LOCAL GOVERNMENT BOUNDARY COMMISSION FOR ENGLAND

REVIEW OF GREATER LONDON, THE LONDON BOROUGHS AND THE CITY OF LONDON

LONDON BOROUGH OF GREENWICH

Boundaries with: BARKING AND DAGENTHAM LB
BEXLEY LB
NEWHAM LB and
TOWER HAMLETS LB
LOCAL GOVERNMENT
BOUNDARY COMMISSION
FOR ENGLAND
REPORT NO 622
LOCAL GOVERNMENT BOUNDARY COMMISSION FOR ENGLAND

CHAIRMAN
SIR GEOFFREY ELLERTON CMG MBE

MEMBERS
MR K F J ENNALS CB
MR G PRENTICE
MRS H R V SARKANY
MR C W SMITH
PROFESSOR K YOUNG
INTRODUCTION

1. On 1 April 1987 we announced the start of a review of Greater London, the London boroughs and the City of London, as part of the programme of reviews we are required to undertake by virtue of section 48(1) of the Local Government Act 1972. We wrote to each of the local authorities concerned.

2. Copies of our letter were sent to the adjoining London boroughs; the appropriate county, district and parish councils bordering Greater London; the local authority associations; Members of Parliament with constituency interests; and the headquarters of the main political parties. In addition, copies were sent to the Metropolitan Police and to those government departments, regional health authorities, water authorities, electricity and gas undertakings which might have an interest, as well as to local television and radio stations serving the Greater London area, and to a number of other interested persons and organisations.

3. The London boroughs and the City of London were requested to assist us in publicising the start of the review by inserting a notice for two successive weeks in local newspapers so as to give a wide coverage in the areas concerned.
4. A period of seven months from the date of our letter was allowed for all local authorities and any person or body interested in the review to send us their views on whether changes to the boundaries of Greater London authorities were desirable and, if so, what those changes should be and how they would serve the interests of effective and convenient local government, the criterion laid down in the 1972 Act.

5. This report concerns Greenwich's boundary with Barking and Dagenham, Bexley, Newham and Tower Hamlets. Greenwich's boundary with Bromley will be considered as part of the review of the London Borough of Bromley, and Greenwich's boundary with Lewisham will be considered as part of the review of the London Borough of Lewisham.

OUR APPROACH TO THE REVIEW OF GREATER LONDON

General

6. As with our previous London borough reports, we have thought it appropriate to commence with some relevant general considerations on the Review of London which have been raised by our examination of Greenwich and other London areas.

7. We took the opportunity in our Report No 550, "People and Places", to explain in some detail the approach we take to our work and the factors which we take into consideration when conducting reviews, including the guidelines we have been given (set out in Department of the Environment Circular 20/86 in the case of the reviews of London).

8. Subsequently, in July 1988, we issued a press notice, copies of which were sent to London boroughs, explaining the manner in which we proposed to conduct the review of London borough boundaries. In the notice we said that, from the evidence seen so far, this was unlikely to be the right time to advocate comprehensive change in the pattern of London government -
although the notice listed a number of submissions for major changes to particular boundaries which had been made to the Commission, some of which the Commission had itself foreseen in "People and Places". These and other major changes to particular boundaries are being considered by the Commission as part of its Review.

Wider London Issues

9. Although our view remains that this review is not the right occasion for a fundamental reappraisal of the extent of London or the pattern of London boroughs, which would inevitably raise questions about the nature and structure of London government, we do see it as very much part of our role to identify and record any general issues which arise and which may need to be brought to the attention of any body charged with undertaking a more fundamental review of London in the future. Where action has been both possible within our interpretation of the scope of the review and in our judgement desirable, we have also investigated whether significant boundary changes need to be made.

10. In formulating boundary proposals that will serve effective and convenient local government we are required to have regard to whether an area or boundary accords with the wishes of the local inhabitants and reflects the pattern of community life. Factors representing the pattern of community life include community of interest within an area and sometimes a sense of separation from other areas stemming from social, geographical, economic and cultural influences. In drawing up proposals for London we have, therefore, as in our other reviews, attempted to identify distinct communities. We have considered, and in some cases proposed, boundaries that will preserve and, if appropriate, unify communities where it has appeared that a different boundary might enhance thriving communities.

11. In a large continuous built-up area such as London there are many difficulties in identifying such distinct communities in the
first place, let alone bringing about administrative boundaries that can respect them. It is clear that people are more mobile and have a greater diversity of interests than in the past. Their community of interest may be with their peers of similar age, lifestyle, or religion over a large geographical area rather than necessarily with the other people in the immediate area around their home. While many people living in London will be able to identify an area or neighbourhood that they relate to, these are generally quite small geographically - perhaps from about the size of an electoral ward down to the few streets immediately around their home.

12. Where the Commission has studied and tried to define existing communities in London it has generally found little agreement on their extent especially in those parts of London where there are no obvious breaks in development. Some people indeed seem rather more concerned about their postcode (which may affect insurance premiums or the targeting of mail shots to their homes). The general resistance to change has meant that even where it appears that strong communities do exist, proposals for their unification within a single authority have proved more unpopular than the continuation of the status quo. We have therefore been cautious in making proposals and have in some cases accepted the fact that boundaries may cut through streets or separate similar or even identical houses.

New Communities

13. There are places where planned developments have been built in recent years. Where they are divided by boundaries, we have investigated whether effective and convenient local government might be better served by them being unified in one borough. No place is static, and London is no exception. Although much of the fabric of London has been in existence since London government reorganisation in 1965, there have been important developments, involving the establishment of new communities, which span two or more London boroughs. Later in this report we
describe our consideration of Thamesmead Town, which is split between Greenwich and Bexley (paragraphs 41 to 62 below).

14. While we have taken the view that this is not the appropriate occasion for a fundamental review of London borough boundaries, our guidelines from the Secretary of State advise us to take account of changes in the pattern of development and, where boundaries have become overlaid by development, to consider what changes may be necessary to correct them. This we have sought to do in relation to Thamesmead, where a planned settlement has been developed across an historic boundary.

15. We take the view that boundary changes should not normally precede the establishment of new communities. However, we consider that the case for uniting an area, much of which is now substantially developed, should be carefully examined in circumstances where a new community, sharing common facilities and problems, has become established. We recognise that change on this scale may not be welcome to many people, especially when they have become used to the provision of local authority services by a particular authority to their part of the community; but we consider that it is our duty where necessary to take a long term view of the needs of such communities.

THE SUBMISSIONS MADE TO US

16. In response to our letter of 1 April 1987 we received submissions from the London Boroughs of Greenwich and Bexley. We received 75 representations, the majority of them from residents of Welling and Plumstead, and a further 54 individual letters and 350 pro-forma letters from the residents of Belvedere.
SUGGESTIONS FOR CHANGE AND OUR INITIAL CONCLUSIONS

GREENWICH AND ITS RIVER BOUNDARIES WITH BARKING AND DAGENHAM, NEWHAM AND TOWER HAMLETS

Interim decision to make no proposals

17. We received no suggestions for change to Greenwich's river boundaries with Barking and Dagenham, Newham and Tower Hamlets. We therefore took an interim decision to make no proposals for these boundaries.

THE BOUNDARY BETWEEN GREENWICH AND BEXLEY

18. In considering Greenwich's boundary with Bexley, we noted that the proposed road south of the East London River Crossing, the A406, would on completion be likely to form a tangible barrier in the north of Greenwich and, in the area of Falconwood, the proposed route would pass close to the existing boundary. We considered the feasibility of using this feature as a boundary, possibly in conjunction with the chain of areas designated as open space between Lesnes Abbey Wood and Avery Hill. However, we decided that the interests of effective and convenient local government would be better served in this area by the adoption, where necessary, of alternative realignments based on more limited change, the details of which are set out in paragraphs 19 - 40 below.

