

LOCAL
GOVERNMENT
COMMISSION
FOR ENGLAND

FINAL
RECOMMENDATIONS
ON THE FUTURE
ELECTORAL
ARRANGEMENTS FOR
ST ALBANS
IN HERTFORDSHIRE

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

February 1998

LOCAL GOVERNMENT COMMISSION FOR ENGLAND

This report sets out the Commission's final recommendations on the electoral arrangements for St Albans in Hertfordshire.

Members of the Commission are:

Professor Malcolm Grant (Chairman)

Helena Shovelton (Deputy Chairman)

Peter Brokenshire

Professor Michael Clarke

Robin Gray

Bob Scruton

David Thomas

Adrian Stungo (Chief Executive)

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CONTENTS

	page
LETTER TO THE SECRETARY OF STATE	<i>v</i>
SUMMARY	<i>vii</i>
1 INTRODUCTION	<i>1</i>
2 CURRENT ELECTORAL ARRANGEMENTS	<i>3</i>
3 DRAFT RECOMMENDATIONS	<i>7</i>
4 RESPONSES TO CONSULTATION	<i>9</i>
5 ANALYSIS AND FINAL RECOMMENDATIONS	<i>13</i>
6 NEXT STEPS	<i>27</i>
 APPENDICES	
A Final Recommendations for St Albans: Detailed Mapping	<i>29</i>
B Draft Recommendations for St Albans (July 1997)	<i>35</i>



Local Government Commission for England

3 February 1998

Dear Secretary of State

On 10 December 1996, the Commission began a periodic electoral review of the district of St Albans under the Local Government Act 1992. We published our draft recommendations for electoral arrangements on 2 July 1997 and undertook a 11-week period of consultation.

We have now prepared our final recommendations in the light of the consultation. We have substantially confirmed our draft recommendations, although some modifications have been made (see paragraph 76) in the light of further evidence. This report sets out our final recommendations for changes to electoral arrangements in St Albans.

We recommend that St Albans City and District Council should be served by 58 councillors representing 20 wards, and that some changes should be made to ward boundaries in order to improve electoral equality, having regard to the statutory criteria. We recommend that elections should continue to take place by thirds.

I would like to thank members and officers of the City and District 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 St Albans on 10 December 1996. We published our draft recommendations for electoral arrangements on 2 July 1996, after which we undertook an 11-week period of consultation.

- **This report summarises the representations we have 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 St Albans because:

- **in eight of the 20 wards, the number of electors represented by each councillor varies by more than 10 per cent from the average for the district; the worst case of electoral inequality is Sandridge ward, which varies from the district average by 128 per cent;**
- **this level of electoral equality is not expected to improve significantly over the next five years.**

Our main final recommendations for future electoral arrangements (Figure 1 and paragraphs 75 to 76) are that:

- **St Albans City and District Council should be served by 58 councillors, compared with 57 at present;**
- **there should continue to be 20 wards, as at present;**
- **the boundaries of 11 wards should be modified, while nine wards should retain their existing boundaries;**
- **elections should continue to take place by thirds.**

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

- **In 17 of the 20 wards, the number of electors per councillor would vary by no more than 10 per cent from the district average.**
- **This level of electoral equality is expected to be maintained for the year 2001.**

Recommendations are also made for changes to parish and town council electoral arrangements. They provide for:

- **revised warding arrangements for St Stephen, London Colney and Sandridge parish councils and Harpenden Town Council.**

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 16 March 1998:

