2003).

150 At Stage Three, the Council supported our draft recommendations for the Heston area. The Conservatives resubmitted their Stage One proposals as a first preference option at Stage Three. They commented that “our most fundamental disagreement with your recommendations concerns Heston”, in particular arguing to retain the boundary between the Heston and Hounslow areas along the Great West Road, which they considered “the natural and generally recognised boundary”. Our proposed Heston East ward would, argued the Conservatives, split existing community ties, especially in the Osterley area and be too disparate for councillors to adequately represent. In particular, they considered the inclusion of the Raleigh Estate (currently in Heston West ward) and the area around the Civic Centre (currently in Hounslow West ward) in Heston East ward did not reflect local ties. Although preferring their original Stage One Heston warding pattern, the Conservatives stated that “if the [Heston West] ward structure ... is to be retained, then we believe the Raleigh Estate should be transferred to Heston East.” The Conservatives opposed the proposed Heston Central ward, as it included an area of Hounslow south of the Great West Road, contained an “artificial boundary” with Heston East ward along Sutton Lane and “prevents the more logical division of Heston between North and South wards”.

151 The Conservatives’ second preference option at Stage Three included an alternative warding pattern for the Heston area. It retained the north – south division of the area contained in their first preference option, but their proposed Heston East and Heston West wards would include areas south of the Great West Road. Their new Heston East ward incorporated the eastern boundary of our proposed Heston East ward, then adopted a modified southern boundary following a line from Lampton Road to the north of the Civic Centre and continuing along a path westwards and finally following the railway line to Hounslow West station. The western boundary would broadly follow Vicarage Farm Road north from the station before turning east along New Heston Road and then along a path across open ground to the existing ward boundary along the perimeter of Osterley Park.

152 The Conservatives’ second preference option included a Heston West ward which would utilise a boundary from Cranford High Street along The Parkway and Bath Road, then south along

Basildene Road before turning east to the rear of properties on Clifford Road, Ivanhope Road and Rosemary Avenue, then following a line generally north from Hounslow West station to Vicarage Farm Road. The northern ward boundary would continue west from Vicarage Farm Road along Cranford Lane, then along Phoenix Way, before following a line to the north of the Parkway Trading Estate and turning south to rejoin Cranford Avenue and Cranford High Street. Their option also included a new Heston North ward comprising all of the existing Heston West and Heston East wards north of the M4 motorway and those parts of the two wards south of the motorway (broadly north of New Heston Road, Cranford Lane and the Parkway Trading Estate).

153 Under the Conservatives’ second preference option for the Heston area, the electoral variances would be 3 per cent in Heston North ward (1 per cent in 2003), equal to the average in Heston East ward (unchanged in 2003) and 1 per cent in Heston West ward (2 per cent in 2003).

154 The Conservatives’ third preference option was to modify the boundary between our proposed Heston East and Heston West wards, thereby transferring the Raleigh Estate (nearly 400 electors) from Heston West to Heston East ward. Additionally, it proposed transferring the southern side of the western end of Bassett Gardens from Heston East ward into the proposed Osterley & Spring Grove ward. They considered these modifications would better reflect community ties. The Feltham & Heston Conservative Association, in its separate submission, argued that the established southern boundary for Heston was the Great West Road. The Association also noted that Osterley Park and The Parkway form equally clear established boundaries for Heston in the east and west. Hounslow Labour Party proposed renaming the proposed Heston East ward as Heston & Lampton.

155 The Heston Residents’ Association commented that it would prefer the proposed Heston East ward to include only those areas north of the Great West Road. It also proposed extending the ward to the east, thereby including part of the proposed Osterley & Spring Grove ward (to Thornbury Road). It also proposed including an area around Haslemere Avenue in a modified Heston West ward while transferring an area west of Vicarage Farm Road, north of Cranford Lane, east of properties along Berkeley Way and south of

properties along The Vale, into a modified Heston Central ward. It proposed modifying the proposed southern boundary of Heston Central ward by reducing the area south of the Great West Road which would form part of the ward. The Association did not include electorate data or detailed boundaries with its submission. A resident of Isleworth proposed no change to the existing Heston East ward and combined the existing Heston Central and Heston West wards in a single ward, although his proposals were not supported with electorate data.