Draft proposals

(a) Mervyn Avenue and Footscray Road

19. Greenwich suggested realigning the boundary to the rear of properties in Mervyn Avenue, and between Nos 498 and 500 Footscray Road. Bexley submitted an identical suggestion for Mervyn Avenue and suggested a side of road alignment in Footscray Road.
20. We gave careful consideration to the suggestions submitted by Greenwich and Bexley but concluded that an alternative realignment would facilitate the provision of local authority services without major disturbance to the existing boundary. We therefore decided to adopt as our draft proposal a realignment which would pass along the rear of properties in Mervyn Avenue, the backs of Nos 492-498 Footscray Road, cross Footscray Road and follow the side and back of Rutland Place. The proposed boundary would then pass along the side of No 2 Ermington Road, cross Ermington Road, and follow the north east side of Ermington Road to join the existing boundary.

(b) Ermington Road, Agaton Road and Dulverton Road

21. Greenwich suggested realigning the boundary along the centres of Footscray, Ermington and Agaton Roads, and along the eastern curtilages of No 22 Agaton Road, No 41 Dulverton Road and No 82 Dulverton Road to meet the existing boundary. Bexley objected to Greenwich's suggestion on the grounds that it would perpetuate the severance of a small community, and leave a number of properties in Greenwich for which vehicular access can only be gained from Bexley. Greenwich disputed this, on the basis that access from Greenwich can be gained to Agaton and Dulverton Roads via Agaton Path, and that residents of the area are part of the community of New Eltham.

22. Bexley suggested realigning the boundary along the north east side of Footscray Road, the north west side of Agaton Path and along the rear curtilages of properties in Dulverton Road to meet the existing boundary, thereby uniting Agaton Road and Dulverton Road in Bexley.

23. We agreed with Bexley that Agaton Road and Dulverton Road should be united in Bexley, but considered that the boundary should pass along the side of No 1 Ermington Road, and along the rear of properties in Agaton and Dulverton Road. We considered that such a realignment would be more conducive to effective and
convenient local government and more easily identifiable, as it united the majority of Footscray Road in Greenwich. We therefore decided to adopt this alignment as our draft proposal.

(c) Oakley Drive, Cradley Road and Sidewood Road

24. Greenwich suggested realigning the boundary along the rear of properties in Beaverbank Road and along the centre of that road to unite properties in Oakley Drive in Bexley. In Cradley Road and Sidewood Road, it suggested realigning the boundary to property curtilages, to unite No 43 Cradley Road, and Nos 23 and 28 Sidewood Road in Greenwich, and Nos 25 and 30 Sidewood Road in Bexley. Bexley submitted an almost identical suggestion, the only differences being that it suggested a side of road alignment on Beaverbank Road, and that it made no suggestion for No 28 Sidewood Road.

25. After considering the suggestions submitted by both Councils, we sought a boundary that would have the merit of uniting all of Oakley Drive, Cradley Road and Sidewood Road in Greenwich. We considered that this could be achieved by an alignment which would follow the northern perimeter of the New Eltham - Sidcup railway line, pass along the southern curtilage of Oakley Drive, follow a footpath between Nos 357 and 361 Old Farm Avenue, pass along the front of Nos 361-369 Old Farm Avenue, and then cross Old Farm Avenue. The boundary would then pass along Crombie Road until it reaches the south eastern corner of the Avery Hill Road Sportsground. We realised that Old Farm Avenue would still be split by the boundary, but noted that the boundary is nevertheless identifiable. We therefore decided to adopt this realignment as our draft proposal.

(d) Avery Hill Road Sportsground

26. Greenwich suggested realigning the boundary to unite Avery Hill Road Sportsground in its area. Bexley agreed with this suggestion.
27. We noted that the sportsground is accessible only from Greenwich, and considered the suggestion would create a clearly defined boundary uniting the whole of the sportsground in one authority. We therefore decided to adopt Greenwich's suggestion as our draft proposal.

(e) Overmead and Half Way Street, Sidcup

28. Greenwich suggested realigning the boundary along the rear of Nos 24 and 26 Overmead, along the west side of Nos 26 Overmead and the centre of Overmead to rejoin the existing boundary. This suggestion would unite properties in Overmead in Greenwich, and properties in Halfway Street in Bexley. Bexley supported this suggestion in principle, but suggested following a side rather than a centre of road alignment in Overmead.

29. We agreed that the Council's suggestions would rectify the anomalies of split curtilages in Overmead and Halfway Street. However, we also considered that uniting Radfield Way, Southspring, Greenhithe Close and Hambledown Road in Bexley would produce a more easily identifiable boundary and would accord with local affinities. We therefore decided to adopt such a realignment as our draft proposal, together with Bexley's suggestion for Overmead and Halfway Street.

(f) Restons Crescent, New Eltham

30. Greenwich suggested realigning the boundary to the west side of allotment gardens to unite Linsted Court, part of the Avery Hill Estate, and four properties in Restons Crescent in Greenwich. Bexley supported Greenwich's suggestion, as did Mr Peter Bottomley MP. The Metropolitan Police had previously drawn our attention to the fact that the existing boundary splits properties in this area.
31. We agreed that Greenwich's suggestion would rectify the problem of split properties, and decided to adopt it as our draft proposal.

(g) Braywood Road, Lingfield Crescent, Wincrofts Drive, Falconwood

32. Bexley suggested the transfer to its authority of the properties in Braywood Road, Lingfield Crescent and Wincrofts Drive, by realigning the boundary along the southern side of Wincrofts Drive and the northern side of the Falconwood/Welling railway. The Council commented that this area forms part of the adjoining larger community of Falconwood, and is isolated from Greenwich by the railway to the north and the A2 Trunk Road to the south. It considered that this isolation would be exacerbated by the construction of the proposed road to serve the East London River Crossing. Greenwich opposed Bexley's suggestion, stating that the area in question comprises the self-contained Falconwood community, which is quite separate from the adjacent Welling community. Greenwich also expressed the view that, despite the construction of the A2 Trunk Road, and the proposed new road to serve the East London River Crossing, there would be continued access from Falconwood to other parts of Greenwich, such as Eltham via Riefield Road.

33. Examination of the proposed route for the East London River Crossing Relief Road appeared to support Greenwich's argument about access to Falconwood, but we considered that the residents of the area would still have to travel northward, through part of Bexley, to join the proposed road. We therefore concluded that Falconwood as a whole is essentially isolated from the rest of Greenwich by the A2 Trunk Road and the railway line to the north, and decided to adopt Bexley's suggestion as our draft proposal.
(h) Glenmore Road, Welling

34. Greenwich suggested realigning the boundary to the rear of properties in Glenmore Road and Dryden Road, thereby uniting them in Bexley. Bexley submitted a similar suggestion for Glenmore Road, although it did not extend as far north as that suggested by Greenwich. We considered that Bexley's suggestion would create a more easily identifiable boundary and avoid the severance of properties. We therefore decided to adopt it as our draft proposal, subject to two modifications to tie the boundary to firm ground detail, thereby linking it to our draft proposal for Woolwich Cemetery.

(i) Woolwich Cemetery, Camdale Road

35. Both Greenwich and Bexley suggested realigning the boundary to the southern perimeter of Woolwich Cemetery, thereby uniting the whole of the cemetery in Greenwich. We agreed that this would provide a more clearly defined boundary, avoiding the division of a cemetery. We therefore decided to adopt Greenwich's suggestion as our draft proposal.

(j) Alliance Road, Bournewood Road and Wickham Lane, Plumstead

36. Greenwich suggested uniting properties on Alliance and Bournewood Roads, and transferring properties in Upper Wickham Lane, Highbanks Court and Patricia Court to its authority, on the grounds that it considered the Wickham Lane community to be separate from the rest of Bexley, to the south of Patricia Court.