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

Figure 1:
The Commission's Final Recommendations: Summary

	Ward name	Number of councillors	Constituent areas	Map reference
1	Ashley (in St Albans)	3	Ashley ward (part)	Map A6
2	Batchwood (in St Albans)	3	<i>Unchanged</i>	Map 2
3	Clarence (in St Albans)	3	Clarence ward; Ashley ward (part)	Map A6
4	Colney Heath	2	Colney Heath district ward and parish; London Colney district ward (part – London Colney East ward (part) of London Colney parish)	Maps 2 and A3
5	Cunningham (in St Albans)	3	<i>Unchanged</i>	Map 2
6	Harpenden East	3	Harpenden East district and parish ward (part); Harpenden North district and parish ward (part)	Large map
7	Harpenden North	3	Harpenden North district and parish ward (part)	Large map
8	Harpenden South	3	<i>Unchanged</i> (Harpenden South parish ward)	Map 2
9	Harpenden West	3	Harpenden West district and parish ward; Harpenden East district and parish ward (part)	Large map
10	London Colney	3	London Colney ward (part – London Colney North West and London Colney South West wards and London Colney East ward (part) of London Colney parish)	Maps 2 and A3
11	Marshalswick North	3	Marshalswick North ward (part – Marshalswick East ward and Marshalswick West ward (part) of Sandridge parish; Sandridge ward (part – Sandridge Village ward of Sandridge parish (part))	Maps A4 and A5
12	Marshalswick South (in St Albans)	3	<i>Unchanged</i>	Map 2
13	Park Street	3	Park Street ward (Park Street ward of St Stephen parish); St Stephen's ward (part – Bricket Wood (North) ward (part) and Bricket Wood (South) ward (part) of St Stephen parish)	Map A2
14	Redbourn	3	<i>Unchanged</i> (the parishes of Harpenden Rural, Redbourn and St Michael)	Map 2

Figure 1 (continued):
The Commission's Final Recommendations: Summary

	Ward name	Number of councillors	Constituent areas	Map reference
15	St Peter's (in St Albans)	3	<i>Unchanged</i>	Map 2
16	St Stephen's	3	St Stephen's ward (part – Chiswell Green ward, Bricket Wood (North) ward (part) and Bricket Wood (South) ward (part) of St Stephen parish)	Map A2
17	Sandridge	2	Sandridge ward (part – Sandridge Village ward of Sandridge parish (part)); Marshalswick North ward (part – Marshalswick West ward of Sandridge parish (part))	Maps A4 and A5
18	Sopwell (in St Albans)	3	<i>Unchanged</i>	Map 2
19	Verulam (in St Albans)	3	<i>Unchanged</i>	Map 2
20	Wheathampstead	3	<i>Unchanged</i> (Wheathampstead parish)	Map 2

Notes: 1 The wards in the centre of St Albans (Ashley, Batchwood, Clarence, Cunningham, Marshalswick South, St Peter's, Sopwell and Verulam) are unparished.

2 The large map inserted in the back of this report details ward boundary changes in Harpenden town.

1. INTRODUCTION

¹ This report contains our final recommendations on the electoral arrangements for the City and District of St Albans in Hertfordshire.

² In undertaking these reviews, we have had regard to:

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

³ We have also had regard to our *Guidance and Procedural Advice for Local Authorities and Other Interested Parties* (published in March 1996 and supplemented in September 1996), which sets out our approach to the reviews.

⁴ This review was in four stages. Stage One began on 10 December 1996, when we invited proposals for the future electoral arrangements from St Albans City and District Council, and copied the letter to Hertfordshire County Council, Hertfordshire Police Authority, the local authority associations, Hertfordshire Association of Local Councils, parish and town councils in the district, Members of Parliament and Members of the European Parliament with constituency interests in the district, and the headquarters of the main political parties. At the start of the review and following publication of our draft recommendations, we published a notice in the local press, issued a press release and invited the District Council to publicise the review more widely. The closing date for receipt of representations was 10 March 1997. At Stage Two, we considered all the representations received during Stage One and prepared our draft recommendations.

⁵ Stage Three began on 2 July 1997 with the publication of our report, *Draft Recommendations on the Future Electoral Arrangements for St Albans in Hertfordshire* and ended on 22 September 1997. 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

⁶ The district covers some 16,100 hectares. Its geographic and administrative centre, the city of St Albans, lies some 20 miles north-west of London, and is easily accessible by rail and road. It was granted a Royal Charter in 1553, and is an important tourist centre. The district's other main settlement, Harpenden, lies to the north of the district. Together, the two towns account for some 62 per cent of the electorate. Both towns are surrounded by smaller villages, including Bricket Wood, Colney Heath, London Colney, Redbourn, Sandridge and Wheathampstead.

⁷ To compare levels of electoral inequality between wards, the extent to which the number of electors per councillor in each ward (the councillor:elector ratio) varies from the district average in percentage terms has been calculated. In the report this calculation may also be described as 'electoral variance'.