¹⁵⁶ We have carefully examined all the representations and evidence available to us for the Heston area. First, it is clear that respondents regard the Heston area as a distinct part of the borough. Second, our draft recommendations for the area have elicited a degree of opposition, with the main concern expressed to us being that the existing boundaries along the edge of Osterley Park and the Great West Road should be respected. Third, the Council supported our proposed 'north – south' warding pattern within the Heston area which reflects its Stage One proposals for minimal overall change to the existing ward pattern, while achieving good electoral equality. The Heston Residents' Association also broadly supported this ward pattern, although with modifications. The Conservatives proposed an alternative warding configuration based upon an 'east – west' split of the area.

¹⁵⁷ As a consequence of moving to a pattern of three-member wards throughout the borough, the current Heston East ward (which only returns two members) will be subject to change. While Heston is regarded as a distinct part of the borough, in order to accommodate the consensus view for three-member wards in Hounslow borough and meet the objective of electoral equality, wards in the Heston area will need to incorporate adjoining areas, thereby crossing at least one of the identified community boundaries of Osterley Park, Great West Road or The Parkway.

¹⁵⁸ We were not persuaded that either of the Conservatives' first or second preference options for the Heston area would provide a better electoral scheme than our draft recommendations. In particular, we noted their second preference option for revised ward boundaries would not address the community identity concerns expressed by residents in Lulworth Avenue, Stucley Road, Pevensey Close and Penwerris Avenue. However,

we also noted that, unlike their first option, their second preference option would not utilise the Great West Road as a ward boundary, as with our draft recommendations. As already mentioned, we consider that The Parkway and part of Bath Road form easily identifiable ward boundaries for Cranford ward. We concluded that the Conservatives' third preference option for the Heston area, to include the Raleigh Estate in Heston West ward, rather than Heston East ward as proposed in the draft recommendations, would not achieve a good electoral scheme in the Heston area when combined with our modification to the eastern boundary of Heston East ward with Osterley & Spring Grove ward.

¹⁵⁹ Overall, we concluded that the only change to our proposed boundaries in this area should be to the eastern boundary of Heston East ward with Osterley & Spring Grove ward, in order to better reflect community identities. We propose that the eastern boundary should follow a line to the east of properties on the western side of Jersey Road, as proposed by the Conservatives at Stage One and Stage Three and supported by local residents, thereby including over 600 electors from Lulworth Avenue, Stucley Road, Pevensey Close and Penwerris Avenue in the proposed Osterley & Spring Grove ward. We judge this would have a greater regard for community identities, while still achieving reasonable electoral equality. We considered modifications to a number of boundaries elsewhere in the Heston area in order to improve electoral equality further but concluded that no improvement could be made without impairing the clear boundaries contained in our draft recommendations. We consider the ward name Heston East has received some local support and accurately reflects the ward boundaries and we are therefore confirming it in our final recommendations.

¹⁶⁰ Under our final recommendations, the electoral variance would be zero in Heston Central ward (2 per cent in 2003), 5 per cent in Heston East ward (6 per cent in 2003) and zero in Heston West ward (3 per cent in 2003). Our proposals are illustrated on the large map at the back of this report.

The Bedfont, Feltham and Hanworth Area

¹⁶¹ There are currently five three-member wards in this area; two wards broadly lie north of the Southern Region railway line and three to the

south. The two most northern wards, East Bedfont and Feltham North, are currently under-represented, while the three wards south of the railway, Feltham Central, Feltham South and Hanworth, are over-represented. At Stage One respondents proposed that in order to address this imbalance, one ward should straddle the railway line in the area around central Feltham, although the proposals differed in the detailed boundaries.

162 We received support from the Borough Council and the Conservatives for this area during Stage Three. The only other representation was from Hounslow Labour Party which submitted modifications to our proposed ward names in this area.

East Bedfont and Feltham North wards

163 The wards of East Bedfont and Feltham North are located in the west of the borough, and have 13 per cent and 14 per cent more electors per councillor than the borough average respectively (10 per cent and 13 per cent more in 2003).