37. Bexley suggested realigning the boundary to the rear of properties in Alliance Road and Bournewood Road, thereby uniting Alliance Road, Grasdene Road and Bournewood Road in Greenwich. We received a similar suggestion from a member of the public.
38. We received 46 letters and a 42 signature petition opposing Bexley's suggestion. We also received a further 50 letters and a 20 signature petition from residents in Upper Wickham Lane opposing Greenwich's suggestion. The East Wickham Tenants' Association opposed both suggestions, claiming that residents had no wish for any boundary changes.

39. The Bexley Boundary Campaign (East Wickham) suggested realigning the boundary to the north of No 90 Alliance Road, the south of No 91 Alliance Road, Nos 42 and 43 Grasdene Road, to the rear of Nos 380-384 Wickham Lane, to the north of No 380 Wickham Lane and south along the west side of Wickham Lane to rejoin the existing boundary. This suggestion would result in the transfer of 24 properties from Greenwich to Bexley. The Campaign stated that the Wickham Lane community considered themselves to be very much a part of Bexley.

40. We took the view that the existing boundary is clearly unsatisfactory, as it splits a number of properties and does not follow identifiable features. We considered that the Bexley Boundary Campaign's suggestion, although having support from local residents, appeared to perpetuate the division of Alliance and Grasdene Roads between two authorities. By contrast, it appeared to us that Bexley's suggestion had the merit of rectifying the boundary anomalies while transferring fewer electors than the realignment suggested by Greenwich. We therefore decided to adopt Bexley's suggestion as our draft proposal.

(k) Thamesmead

41. At the commencement of our review, we had received only one suggestion for Thamesmead, from Mr David Evennett MP. His suggestion, to realign the northern sector of Greenwich's boundary with Bexley to the A2041 Carlyle Road would, if adopted, have resulted in only relatively minor changes to the boundary in the Thamesmead area. We considered that, although the
proposal had the merit of uniting the Thamesmead North Estate, which is at present divided by the boundary, it perpetuated the division of Thamesmead as a whole.

42. Thamesmead is, in geographical terms, a reasonably self-contained community located to the south of the River Thames, spanning the Greenwich/Bexley boundary between the Woolwich Arsenal site and Erith Marshes. It is predominantly residential in character, but contains a mix of industrial and commercial development at both its eastern and western extremities.

43. Thamesmead Town was planned from the start as a single community. It was originally developed by the former GLC to provide housing for inner London overspill. Launched in 1967, the plan was to create a balanced community with a population of 60,000 by 1981, living in 17,000 dwellings, one-third of which were to be provided by the private sector for owner-occupation. Later adjustments to the plan in 1981 brought the projected population down to 40,000, of whom half were to be owner-occupiers.

44. By 1986, when the GLC was abolished, Thamesmead already housed about 20,000 people in 6,500 dwellings, of which 5,300 were local authority properties. However, the area still lacked some important facilities, with relatively little provision having been made for shopping or leisure. Nevertheless, we understood that a Thamesmead identity had already been established by that time, as evidenced by the establishment of tenants' associations, community groups, voluntary clubs, a community newspaper and even a local radio station. Following the abolition of the GLC and Thamesmead's subsequent transfer to the London Residuary Body, local groups made it clear that they wished to be consulted and involved in the future of the area, and expressed a desire to retain the identity of Thamesmead as a whole. This suggested to us that the concept of Thamesmead as a single planned community had in fact already been recognised by residents.
45. Since 1986, Thamesmead Town has been managed, maintained and further developed by Thamesmead Town Ltd, a community-based company whose board of directors are substantially elected by Thamesmead residents. As part of its future plans for Thamesmead, the Company is actively pursuing the development of further shopping, community and recreational facilities for residents of the area. Thamesmead Town Centre, located in Greenwich, although as yet insufficiently developed for its potential catchment area, has been designated as a district shopping centre in the London Planning Advisory Committee's (LPAC) strategic planning advice, and in the Greenwich draft Unitary Development Plan (UDP). There are also significant areas of Thamesmead, primarily in Bexley, which have been developed, or have been earmarked for development, for industrial and commercial use.

46. In the absence of suggestions for uniting Thamesmead, we considered it necessary for the question of whether the community should remain divided between the two authorities to be investigated further. We advised Greenwich, Bexley and Thamesmead Town Ltd of our decision to address this issue, and requested detailed information from each of them on the provision of local government services in the area.

47. Greenwich responded to our decision to investigate the issue further by stating that it wished the present division of Thamesmead to be maintained, and that it was premature to consider changing the boundary when development in the area was still incomplete. Nevertheless, the Council acknowledged that unification of Thamesmead could facilitate the area's planning and development. Bexley reaffirmed its previous decision to make no proposals for change to the boundary. It took the view that the creation of Thamesmead Town Ltd negated the need to unite the community. Thamesmead Town Ltd responded to our request for further information by suggesting the use of the East London River Crossing and the railway line from Abbey Wood Station as a boundary. However, this suggestion was later withdrawn.
48. We carefully considered the information and suggestions submitted to us but noted that no representations had been received from local residents. We therefore decided to hold a local meeting in Thamesmead before adopting any draft proposals for the area. Accordingly, we wrote to Greenwich and Bexley and Thamesmead Town Ltd informing them of our decision, and a meeting was held on 18 October 1989 at the Riverside Lower School, Thamesmead.

49. Five options had been identified by us for the purpose of examining the boundary further, and were available for consideration and comment at the local meeting. They were:

- **Option 1.** To unite Thamesmead in Bexley or Greenwich;
- **Option 2.** To realign the boundary to follow the East London River Crossing;
- **Option 3.** To realign the boundary to follow the A2016 west from the existing boundary, and then the East London River Crossing to the river;
- **Option 4.** To realign the northern sector of the boundary to the A2041 Carlyle Road; and
- **Option 5.** To make no proposal.

50. Greenwich, Bexley and Thamesmead Town Ltd were all represented at the local meeting, which was chaired by the Chairman of the Commission. 278 people signed the meeting register, comprising residents from Greenwich and Bexley, and representatives of various local bodies and organisations. We also received several letters from the public in relation to the local meeting and possible boundary changes. Many of these were from parents, expressing concern over their children's education and fearing a possible deterioration in the standard of other services provided. Of the representations received from local
organisations, the Greenwich Teachers Association objected to any change, and the Erith and Crayford Conservative Association discounted the possibility of unifying Thamesmead in Bexley on the grounds that the population of Central Thamesmead would be isolated from the civic and commercial centre of the Borough, namely Bexleyheath. The Association did, however, support the suggestion by Mr David Evennett MP (Option 4).

51. The majority of residents who attended the local meeting and signed the register were from Greenwich. Although some Bexley residents did attend, they were in the minority and few spoke. Of those who did speak, most opposed any change to the boundary. Similar opposition was expressed by the Greenwich residents who spoke; a viewpoint reflected in the Harris Poll of Greenwich residents which Greenwich had earlier commissioned, and which formed part of its submission on Thamesmead. However, we noted that the majority of those Greenwich residents attending the meeting were in fact from Abbey Wood, which lies outside Thamesmead. We were also aware that most of the discussion centred on Option 2, the proposal to use the East London River Crossing as a boundary, which would have had the effect of transferring parts of Abbey Wood, as well as most of Thamesmead, to Bexley.

52. In its subsequent submission, Greenwich opposed Option 2 on the grounds that it would leave both Tripcock Park and the Abbey Wood Estate divided. Greenwich also objected to the fact that this boundary would come within 1½ miles of Woolwich Town Centre. Thamesmead Town Ltd apparently had plans to expand the town centre in Thamesmead, and Greenwich wished to retain planning control over it in order to relate its development to the role of Woolwich Town Centre. Greenwich had also expressed concern over the possible transfer of an area at Thamesmead Moorings and Abbey Wood, which it had designated "areas of stress", believing that the services afforded to these areas as a high priority would suffer if they were transferred to Bexley. Greenwich's opposition to Option 3 was based on similar grounds.
53. Finally, Greenwich took the view that the suggestion submitted by Mr David Evenett MP, to realign the boundary along the A2041 (Option 4), would not result in increased effectiveness or efficiency in the provision of services.