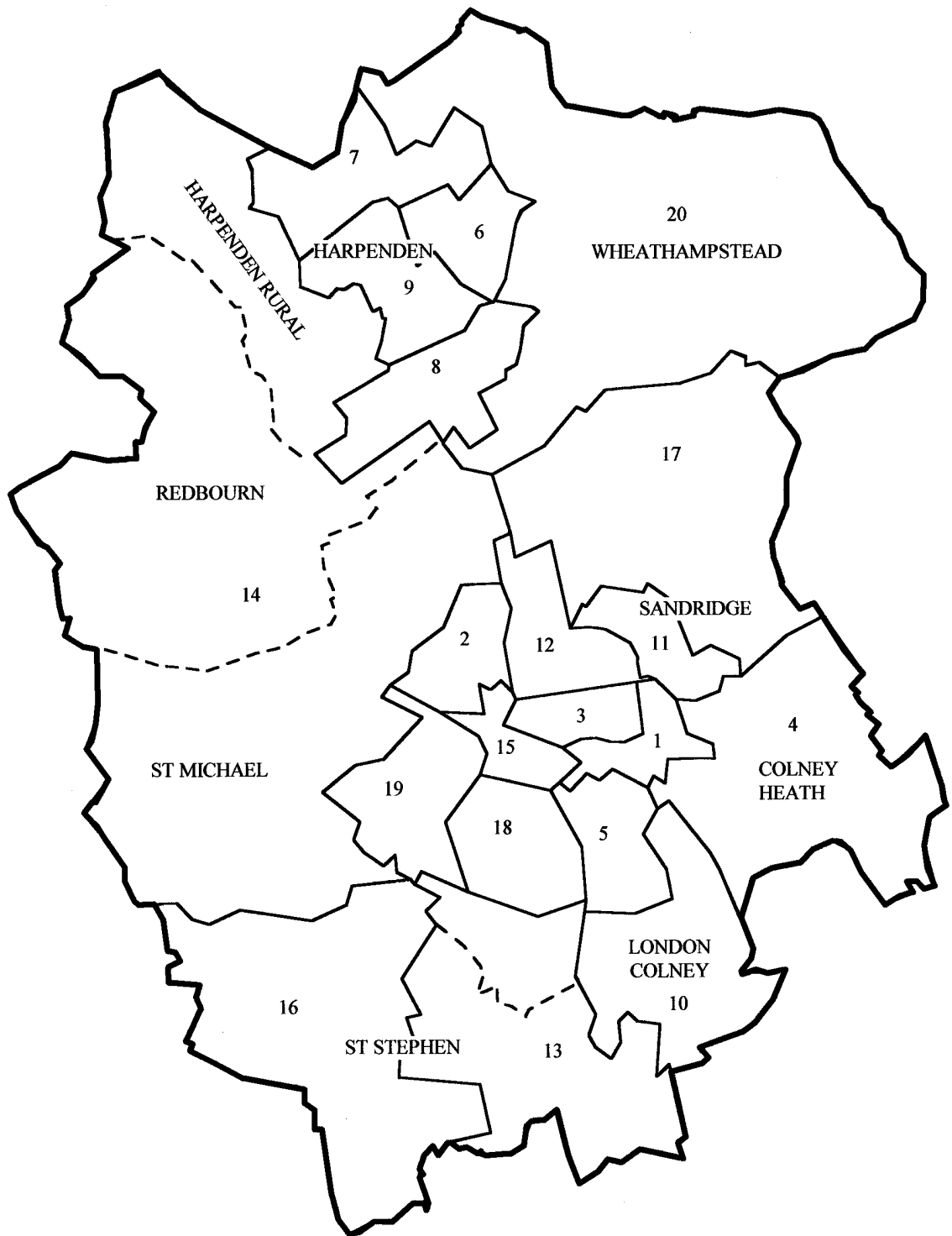
⁸ The District Council has 57 councillors elected from 20 wards (Map 1 and Figure 2). There are 18 wards represented by three councillors, one ward represented by two councillors, and one ward represented by a single councillor. Elections are held by thirds, with the next elections due to take place in May 1998. The electorate of the district is 98,340 (February 1996), and each councillor represents an average of 1,725 electors. The District Council forecasts that the electorate will increase to some 100,348 by the year 2001, which would increase the average number of electors per councillor to 1,760. The most significant areas of development over the next five years are expected to be the parishes of London Colney and Colney Heath, with the development of the Napsbury and Cell Barnes Hospital sites.

⁹ Since the last electoral review in 1977 there has been significant growth in the district, with the electorate increasing by some 10 per cent.