164 At Stage One, there was broad consensus between the three schemes submitted by the Borough Council, the Liberal Democrats and the Conservatives on the ward boundaries for East Bedfont and Feltham North. Each scheme proposed maintaining the Southern Region railway line for the majority of the southern boundary of both wards, except where each scheme proposed a revised ward straddling the railway line, focused on the centre of Feltham. In addition, they all proposed extending the northern boundary of Feltham North ward from the existing boundary on the Staines Road, to the borough boundary, west of the river. The Conservatives and the Liberal Democrats both proposed that the boundary between the two wards of East Bedfont and Feltham North should lie east of Elmcroft Close, while the Borough Council proposed that it should lie further east, to include Engleheart Drive and Pentelow Gardens in the revised East Bedfont ward. All three proposed using part of the existing boundary along Staines Road and part of Bedfont Lane.

165 Between the proposed wards of Feltham North and Feltham Central, the Borough Council's and the Conservatives' revised boundary continued along Bedfont Lane, while the Liberal Democrats proposed a slightly different boundary, moving away from Bedfont Lane and going through Blenheim Park.

166 Between the proposed wards of East Bedfont and Feltham Central, the Council, the Liberal Democrats and the Conservatives all proposed a similar ward boundary along part of the existing boundary between East Bedfont and Feltham North wards along Bedfont Lane. The Conservatives and the Liberal Democrats proposed renaming East Bedfont ward as Bedfont.

167 Under the Borough Council's Stage One proposals, the number of electors per councillor in East Bedfont ward would be equal to the borough average (2 per cent below in 2003), and under the Conservatives' and Liberal Democrats' Bedfont ward it would be 2 per cent above (equal to the average in 2003). In the proposed Feltham North ward, the number of electors per councillor would be equal to the average under all three schemes (and would vary by no more than 2 per cent from the average in 2003).

168 We considered carefully the alternative Stage One proposals for these two wards. We noted that they all significantly improved electoral equality in the area, and that each scheme proposed a similar Feltham Central ward, straddling the railway line. We noted that the Liberal Democrats' calculations for the electorate in their revised Feltham North ward did not appear to accurately reflect their described boundary. Their calculations appeared to include 338 electors from part of polling district BC in Feltham North ward (an area to the east of Bedfont Lane including Shore Close, Manor Place and Glebelands Road) which their boundary description indicated would form part of a revised Feltham Central ward. By modifying the Liberal Democrats' figures to account for this discrepancy, we calculated that the electoral equality for Feltham North ward under the Liberal Democrats' proposals was not as good as under the alternatives.

169 In our draft recommendations report, we decided to endorse the Conservatives' proposals for both Feltham North and Bedfont wards, as they would secure the best electoral equality and, we judged, better reflect community ties in the Bedfont area.

170 At Stage Three, no proposals for change to the proposed Feltham North and Bedfont wards were received and we are therefore confirming our draft recommendations in this area as final.

Feltham Central, Feltham South and Hanworth wards

171 All three wards of Feltham Central, Feltham South and Hanworth currently lie south of the Southern Region railway line and west of the River Crane. In Feltham Central, the number of electors per councillor is 3 per cent below the borough average (4 per cent below in 2003), in Feltham South 10 per cent below (12 per cent below in 2003) and in Hanworth 11 per cent below (unchanged in 2003). Each ward is currently represented by three councillors.

172 At Stage One, the Borough Council, the Conservatives and the Liberal Democrats proposed alternative warding patterns for the existing Feltham Central and Feltham South wards, although there was some consensus for the Hanworth ward area.

173 Each of the three schemes proposed a broadly similar northern boundary for Hanworth ward, using Hounslow Road and part of the A316 Twickenham Road. The Borough Council's proposals differed in two main areas: it followed an alternative boundary to the north of Hounslow College, including Park Road in Hanworth ward, and proposed an alternative boundary west of Twickenham Road.