54. We further considered all five options, and their consequences. We considered that Option 2, to realign the boundary to follow the line of the proposed East London River Crossing, to which there had been many objections from members of the public, would effectively result in isolating Thamesmead West from the rest of Thamesmead, and would create another artificial division of a planned single community. We also considered the less radical suggestion of using the A2041 as a boundary, Option 4, which Greenwich considered would not result in increased effectiveness or efficiency in the provision of services. We reaffirmed our earlier view that, although the suggestion would unite Thamesmead North within one borough, it would not result in a substantial improvement to the present boundary. It would still leave Thamesmead essentially divided, despite transferring as many as 1400 electors.

55. We recognised the obvious and understandable concern expressed at the local meeting by Abbey Wood residents, and their opposition to being transferred to Bexley. Their opposition had been focused almost exclusively on one possible major boundary change, Option 2, using the line of the proposed East London River Crossing. However, this was only one of the five options available for comment at the meeting. We did not feel therefore that this expression of public opinion should preclude further consideration of the other possible major boundary changes for Thamesmead.

56. The Harris Opinion Poll of Greenwich residents suggested that the majority of residents did not desire change. However, since the survey was conducted only on the Greenwich side of Thamesmead, we did not regard the poll as being representative of the current views of Thamesmead as a whole; it could give no
information on the views of those who might be moved from the Bexley part of Thamesmead into Greenwich.

57. In our view, the issue of Thamesmead's current division, and the potential benefits to be derived from uniting it, had not, up to that time, been adequately addressed in the current review by Greenwich, Bexley or Thamesmead Town Ltd, even though the latter did initially welcome the possibility that the area might be united in one borough. Furthermore, as long ago as 1981, Bexley had sought a review of the boundary at Thamesmead, expressing the view that the area should be united in one borough because of its distinct character - both socio-economic and physical - and its relative separation from other centres of population. Differing policies practised by the boroughs on either side of the boundary were said by Bexley to contribute to confusion and a sense of inequality in what was ostensibly a single community.

58. At that time, Bexley advocated uniting Thamesmead in Greenwich, because of the better transport links and accessibility to services on the Greenwich side. In commenting upon that 1981 proposal, Greenwich had indicated that it was not opposed to Thamesmead being transferred to it, but that it would be premature to consider the proposal in advance of the mandatory review of Greater London, which is now the current review. Greenwich considered then that if the review were to take place in 1991, a good case could be made for the transfer of Thamesmead to Greenwich.

59. More recently, following the local meeting at Thamesmead, whilst Greenwich urged that there should be no change to the boundary, it considered that if we felt there was an overriding need to place Thamesmead within one borough, that borough should be Greenwich.

60. We recognised that there was no evidence of support for major change, but felt that, to an extent, this may have
reflected pre-occupation on the part of local residents with one particular option, Option 2. Nevertheless, we recognised that Thamesmead was still a community divided by the borough boundary; that substantial development, particularly of community facilities, was still to come; and that many of the arguments advanced by Bexley in 1981 remained valid. The sense of community shown by the involvement of residents in the discussions on the future of Thamesmead prior to the abolition of the GLC pointed to the same conclusion.

61. We took the view that the necessary future planning and development of Thamesmead would be better carried out under one local authority. Although we accepted that Thamesmead Town Ltd was to some extent a unifying influence, it did not provide the services of a London borough and it could not, even in the short term, take the place of such an authority. Even in the field of housing, liaison would be facilitated if the Company had to deal with only one Borough. We noted that voluntary services in the area were often geared to Thamesmead as a whole. We considered that, similarly, the logic of Thamesmead as a united community would suggest that the whole area should be served by the same local authority. We concluded therefore that, even after having full regard to the views expressed at the local meeting, the case for uniting Thamesmead in one borough remained strong. As already mentioned, Bexley had reached the same conclusion in 1981. In our view, the arguments for unification seemed, if anything, to have strengthened with the passage of time.

62. On the basis of the information we had received about local government services in Thamesmead, we considered that the balance of arguments about service provision and the use of facilities pointed to uniting the town in Greenwich rather than Bexley. We also noted that an increasing number of facilities were being sited on the Greenwich side of the boundary, a trend which would tend to accelerate with the further development of the Thamesmead town centre, and that the major centre of Woolwich and the smaller centre of Plumstead were the nearest significant outside
centres for Thamesmead residents for shopping and employment. The existing patterns of public transport/service provision appeared to confirm this, and current plans showed that the larger proportion of the population would live on the Greenwich side. We therefore decided to adopt as our draft proposal a boundary to incorporate the whole of Thamesmead into Greenwich. We proposed to realign the borough boundary between Bexley and Greenwich to follow the eastern edge of Thamesmead Town. The boundary would then return westward along the Abbey Wood Railway line to meet the present Greenwich/Bexley boundary.

ANNOUNCEMENT OF OUR DRAFT PROPOSALS/INTERIM DECISIONS

63. The letter announcing our draft proposals and interim decisions was published on 1 October 1990. Copies were sent to all the local authorities concerned and to all those who had made representations to us. Greenwich, Bexley, Tower Hamlets, Newham and Barking and Dagenham were asked to publish a notice announcing our draft proposals and interim decisions. In addition, the Councils were asked to post copies of the notice at places where public notices are customarily displayed. They were also asked to place copies of our letter on deposit for inspection at their main offices for a period of eight weeks. Comments were invited by 10 December 1990.

RESPONSE TO OUR DRAFT PROPOSALS

64. The most significant response to our draft proposals centred on the proposal to unite Thamesmead in Greenwich; over 2,600 letters and proformas were received, all opposing our draft proposal, together with a 917 signature petition. In response to our other draft proposals, we received 85 letters, 127 comment slips and a 125 signature petition from members of the public, as well as 59 responses to a questionnaire distributed by the Bexley Boundary Campaign.
OUR PROPOSALS AND DECISIONS

GREENWICH AND ITS RIVER BOUNDARIES WITH BARKING AND DAGENHAM, NEWHAM AND TOWER HAMLETS

65. We received no comments on our interim decision to propose no changes to Greenwich's river boundaries. We have therefore decided to confirm our interim decision as final.

THE BOUNDARY BETWEEN GREENWICH AND BEXLEY

(a) Mervyn Avenue and Footscray Road

66. Our draft proposal to unite properties in Mervyn Avenue and Footscray Road was supported by Greenwich. However, the Council pointed out that our draft proposal would have the effect of splitting the site of Rutland Court; while it united the flats in Greenwich, it left the garages in Bexley. Bexley supported our draft proposal for Mervyn Avenue and Footscray Road, but opposed Rutland Court being united in Greenwich. Bexley submitted an alternative suggestion to unite Rutland Court in its area, which was opposed by Greenwich.

67. We also received a letter signed by 17 residents of Rutland Court, four individual letters from Rutland Court residents and a representation from the Old Bexley and Sidcup Conservative Association. All opposed the block being united in Greenwich.

68. We acknowledged that our draft proposal, while generally rectifying the anomalies in the existing boundary, was defective in respect of Rutland Court. We noted the wish expressed by the majority of the residents of Rutland Court to stay in Bexley and considered that, as the main part of the building is located in Bexley, Rutland Court and its curtilage should be united in that Borough. It appeared to us that Bexley's counter-suggestion would resolve the anomaly by unifying Rutland Court and the whole of Ermington Road in Bexley, and would provide a clear boundary.
69. In view of this, we decided to withdraw that part of our draft proposal in the area of Rutland Court, and to issue a further draft proposal based on Bexley's suggestion, to realign the boundary along the north east side of Footscray Road from its junction with Mervyn Avenue, and the north side of Ermington Road to rejoin our draft proposal. Subject to this, we have decided to confirm the remainder of our draft proposal as final.