However, changes in the electorate have not been evenly spread across the district, resulting in eight wards in which the number of electors per councillor varies by more than 10 per cent from the district average. In particular, Sandridge ward currently has 128 per cent more electors per councillor than the average; in other words, the councillor for Sandridge ward represents 3,925 electors, compared to the district average of 1,725.

¹⁰ As part of this review, the Commission may also make recommendations relating to the electoral arrangements of the nine parish and town councils in the district.

Map 1:
Existing Wards in St Albans



KEY

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Figure 2:
Existing Electoral Arrangements

Ward name	Number of councillors	Electorate (1996)	Number of electors per councillor	Variance from average %	Electorate (2001)	Number of electors per councillor	Variance from average %
1 Ashley (in St Albans)	3	5,148	1,716	-1	5,448	1,816	3
2 Batchwood (in St Albans)	3	4,930	1,643	-5	4,990	1,663	-6
3 Clarence (in St Albans)	3	4,356	1,452	-16	4,356	1,452	-18
4 Colney Heath	2	2,810	1,405	-19	3,285	1,643	-7
5 Cunningham (in St Albans)	3	4,833	1,611	-7	4,833	1,611	-8
6 Harpenden East	3	5,088	1,696	-2	5,088	1,696	-4
7 Harpenden North	3	5,842	1,947	13	5,842	1,947	11
8 Harpenden South	3	5,270	1,757	2	5,270	1,757	0
9 Harpenden West	3	5,326	1,775	3	5,326	1,775	1
10 London Colney	3	5,823	1,941	13	6,498	2,166	23
11 Marshalswick North	3	4,763	1,588	-8	4,921	1,640	-7
12 Marshalswick South (in St Albans)	3	5,178	1,726	0	5,276	1,759	0
13 Park Street	3	4,464	1,488	-14	4,464	1,488	-15
14 Redbourn	3	4,436	1,479	-14	4,562	1,521	-14
15 St Peter's (in St Albans)	3	4,980	1,660	-4	4,980	1,660	-6
16 St Stephen's	3	6,047	2,016	17	6047	2016	14
17 Sandridge	1	3,925	3,925	128	3,925	3,925	123
18 Sopwell (in St Albans)	3	5,178	1,726	0	5,294	1,765	0
19 Verulam (in St Albans)	3	5,208	1,736	1	5,208	1736	-1

continued overleaf

Figure 2 (continued):
Existing Electoral Arrangements

Ward name	Number of councillors	Electorate (1996)	Number of electors per councillor	Variance from average %	Electorate (2001)	Number of electors per councillor	Variance from average %
20 Wheathampstead	3	4,735	1,578	-9	4,735	1,578	-10
Totals	57	98,340	—	—	100,348	—	—
Averages	—	—	1,725	—	—	1,760	—

Source: Electorate figures are based on St Albans City & District Council's 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 district. The minus symbol (-) denotes a lower than average number of electors. For example, electors in Colney Heath ward are relatively over-represented by 19 per cent, while electors in London Colney ward are relatively under-represented by 13 per cent. Figures have been rounded to the nearest whole number.

3. DRAFT RECOMMENDATIONS

¹¹ During Stage One, we received representations from St Albans City and District Council and the Liberal Democrat Group of St Albans City and District Council on electoral arrangements for the whole district. Representations were also received from St Stephen and Wheathampstead parish councils. In the light of these representations and evidence available to us, we reached preliminary conclusions which were set out in the report, *Draft Recommendations on the Future Electoral Arrangements for St Albans in Hertfordshire*. We proposed that:

- (a) St Albans City and District Council should be served by 58 councillors representing 20 wards;
- (b) the boundaries of 11 of the existing wards should be modified, while nine wards should retain their existing boundaries;
- (c) there should be revised warding arrangements for St Stephen, London Colney and Sandridge parish councils and Harpenden Town Council.

Draft Recommendation

St Albans City and District Council should comprise 58 councillors, serving 20 wards. Elections should continue to take place by thirds.

¹² Our proposals would have resulted in significant improvements in electoral equality, with the number of electors per councillor in 16 of the 20 wards varying by no more than 10 per cent from the district average. This level of electoral equality was expected to improve over the next five years, with only three wards expected to vary by more than 10 per cent from the average number of electors per councillor for the district.