174 The Council's Stage One submission broadly proposed following the existing western boundary of Feltham Central ward with Feltham South ward, from the Southern Region railway line to where Lower Feltham Brook meets Felthambrook Way. From this point, the Council proposed an alternative boundary, following Felthambrook Way in a southerly direction. The Conservatives proposed an alternative boundary along Feltham High Street (A244), turning southwards by the cemetery, to the west of Sunbury Road and Ryland Close. The Liberal Democrats proposed a different ward configuration in this area, splitting the existing Feltham Central ward on a north – south divide using Uxbridge Road, Elmwood Avenue and Vernon Road as boundaries. The Heston Residents' Association proposed that Hanworth ward should remain unaltered, in order to reflect community ties in the area.

175 Both the Council and the Liberal Democrats proposed including a number of properties around the Westmacott Drive area of Feltham, north of the Southern Region railway line, in a revised Feltham Central ward, whereas the Conservatives proposed

including this area, north of the railway line, in a revised Feltham South ward.

176 The Council and the Liberal Democrats proposed retaining the existing ward names in this area. The Conservatives proposed retaining the existing ward name for Hanworth ward, but renaming Feltham South ward as Feltham West, and Feltham Central ward as Hanworth Park.

177 Under the Liberal Democrats' and Conservatives' Stage One proposals, by 2003 the number of electors per councillor in the three wards in this area would be no more than 1 per cent from the borough average, and under the Council's proposals they would be no more than 4 per cent from the average.

178 The Council submitted five reasons to justify a comparatively higher electoral variance for Feltham South ward in 2003. It noted the use of many existing ward boundaries in its proposals, the improvement upon the current level of electoral inequality, the potential for new development in 10 – 15 years improving further the proposed electoral inequality and that further improvement upon electoral equality may require "the splitting of established estates". The Council argued that "the nature of the area – which has substantial open space, borough boundaries and physical boundaries which are easily identifiable – does not lend itself to a better solution".

179 We carefully considered all the proposals for change in this area. In our draft recommendations report we noted that while the Council argued that a degree of electoral inequality could be justified in Feltham South ward, the proposals from both the Conservatives and the Liberal Democrats achieved better electoral equality in this area. We did not consider that Feltham South ward was sufficiently different in character to warrant special consideration. In seeking to achieve the best electoral equality for the whole borough, having regard to the statutory criteria, we noted that the Conservatives' proposals provided marginally better electoral equality than the Liberal Democrats' proposals, although both schemes provided similar electoral equality by 2003. However, the Liberal Democrats' submission appeared to contain a calculation error whereby 338 electors were included in Feltham North ward, as noted earlier, instead of in Feltham Central ward, which would adversely affect the balance of representation.

180 We therefore adopted the Conservatives' proposals for the three wards of Feltham West, Hanworth and Hanworth Park, which achieved the best electoral equality, having regard to the statutory criteria.

181 At Stage Three, no proposals for change to the proposed ward pattern in Feltham West, Hanworth and Hanworth Park were received and we are therefore confirming our draft recommendations as final. We received a proposal from Hounslow Labour Party to rename the proposed Feltham West ward as Feltham Village and Hanworth Park ward as Air Park. However, we consider that Hanworth Park clearly reflects the location of the ward and that while the park has historical connections as an airfield, it is well known as Hanworth Park. We also consider that the ward name Feltham West, as suggested by the Conservatives at Stage One and accepted by the Borough Council at Stage Three, accurately reflects the location of the proposed ward. We are confirming our proposed Feltham West, Hanworth and Hanworth Park ward names as final.

Conclusions

182 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 two amendments:

- (a) The Chiswick Area
 - we are modifying the boundary between Turnham Green and Brentford wards to follow a line to the rear of properties along the western side of Gunnersbury Avenue and also including the B&Q superstore in Turnham Green ward.
- (b) The Central Area
 - we are modifying the boundary between Heston East and Osterley & Spring Grove wards, so that Lulworth Avenue, Penwerris Avenue, Pevensey Close and Stuckley Road would be included in Osterley & Spring Grove ward.

183 We conclude that, in Hounslow:

- there should be no change to the current council size of 60;
- there should be 20 wards, one less than at present, involving changes to the boundaries of all of the existing wards.