(b) Ermington Road, Agaton Road and Dulverton Road

70. Our draft proposal to unite Agaton Road and Dulverton Road in Bexley was supported by Bexley and by the Old Bexley and Sidcup Conservative Association. Greenwich made no further comment.

71. In the absence of opposition, we have decided to confirm our draft proposal as final.

(c) Oakley Drive, Cradley Drive and Sidewood Road

72. Greenwich supported our draft proposal to unite Oakley Drive, Cradley Road and Sidewood Road in Greenwich. However, Bexley opposed it, and suggested an alternative alignment, the effect of which would be to transfer parts of Oakley Drive, Cradley Road and Sidewood Road to its area. Bexley took the view that its suggestion would unite properties divided by the existing boundary and would accord with the wishes expressed by local residents. The Council indicated that it had received 51 representations and a 96 signature petition, all opposing our draft proposal.

73. The Old Bexley and Sidcup Conservative Association also opposed our draft proposal, and submitted an alternative suggestion identical to that submitted by Bexley. A local councillor opposed the draft proposal and suggested retaining the existing boundary. Another local councillor supported our draft proposal, commenting that the local shopping centre for this area
is New Eltham, in Greenwich.

74. We also received 15 letters from residents of Sidewood Road, 21 letters from residents of Old Farm Avenue, and 25 letters from residents of Oakley Drive. All opposed our draft proposal, and emphasised their satisfaction with the services provided by Bexley. We also received a 125 signature petition from the residents of Oakley Drive and Milner Walk opposing our draft proposal.

75. We noted the considerable opposition to our draft proposal from local residents, who had expressed an affinity with Bexley and a desire to stay in that Borough. We also noted that Bexley's alternative suggestion would transfer to its area a large number of residents whose affinities are likely to be with Greenwich. In the light of the opposition to our draft proposal, we concluded that we would not be justified in seeking to unite this area in any one authority, and decided to withdraw it. However, we took the view that some realignment was necessary in order to unite properties divided by the existing boundary, and that this could best be achieved by adopting, as our further draft proposal, a minor realignment based on Greenwich's original suggestion.

(d) Avery Hill Road Sportsground

76. Our draft proposal to unite the Sportsground in Greenwich was supported by Greenwich and by two local councillors. A member of the public, while not opposing our draft proposal, commented that Greenwich had sought to develop the sports field, but that this had been opposed by Bexley.

77. In the absence of opposition, we have decided to confirm our draft proposal as final.
78. Both Greenwich and Bexley supported our draft proposal to unite properties in Overmead in Greenwich, and properties in Half Way Street in Bexley. However, both Councils opposed that part of it relating to Southspring, Greenhithe Close and Hambleton Road.

79. Greenwich pointed out that our draft proposal would transfer the southern part of the Avery Hill Estate from Greenwich to Bexley, which would result in the transfer of a large number of Greenwich tenants to Bexley. Bexley noted that most of the area forms part of Greenwich's Avery Hill Estate, and that many of the properties are still owned by that Council. Bexley expressed the view that the area has no local affinities with the adjoining area, in Bexley; that it is served by schools, shops and other community facilities in Greenwich; and that its transfer to Bexley would disrupt the pattern of community life.

80. Our draft proposal was also opposed by a local councillor, on the grounds that it does not accord with local affinities. That part of it relating to Southspring was supported by four residents. However, another resident of Southspring opposed it, commenting that she was happy with the services received from Greenwich.

81. We noted that both authorities had supported our draft proposal for Overmead and Half Way Street, but that they had opposed that part of it relating to Southspring, Greenhithe Close and Hambleton Road. We accepted that this area relates more to Greenwich and that the affinities of residents are with that authority. We have therefore decided to withdraw our draft proposal in the area of Southspring, Greenhithe Close and Hambleton Road, while confirming as final that part of it for Overmead and Halfway Street.
82. Greenwich, Bexley and a local councillor all supported our draft proposal to unite properties in Restons Crescent and Linsted Court in Greenwich.

83. In the absence of opposition, we have decided to confirm our draft proposal as final.

84. Bexley supported our draft proposal to transfer all properties in Braywood Road, Lingfield Crescent and Wincrofts Drive from Greenwich to Bexley. However, Greenwich opposed it, commenting that the residents of Mabel Crout Court Sheltered Housing Unit receive a good service from its Council, and that our draft proposal would not improve service delivery in any way. Greenwich also commented that Falconwood Station, which would be transferred into Bexley by our draft proposal, is predominantly used by Greenwich residents and that its Council works closely with British Rail to develop transport facilities in the area.

85. Bexley underlined its support for our draft proposal by commenting that the majority of primary school children in this area already attend schools in Bexley. It commented that ownership of Mabel Crout Court sheltered housing unit could be dealt with as part of the associated property order.

86. We received 129 comment slips from local residents of the area, of which 107 residents supported our draft proposal, while 22 opposed it. Of those opposing our draft proposal, 14 were from residents of Mabel Crout Court Sheltered Housing, who were worried about service provision. We received four individual letters, two opposing our draft proposal and two supporting it.
87. We considered that this area is isolated from the rest of Greenwich by the A2 Trunk Road and the Falconwood-Welling railway to the north. We noted the concern expressed by Greenwich and some residents about service provision to the sheltered housing unit at Mabel Crout Court. However, we took the view that the ownership and servicing of this facility could be resolved through an agreement between the two authorities, or under any Boundary Changes Order. We have therefore decided to confirm our draft proposal as final.

(h) Glenmore Road, Welling

88. Both Greenwich and Bexley supported our draft proposal to unite properties in Dryden Road and Glenmore Road in Bexley.

89. In the absence of opposition, we have decided to confirm our draft proposal as final.

(i) Woolwich Cemetery

90. Both Greenwich and Bexley supported our draft proposal to unite Woolwich Cemetery in Greenwich.

91. In the absence of opposition, we have decided to confirm our draft proposal as final.

(j) Alliance Road, Bournewood Road and Wickham Lane, Plumstead

92. Greenwich supported our draft proposal to unite Alliance Road, Bournewood Road and Grasdene Road in its area. Bexley agreed that our draft proposal would provide a sound boundary. However, the Council indicated that it now wished to support the alternative alignment, subject to a minor modification, originally suggested to us by the Bexley Boundary Campaign (East Wickham) at the commencement of our review.
93. The Bexley Boundary Campaign resubmitted its suggestion, together with the results of a survey it had undertaken of households in the area. This had shown that 41 of the 43 households affected by our draft proposal had responded, and that all wished to remain in Bexley. The Campaign indicated that, if we were not minded to adopt its suggestion, it would be willing to support the realignment now proposed by Bexley.

94. We considered the Bexley Boundary Campaign's suggestion, and Bexley's modification to it. However, we noted that the area in question is separated from the rest of Bexley to the south by an area of open space, and reaffirmed our view that either of these proposed realignments would merely serve to perpetuate the division of a single residential community between two local authorities. We concluded that our draft proposal to unite the area in Greenwich would create the clearest boundary, and have therefore decided to confirm it as final.

(k) Thamesmead

95. Our draft proposal to unite Thamesmead in Greenwich was supported by Greenwich, the Bexley Council for Racial Equality, the Woolwich and Eltham Labour Party, an elected representative of Thamesmead Town Ltd, and by one member of the public. The concept of uniting Thamesmead in one authority was supported by the Anglican Rector of Thamesmead and by the Eltham Conservative Association.

96. Our draft proposal was opposed by Bexley, Thamesmead Town Ltd, Mr David Evennett MP, Mr John Cartwright MP, the Erith and Crayford Conservative Association and the Erith and Crayford Constituency Labour Party. We also received considerable opposition to our draft proposal from members of the public: 699 individual letters; 1,413 proforma letters distributed by Labour Councillors; 76 proforma letters distributed by the Binsey Walk Tenants' Association; 14 proforma letters from residents of Abbey Wood; 483 other proforma letters; and a petition of 917
signatures from the South Thamesmead Tenants' Association.