¹³ Our draft recommendations are summarised at Appendix B.

4. RESPONSES TO CONSULTATION

14 During the consultation on our draft recommendations report, 28 representations were received. In addition, Councillor Blackwell forwarded a further 15 representations from residents of Chiswell Green. A list of respondents is available on request from the Commission's offices.

St Albans City and District Council

15 In Harpenden, the District Council concurred with our draft recommendation to transfer Porters Hill and surrounding roads from Harpenden North ward to Harpenden East wards, which it considered would better reflect local community ties and interests. However, it did not agree with the proposals to transfer the area between Granary Lane and Dalkeith Road from Harpenden East ward to Harpenden West ward, and the area to the north of Hollybush Lane from Harpenden West ward to Harpenden North ward. It maintained that improvements in electoral equality did not justify those proposed boundary changes.

16 It noted the improvement in electoral equality achieved by the proposed changes to the ward boundary between St Stephen's and Park Street wards. Nevertheless, it contended that the A414 North Orbital Road constituted an effective barrier between the communities of Park Street and St Stephen, and that our proposals would adversely impact upon the local community of Chiswell Green. It agreed with our draft recommendations for boundary changes between London Colney and Colney Heath wards and Marshalswick North and Sandridge wards, and endorsed the proposal to increase the number of councillors in Sandridge ward by one. However, it was unable to reach a consensus on the proposed boundary changes between Ashley and Clarence wards.

17 The District Council also considered that there were exceptional circumstances to justify amending a further number of ward boundaries to reflect local community ties. First, it considered that both Batchwood Hall and Townsend School had strong

links with the Batchwood community, and should therefore be transferred from Redbourn ward to Batchwood ward. Second, it argued that the existing boundary between Redbourn, St Stephen's and Verulam wards should be amended to follow the M10 motorway and Footpath 8, which would provide for the whole of Ragged Hall lane to be contained within St Stephen's ward.

Liberal Democrat Group of St Albans City and District Council

18 The Liberal Democrat Group of St Albans City and District Council (the 'Liberal Democrats') maintained that our proposal for changes to London Colney ward should be reconsidered. It contended that the District Council be charged with monitoring population growth in the area, and that once electorate numbers became more equitable under the warding arrangements proposed in its initial submission, the District Council should implement those changes. In Harpenden, it supported the transfer of the North Batford area from Harpenden North ward to Harpenden East ward, but did not support the proposed boundary changes between Harpenden East and Harpenden West wards and Harpenden North and Harpenden West wards.

19 Furthermore, the Liberal Democrats also indicated that there were a number of boundary anomalies which should be addressed. First, it proposed that the houses on the northern side of Ragged Hall Lane be transferred from Redbourn ward to St Stephen's ward by moving the ward boundary to align with the M10 motorway. Second, it proposed that the boundary between Ashley and Colney Heath wards be modified to include all the properties in St Yon Court in Ashley ward. It also considered that the boundary between Welwyn Hatfield district and St Albans district around the Bullen's Green Lane should be examined because the construction of the A1(M) has completely detached the area from the rest of Welwyn Hatfield district.

St Albans Constituency Labour Party

20 St Albans Constituency Labour Party welcomed the transfer of that part of London Colney ward to the north of the North Orbital Road, and agreed that London Colney should not be divided into two wards. However, it did not support the proposal for a separate parish ward for the Highfield area, and argued that there were insufficient electors contained within that area to justify separate parish representation.

21 It did not support the proposal to transfer part of Chiswell Green from St Stephen's ward to Park Street ward, and argued that this would link areas which were divided by the A414 Orbital Road. It considered that an alternative would be to transfer roads from the northern side of Bricket Wood to Park Street ward, which it considered would be "more socially and geographically acceptable".

22 In the centre of the town, it supported the transfer of part of Beechwood Avenue from Ashley ward to Clarence ward, but opposed the transfer of Albion Road, Cavendish Road, Cecil Road and parts of Hatfield Road and Camp Road from Ashley ward to Clarence ward. It argued that Hatfield Road was a strong physical boundary, and that those roads formed a natural part of the community around Camp Road in Ashley ward.