184 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.

185 As shown in Figure 4, our final recommendations for Hounslow Borough Council

*Figure 4 :
Comparison of Current and Recommended Electoral Arrangements*

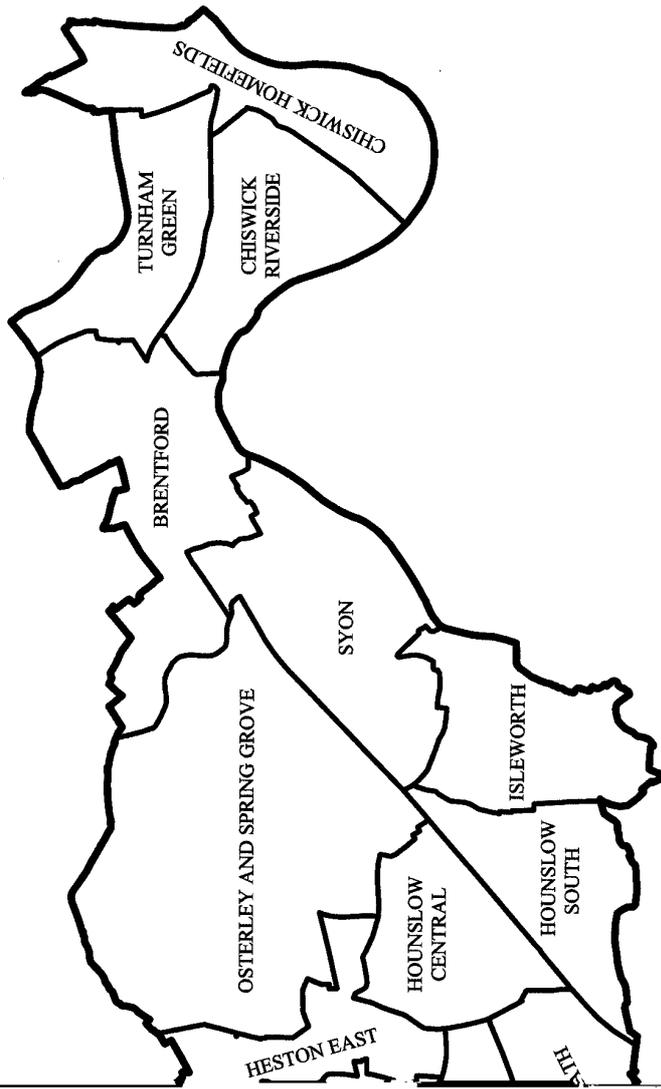
	1998 electorate		2003 forecast electorate	
	Current arrangements	Final recommendations	Current arrangements	Final recommendations
Number of councillors	60	60	60	60
Number of wards	21	20	21	20
Average number of electors per councillor	2,606	2,606	2,670	2,670
Number of wards with a variance more than 10 per cent from the average	8	1	9	0
Number of wards with a variance more than 20 per cent from the average	1	0	1	0

would result in a reduction in the number of wards where the number of electors per councillor varies by more than 10 per cent from the borough average from eight to one. This improved balance of representation is expected to improve further with all wards expected to vary by less than 10 per cent in 2003, in fact all wards varying by 6 per cent or less. 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

Hounslow Borough Council should comprise 60 councillors serving 20 wards, as detailed and named in Figures 1 and 2, and illustrated on the large map in the back of the report.

Map 2:
The Commission's Final Recommendations for Hounslow



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6. NEXT STEPS

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

187 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.

188 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 Hounslow

Our final recommendations, detailed in Figures 1 and 2, differ from those we put forward as draft recommendations in respect of only two wards. In addition minor boundary modifications are made to a further two wards (Brentford and Turnham Green) which would not involve changes to the electorate and do not impact upon electoral variances. Therefore, only the two wards which differ substantially from our draft recommendations are detailed below. We are not proposing any ward name changes from our draft recommendations.

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 %
Heston East	3	8,075	2,692	3	8,176	2,725	2
Osterley & Spring Grove	3	7,835	2,612	0	7,899	2,633	-1

Source: Electorate figures are based on Hounslow 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.