97. Greenwich reiterated the claims made to us in its original submission, that there are very significant differences in the levels of local authority service provision between Bexley and Greenwich and, in particular, between their respective parts of Thamesmead. Greenwich took the view that, in terms of housing, social services, leisure provision and education (including nursery provision and adult education), the level of service it provided to Thamesmead residents was superior to that of Bexley. It also pointed out that substantial development was still to take place in Thamesmead, particularly of community facilities and associated infrastructure, and claimed that the area's division between itself and Bexley could only be to the detriment of cohesive town planning.

98. The Council believed that the diverse approaches to service provision adopted by the two authorities were having the effect of splitting the Thamesmead community. This was in contrast to what it saw as the unifying influence of a single landlord in Thamesmead Town, and the Thamesmead-wide approach taken by the extensive network of voluntary sector groups and organisations operating in the area. It felt that our draft proposal had correctly identified the existing balance of service provision, the use of facilities and the community of interest in the area, all of which pointed to uniting Thamesmead in Greenwich rather than in Bexley. This, it considered, also reflected the patterns of public transport, the proximity and use of shopping facilities and employment opportunities.

99. Finally, Greenwich suggested that, while we are required to take the views of local residents into account in our deliberations, these should be kept in perspective; the views of current residents, which may only reflect the short-term impact of our draft proposal for Thamesmead, should be weighed against the longer term benefits to be derived from boundary changes in the area. In the Council's view, Thamesmead's longer term
interests lay with a united community within Greenwich.

100. In opposing our draft proposal, Bexley indicated that it had received over four hundred individual representations, and petitions containing over eight hundred signatures, all opposed to our draft proposal. It also referred to, and enclosed the results of, a poll of Bexley residents of Thamesmead, conducted by the Electoral Reform Society on behalf of Thamesmead Town Ltd, which indicated that of the 6,956 (74% of the electorate) who voted, 6,656 opposed the area being united in Greenwich.

101. Bexley also mentioned that it had received five representations from businesses located in Thamesmead, which were also opposed to our draft proposal. It commented that the business community in the area is largely based at the eastern end of Thamesmead East ward, and expressed the view that it forms part of a business/industrial complex with the adjoining business/industrial complex in Belvedere.

102. The Council expressed the view that the most reliable indication of whether effective and convenient local government services are being provided to an area is the perception of those services by local residents and firms. Bexley believed that the views expressed by residents confirmed that they were content with the services provided by its Council. While acknowledging that there are differences in both the nature and level of services provided to residents in the two parts of Thamesmead, the Council considered that this disparity in service provision was supported by residents in the Bexley part of the area, as was evidenced by their opposition to our draft proposal.

103. Bexley claimed that circumstances had changed since 1980/81, when it had originally recommended that Thamesmead should be united in Greenwich. It now took the view that the nature, style and psychology of Thamesmead had altered since the abolition of the former Greater London Council, and that Thamesmead Town Ltd now provided the unifying influence necessary
for the management of the area. It claimed that shopping and service provision no longer pointed towards Greenwich as the focal point, as major shopping development had since taken place at Bexleyheath, which now has direct bus links from Thamesmead, and that the road links between Thamesmead and Bexley had been improved. Bexley considered that there was no measurable support for our draft proposal, and that the overwhelming view of both the Bexley and the Greenwich residents of Thamesmead was that the status quo should be maintained. It also took the view that the provision of effective and efficient local government services would not be enhanced by our draft proposal.

104. Mr David Evennett MP resubmitted his original suggestion for a realignment of the Greenwich/Bexley boundary along the A2041 Carlyle Road (Option 4). He expressed the view that the concept of Thamesmead being united in a single borough was both outdated and unnecessary. Mr Evennett commented that, while Thamesmead had been planned as a single community, its development had taken place in a piecemeal manner over a period of time. He acknowledged that this approach had led to a severe lack of community facilities, but expressed the view that this was now being addressed by Thamesmead Town Ltd, which had also shown itself to be effective in administering the affairs of the whole of Thamesmead, in many cases undertaking local authority tasks. However, Mr Evennett agreed that Thamesmead Town Ltd was not a local authority, and that a benefit of uniting Thamesmead in one borough would be to have a single planning authority for the whole area. Nevertheless, he felt that such a benefit would not outweigh the disadvantages of uniting Thamesmead.

105. In supporting our draft proposal, the Bexley Council for Racial Equality commended both the level and sensitivity of service provision in Greenwich for special needs groups, including ethnic minorities. The Anglican Rector of Thamesmead commented that Thamesmead's split between two boroughs caused difficulties over the production of a common education policy for children in the area, and that these difficulties were aggravated.
by the opposing attitudes adopted by the two Councils in relation to under-five nursery provision, and the provision of health care and social services. He also commented on the current boundary's adverse effect on the co-ordination of the voluntary sector, and the Thamesmead Christian Community's work among the growing ethnic minority groups in the area.

106. As indicated in paragraph 100 above, Thamesmead Town Ltd had commissioned a local referendum among residents of the Bexley half of Thamesmead, supervised by the Electoral Reform Society. 74% of the electorate responded, and 96.2% of the valid vote opposed our draft proposal. In commenting on this result, Thamesmead Town Ltd indicated that it had been left in no doubt that our draft proposal did not accord with the wishes of Bexley residents, and that it did not reflect the pattern of community life within the area.

107. The Company expressed the view that it is as easy for Thamesmead residents to travel to shopping centres in Bexleyheath or Erith as to travel to Greenwich. It indicated that the Company's offices provide a number of services to Bexley residents of Thamesmead, which are not available to Greenwich residents, for example, community charge payment facilities, and a social services office dealing with housing benefit and income support enquiries. Residents can also enquire about housing repairs and other tenancy matters. It also mentioned that Bexley have local offices for social services, community race relations, a Citizen's Advice Bureau and a library located in the area. By contrast, while Greenwich had provided a local social services office, residents requiring other services had to travel to Woolwich. A further concern of Thamesmead Town Ltd was the possible adverse effect our draft proposal might have on the provision of education services to the area. Finally, it expressed the view that our draft proposal did not reflect the pattern of community life within Thamesmead, and that it would not be conducive to the effective operation of local government services.
The overwhelming majority of Bexley residents of Thamesmead from whom we received comments indicated that they were content with the services provided by Bexley. Their main grounds for objecting to our draft proposal were the political complexion of Greenwich Council, the higher level of community charge payable in Greenwich, and a belief that being transferred to Greenwich would result in higher car and household insurance premiums. A number also suggested that the value of their properties would decrease. The majority of respondents suggested that the existing boundary should be retained.

Thames Water Utilities Ltd pointed out that our draft proposal would split the Crossness Sewage Treatment Works between Bexley and Greenwich. It suggested realigning the boundary along the south of its land holdings to the south of Eastern Way.

**Thamesmead: Our Conclusions**

We have a statutory duty to make proposals to you for boundary changes which appear to us desirable in the interests of effective and convenient local government. Our guidelines, contained in Department of the Environment Circulars 33/78 and 20/86, advise us that, in conducting boundary reviews, we should have regard to three criteria: "whether or not an area or boundary accords with the wishes of the people, reflects the pattern of community life, and is conducive to the effective operation of local government and associated services". The guidelines also advise us to examine "the need for adjustment of local authority boundaries to overcome specific problems arising from historic anomalies or from subsequent changes in the pattern of development".

We noted the strength of feeling expressed by the considerable number of residents in the Bexley part of Thamesmead who wrote to us, or signed petitions, that they are satisfied with the services provided by Bexley, and have no wish to see the area united in Greenwich. This expression of public opinion was
supported by the results of the referendum organised by Thamesmead Town Ltd. However, in taking account of the representations received, we have had to bear in mind that the wishes of the people are not the only factor to be taken into account. We must also consider the pattern of community life and the effective operation of local authority services. We have also felt it necessary to consider the past and future development of Thamesmead, and whether the current boundary inhibits residents' sense of belonging to a single community.