St Albans Conservative Association

23 St Albans Conservative Association was "broadly supportive" of our draft recommendations. It supported the proposal to provide a second councillor for Sandridge ward, and concurred with the proposed boundary change between Sandridge and Marshalswick North wards. However, it considered that there was merit in modifying a further anomalous boundary at the other end of Jersey Farm, which currently divided Southfield Way between Sandridge and Marshalswick North wards. It also supported our draft recommendations for Ashley, Clarence, London Colney and Colney Heath wards.

24 Its main area of concern was the proposal to transfer part of the village of Chiswell Green into Park Street. It argued that the area of Chiswell Green had more in common with the remainder of the village than Park Street. It also indicated that

there were a number of boundary anomalies in the boundaries between St Stephen's, Verulam and Redbourn wards, and that this could be resolved by adopting the M10 motorway as part of St Stephen's ward's southern boundary.

Parish and Town Councils

25 Representations were received from four parish and town councils during the Stage Three consultation period. Harpenden Town Council agreed that the northern part of Batford should be included with the southern part of Batford in Harpenden East ward. However, while it recognised that a minimum of adjustment had been proposed to balance numbers in other wards, it "deplored the setting of boundaries down the middle of roads". It considered that this adversely impacted upon natural communities, and therefore proposed further changes in Ox Lane, Piggottshill Lane, part of Station Road, Dalkeith Road and Holybush Lane. It proposed that Granary Lane should remain as the boundary between Harpenden East and Harpenden West wards, and that the Nicky Line footpath should remain as the boundary between Harpenden North and Harpenden West wards.

26 St Stephen Parish Council opposed the proposal to transfer part of Chiswell Green to Park Street ward, and maintained that the Watford Road split the village. It considered that if there was to be a boundary change in this area, it would be more appropriate to transfer the whole of Chiswell Green to Park Street ward. St Michael Parish Council opposed the suggested boundary change between Redbourn and Batchwood wards and between Redbourn and St Stephen's wards. Sandridge Parish Council agreed that Sandridge ward should in future be represented by two councillors rather than one councillor, as at present.

Other Representations

27 The Commission received a further 20 submissions from local groups, local councillors and residents. Of those, the majority commented on our draft recommendation to transfer part of Chiswell Green from St Stephen's ward to Park Street ward. Councillor Blackwell, Chiswell Green United Reformed Church, Chiswell Green Residents' Association and seven residents all expressed opposition to our draft recommendation. Five of those submissions contended that a more appropriate boundary change would be to transfer

the northern part of Bricket Wood to Park Street ward on account of easier access between the two areas and that much of the housing at that end of Bricket Wood had originally been built to provide housing for workers in the Park Street factory. In addition, Councillor Blackwell submitted a further 15 representations from local residents, all of which expressed opposition to our draft recommendation.

28 A number of representations were also received in respect of Harpenden. Hitchin and Harpenden Constituency Labour Party accepted that our draft recommendations improved the level of electoral equality, although it considered that ward boundaries should be substantially altered from the current arrangements because they provided for a number of “unconnected sub-areas” Accordingly, it proposed to divide the town into four new wards – north-east, north-west, south-east and south-west – each to be represented by three councillors. Hitchin and Harpenden Liberal Democrats, Harpenden Liberal Democrats and Councillor Coe supported the proposal to unite the Batford area within Harpenden East ward, but expressed opposition to the other two proposed boundary changes in the town. Hitchin and Harpenden Conservatives endorsed our draft recommendations for the four wards in Harpenden, Redbourn, Sandridge and Wheathampstead wards.

29 Councillor Mrs Sanderson and two residents agreed with our draft recommendation not to divide London Colney ward into two new wards. It was argued that there was not sufficient justification to increase the number of councillors representing London Colney from three to four, and that any division of the village would create artificial boundaries and cause confusion to the electorate. The transfer of that part of London Colney ward to the north of the A414 to Colney Heath ward was supported, and it was hoped that a review of parish boundaries would follow subsequently, which would allow for parish boundaries to be modified to reflect the proposed new district ward boundaries. One resident argued that the Bullen’s Green area should be wholly contained within St Albans district rather than be divided between Welwyn Hatfield and St Albans districts. A submission was also received from Councillor Mrs Mills, who expressed support for the Borough Council’s proposed boundary changes between Batchwood and Redbourn wards.

5. ANALYSIS AND FINAL RECOMMENDATIONS

30 As indicated previously, the Commission's prime objective in considering the most appropriate electoral arrangements for St Albans is to achieve electoral equality, having regard to the statutory criteria and to Schedule 11 to the Local Government Act 1972, which refers to the ratio of electors to councillors being "as nearly as may be, the same in every ward of the district or borough".