112. One of the main grounds of objection to our draft proposal is that there is no need to unite Thamesmead in a single local authority, since Thamesmead Town Ltd, which took over responsibility as landlord for the public sector housing stock following the abolition of the former GLC, provides the necessary unifying influence in the area. We recognise the important role which the Company has played, and continues to play, in the management and development of Thamesmead. However, we cannot accept that the purpose and objectives of the company are, in themselves, sufficient grounds for maintaining the present boundary through Thamesmead. Indeed, in our view, the character and purpose of Thamesmead Town Ltd, and its unifying influence, argues in favour of a common approach to the future development of what is a strategic London housing resource and an area for economic growth, and the provision of services to it.

113. Thamesmead is currently located on the fringes of two London boroughs which have different policies and priorities in relation to the provision of services to their respective areas. Both Greenwich and Bexley highlighted these differences in their responses to our draft proposal, as to some extent did Thamesmead Town Ltd. Both the Bexley Council for Racial Equality and the Anglican Rector of Thamesmead expressed concern over the difficulties these different approaches were causing to community and voluntary groups whose work encompasses Thamesmead as a whole.
114. We do not see it as part of our remit to comment on the relative merits of the services, or their levels, provided to Thamesmead by Greenwich and Bexley. Rather, our concern is that there are two different sets of policies and priorities being applied to what is clearly a single developing community. In our view, such an approach to the particular and unique circumstances of Thamesmead may be divisive, and cannot be considered as conducive to the effective and convenient operation of local authority and associated services.

115. If responsibility for the provision of local government services continues to be divided between two local authorities, the potential for this divisiveness will inevitably remain as a threat to the coherent development of services throughout the community. This was recognised by Bexley in its 1980/81 boundary review submission. While Bexley has now taken the view that circumstances have changed since that time, it remains our view that the arguments deployed by the Council in 1980/81 concerning the divisive nature of the current boundary are no less valid today.

116. We are also concerned that Thamesmead's current split between two local authorities may, to some extent, have resulted in insufficient regard having been paid to the strategic nature of Thamesmead as a major housing and employment resource in its own right. From their draft Unitary Development Plans (UDPs), it is clear that both Greenwich and Bexley accord considerable importance to the continuing development of their respective parts of Thamesmead within the framework of their respective boroughs, having due regard to the potential impact on established shopping and employment centres.

117. However, it is inevitable that the existence of two, quite separate UDPs covering different parts of a community will tend to pull it in two different directions. Quite justifiably, both Greenwich and Bexley have formulated planning policies which address the specific issues and priorities of their respective
areas. Where these issues and priorities are different in the two authorities, this is reflected in the policies contained in their draft UDPs, which we feel may be detrimental to Thamesmead's development. Even where Greenwich and Bexley's policies are similar, for example, in maintaining growth in their respective established town centres, the effect on Thamesmead must be to make it look in separate directions.

118. In our view, the differences in emphasis by the two Councils in their development policies can only run counter to the attempts being made by a number of Thamesmead organisations, including Thamesmead Town Ltd, to create and maintain Thamesmead as one community. We are also concerned that the community's division between two authorities may mean that its needs, for example, for a district shopping centre, may have less prominence or priority for each Council than if Thamesmead and its electorate were united in one authority. Accordingly, we feel that the full potential of Thamesmead is only likely to be realised if it is united and developed within the framework of a single borough.

119. In issuing our draft proposal, we expressed the view that, from its history and development, and the numerous community and voluntary groups operating in the area, Thamesmead was, and is, a single, planned community with its own identity. Notwithstanding the opposition to our draft proposal, we have received no convincing evidence to refute that view. We accept that shopping, employment and travel to work patterns have developed since Bexley originally suggested uniting the area in Greenwich, and that there are now links to Bexleyheath and Erith. However, the change in these patterns appears, at least in part, to be a consequence of general trends affecting London as a whole; Londoners now appear more willing to travel further afield for shopping, employment and recreational facilities. Nevertheless, the main links still appear to be with Greenwich.
120. We have taken full account of the strongly held views of those Bexley residents of Thamesmead who wrote to us, signed petitions or took part in the referendum organised by Thamesmead Town Ltd. Such views are important to us, and we are grateful to all who took the trouble to submit their observations. However, as indicated above, the wishes of the people are only one of the factors we are enjoined to take into consideration in reviewing local authority boundaries.

121. We feel that there is logic in Greenwich's comment that this boundary issue should not be determined by the short-term considerations mentioned in paragraphs 108 above, which includes house values and the respective levels of Community Charge in Greenwich and Bexley. While accepting that these are current issues of moment to the Bexley residents concerned, which could have been among the main influences upon the views expressed, we have felt bound to conclude that there is an overriding case, in terms of effective and convenient local government in the longer term, for uniting Thamesmead in Greenwich. By reason of its history and particular characteristics, which we have explained above, Thamesmead is a special case. We have therefore decided to confirm our draft proposal as final, subject to a minor modification to unite all the land owned by Thames Water Utilities Ltd, at the Crossness Sewage Works, in Bexley.

RESPONSE TO OUR FURTHER DRAFT PROPOSALS: OUR FINAL PROPOSALS

122. Our further draft proposals letter was issued on 2 August 1991. The local authorities concerned were asked to ensure that it received the same publicity as our original draft proposals. Copies of our letter were also sent to all those who had made representations to us on the issues covered by our further draft proposals. Comments were invited by 27 September 1991.

123. In response to our letter of 2 August 1991, we received comments from Greenwich, Bexley, the Eltham Conservative Association and four members of the public. The Metropolitan
Police stated that it had no comment to make on our further draft proposals.

124. As required by section 60(2) of the Local Government Act 1972, we have carefully considered all the representations made to us and set below our final proposals.

THE BOUNDARY BETWEEN GREENWICH AND BEXLEY

(a) Mervyn Avenue and Footscray Road

125. Bexley and the Eltham Conservative Association supported our further draft proposal to unite properties on Footscray Road and Rutland Court in Bexley. Greenwich stated that it had decided to make no further comment.

126. In the absence of opposition, we have decided to confirm our further draft proposal as final.

(b) Oakley Drive, Cradley Road and Sidewood Road

127. Bexley, the Eltham Conservative Association and five members of the public supported our further draft proposal to unite Oakley Drive and split properties on Sidewood Road in Bexley, and a split property on Cradley Road in Greenwich.

128. However, Greenwich opposed it and suggested reverting to our original draft proposal, which was to unite Oakley Drive, Cradley Road and Sidewood Road in Greenwich. The Council expressed the view that our original draft proposal had considerable merit and logic, and pointed out that the developments on Oakley Drive and Cradley Road share a common access from Beaverbank Road, in Greenwich. It commented that Oakley Drive is bounded to the south by the Lewisham/Sidcup railway line and to the east by allotment gardens, both of which form natural community boundaries.
129. Greenwich noted that we had withdrawn our original draft proposal for Oakley Drive, Cradley Road and Sidewood Road and issued a further draft proposal for uniting properties, but that we had not withdrawn our draft proposal to unite Agaton and Dulverton Roads in Bexley. This, it argued, was inconsistent. The Council commented that we should be adopting a similar approach in both these areas, either uniting the roads concerned in a single borough or making no change to the existing boundary.

130. We noted Greenwich's comment that we had been inconsistent in our approach to these two boundary issues. We do not accept this. The suggestions for change to each of these two stretches of boundary were considered on their own merits, in terms of effective and convenient local government, and in the light of the responses to our original draft proposals letter. There is nothing inconsistent about reaching different conclusions in the light of different considerations.

131. We considered that Greenwich had provided no new evidence to support its view that we should revert to our original draft proposal. In view of this, and the support for our further draft proposal expressed by the other respondents, we have decided to confirm it as final.

(c) Abbey Wood Village

132. As part of its response to our further draft proposals, Greenwich suggested that we should give consideration to the existing boundary at Abbey Wood Village. The Council expressed the view that, while neither it nor Bexley had submitted suggestions for change in this area, there might be merit in seeking to unite the village in Greenwich, particularly if we were minded to confirm our draft proposal for Thamesmead. Greenwich commented that the existing boundary splits Abbey Wood Village, but that it did not have a specific suggestion for the area.
133. We noted that the existing boundary in this area is not defaced, but follows a centre of road alignment. We also noted that there is considerable development extending eastwards from Abbey Wood along the south side of the Abbey Wood/Belvedere BR line, essentially linking Abbey Wood and Belvedere BR Stations. While there are breaks in that development, we did not consider that they were such as might be regarded as delineating the eastward extent of Abbey Wood.

134. Accordingly, in the absence of any evidence from either of the authorities concerned or from the residents of the area to suggest that effective and convenient local government has been hindered in Abbey Wood Village, we have decided to make no proposals for this area.

Electoral Consequences

135. We are aware that our final proposal for Thamesmead would necessitate consequential changes to local authority electoral arrangements, namely the transfer from Bexley of the majority of Thamesmead East Ward, with an electorate in 1991 of 9,555. Our final proposal would result in Thamesmead East becoming a borough ward in Greenwich. The remainder of the ward would be left in Bexley to become part of Belvedere Ward. In addition, Area C, shown on Map 7 (attached at Annex A to this report), currently part of Belvedere Ward, would be added to Thamesmead East Ward. The transfer of Thamesmead East, a 3 member ward, would result in a Greenwich Council comprising 65 members. Bexley would have a new council of 59 members.

CONCLUSIONS

136. We believe that our final proposals, which are summarised in Annex C to this report, are in the interests of effective and convenient local government and we commend them to you accordingly.
137. A separate letter is being sent to the London Boroughs of Greenwich, Barking and Dagenham, Bexley, Newham and Tower Hamlets, asking them to deposit copies of this report at their main offices for inspection for a period of six months. They are also being asked to put notices to that effect on public notice boards. Arrangements have been made for similar notices to be inserted in the local press. The text of the notice will explain that the Commission has fulfilled its statutory role in this matter and that it now falls to you to make an Order implementing the proposals, if you think fit, though not earlier than a period of six weeks from the date our final proposals are submitted to you. Copies of this report, with the maps attached at Annex A illustrating the proposed changes, are being sent to all those who received our draft and further draft proposal letters of 1 October 1990 and 2 August 1991, and to those who made written representations to us.
Signed

G J ELLERTON (Chairman)

K F J ENNALS

G R PRENTICE

HELEN SARKANY

C W SMITH

K YOUNG

R D COMPTON
Secretary
19 December 1991
LOCAL GOVERNMENT BOUNDARY COMMISSION FOR ENGLAND

REVIEWS OF GREATER LONDON, THE LONDON BOROUGHS AND THE CITY OF LONDON

GREENWICH LB AFFECTING BEXLEY LB

FINAL PROPOSALS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Existing Boundary</th>
<th>Proposed Boundary</th>
<th>Other boundary</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Produced by Ordnance Survey for the Local Government Boundary Commission for England
INSET

Map 3

Area A

Area B

Area C

Area D

Area E

Area F

GREENWICH LB

BEXLEY LB

SEE INSET ABOVE

© Crown Copyright 1992
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Map No.</th>
<th>Area Ref.</th>
<th>From</th>
<th>To</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>A C D</td>
<td>Greenwich LB New Eltham Ward</td>
<td>Bexley LB Sidcup West Ward</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>B E</td>
<td>Bexley LB Sidcup West Ward</td>
<td>Greenwich LB New Eltham Ward</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>A C E G</td>
<td>Bexley LB Lamorbey Ward</td>
<td>Greenwich LB Avery Hill Ward</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>B D F J</td>
<td>Greenwich LB Avery Hill Ward</td>
<td>Bexley LB Lamorbey Ward</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>A</td>
<td>Bexley LB Blackfen Ward</td>
<td>Greenwich LB Avery Hill Ward</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>D F</td>
<td>Greenwich LB Avery Hill Ward</td>
<td>Bexley LB Lamorbey Ward</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>C E</td>
<td>Bexley LB Lamorbey Ward</td>
<td>Greenwich LB Avery Hill Ward</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>A</td>
<td>Greenwich LB Deansfield Ward</td>
<td>Bexley LB Falconwood Ward</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>B</td>
<td>Greenwich LB Eltham Park Ward</td>
<td>Bexley LB Falconwood Ward</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>A</td>
<td>Bexley LB East Wickham Ward</td>
<td>Greenwich LB Slade Ward</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>B</td>
<td>Greenwich LB Slade Ward</td>
<td>Bexley LB East Wickham Ward</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>A</td>
<td>Bexley LB East Wickham Ward</td>
<td>Greenwich LB Slade Ward</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>B</td>
<td>Greenwich LB Slade Ward</td>
<td>Bexley LB East Wickham Ward</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>A</td>
<td>Bexley LB East Wickham Ward</td>
<td>Greenwich LB Slade Ward</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>A</td>
<td>Bexley LB Thamesmead East Ward</td>
<td>Greenwich LB Thamesmead East Ward</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>B D</td>
<td>Bexley LB Thamesmead East Ward</td>
<td>Bexley LB Belvedere Ward</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>C</td>
<td>Bexley LB Belvedere Ward</td>
<td>Greenwich LB Thamesmead East Ward</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
**SUMMARY OF PROPOSED BOUNDARY CHANGES**

**Boundary between Greenwich and Bexley**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Location</th>
<th>Realignment Details</th>
<th>Paragraphs</th>
<th>Maps</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Mervyn Avenue and Footscray Road</td>
<td>Realignment to unite properties in Mervyn Avenue in Greenwich and two properties in Footscray Road and Rutland Court in Bexley.</td>
<td>125 - 126</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ermington Road, Agaton Road and Dulverton Road</td>
<td>Realignment to unite Agaton and Dulverton Roads in Bexley.</td>
<td>70 - 71</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Oakley Drive, Cradley Road and Sidewood Road</td>
<td>Minor realignment to unite split properties in one authority.</td>
<td>127 - 131</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Avery Hill Road Sportsground</td>
<td>Realignment to unite the sportsground in Greenwich.</td>
<td>76 - 77</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Overmead and Half Way Street, Sidcup</td>
<td>Minor realignment to unite properties in Overmead in Greenwich and properties in Halfway Street in Bexley.</td>
<td>78 - 81</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Restons Crescent, New Eltham</td>
<td>Realignment to unite Restons Crescent in Greenwich.</td>
<td>82 - 83</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Braywood Road, Lingfield Crescent, and Wincrofts Drive, Falconwood</td>
<td>Realignment to transfer Braywood Road, Lingfield Crescent and Wincrofts Drive to Bexley.</td>
<td>84 - 87</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Glenmore Road, Welling</td>
<td>Realignment to unite properties in Glenmore Road in Bexley.</td>
<td>88 - 89</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Woolwich Cemetery</td>
<td>Realignment to unite Woolwich Cemetery in Greenwich.</td>
<td>90 - 91</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Alliance Road, Bournewood Road and Wickham Lane, Plumstead</td>
<td>Realignment to unite Alliance Road, Grasdene Road and Bournewood Road in Greenwich.</td>
<td>Paragraphs 92 - 94, Map 6</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-----------------------------------------------</td>
<td>-------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>--------------------------</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Thamesmead</td>
<td>Realignment to unite Thamesmead in Greenwich.</td>
<td>Paragraphs 95 - 121, Map 7</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>