31 However, our function is not merely arithmetical for three reasons. First, 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. Second, we must have regard to the desirability of fixing identifiable boundaries, and to maintaining local ties which might otherwise be broken. Third, we must consider the need to secure effective and convenient local government, and reflect the interests and identities of local communities.

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

33 In our March 1996 *Guidance*, we expressed the view that "proposals for changes in electoral arrangements should therefore be based on variations in each ward of no more than plus or minus 10 per cent from the average councillor:elector ratio for the authority, having regard to five-year forecasts of changes in electorates. Imbalances in excess of plus or minus 20 per cent may be acceptable, but only in highly exceptional circumstances... and will have to be justified in full." However, as emphasised in our September 1996 supplement to the *Guidance*: "While the Commission accepts that absolute equality of representation is likely to be unattainable, it consider that, if electoral imbalances are to be kept to the minimum, such

equality should be the starting point in any electoral review."

Electorate Projections

34 During Stage One, the District Council and Liberal Democrats submitted electorate forecasts for the period 1996 to 2001. While the District Council projected an increase in the electorate over the next five years from 98,340 to 100,348 (some 2 per cent), the Liberal Democrats forecast an increase in the electorate to 101,261 (some 3 per cent). The District Council and Liberal Democrats estimated rates and locations of housing development with regard to structure and local plans, and the expected rate of building over the five-year period. While we noted that there had been general consensus in respect of the location of future housing development, the District Council had been more cautious about anticipated housing completions by 2001. In our draft recommendations report, we accepted that this was an inexact science and, having given consideration to projected electorates, were persuaded that the District Council's figures represented the best estimates that could reasonably be made at that time.

35 At Stage Three, we received representations from Hitchin and Harpenden Constituency Labour Party and St Albans Liberal Democrats, who queried projected electorates in Harpenden and London Colney. We sought further advice on those areas from the District Council. Having reconsidered electorate projections, in the light of representations made at Stage Three, and following further advice from the District Council, we remain satisfied the electorate projections used in our draft recommendations report provide the best estimates presently available.

Council Size

36 Our March 1996 *Guidance* indicated that we would normally expect the number of councillors serving a district or borough council to be in the range of 30 to 60.

37 At present, St Albans District is represented by 57 councillors. The District Council proposed an increase in council size to 58 during Stage One of the review, while the Liberal Democrats, in its preferred option, proposed 59 councillors. 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 be best met by a council size of 58 members and invited further comments. We have not received evidence during Stage Three to persuade us to move away from this view.

Electoral Arrangements

38 Having considered all representations received during Stage Three of the review, we have further considered our draft recommendations. While we are endorsing the major part of our draft recommendations in the light of those views expressed at Stage Three, we consider that some changes are required in order to provide for a scheme which would secure a better balance between the achievement of electoral equality and the need to reflect community identities in the area.

39 The following sections outline our analysis and final recommendations for the future electoral arrangements for St Albans, which are summarised in Figures 1 and 4 and illustrated on Map 2. Appendix A contains detailed mapping of boundary changes proposed by us, while the map at the back of the report illustrates the final recommendations for Harpenden. The following wards are considered in turn:

- (a) Harpenden – the wards of Harpenden East, Harpenden North, Harpenden South and Harpenden West;
- (b) Redbourn ward;
- (c) St Stephen's and Park Street wards;
- (d) London Colney and Colney Heath wards;
- (e) Marshalswick North and Sandridge wards;
- (f) Ashley, Batchwood, Clarence, Cunningham, Marshalswick South, St Peter's, Sopwell and Verulam wards;
- (g) Wheathamstead ward.

Harpenden – the wards of Harpenden East, Harpenden North, Harpenden South and Harpenden West

40 Currently, the four wards in Harpenden are each represented by three councillors. Overall, there is a reasonable level of electoral equality, with the number of electors per councillor varying by more than 10 per cent from the district average in Harpenden North ward only (13 per cent). At Stage One, the District Council proposed no change to these wards, while the Liberal Democrats (in its third option) suggested that electoral equality could be improved by transferring Porters Hill and surrounding roads from Harpenden North ward to Harpenden East ward.

41 Our draft recommendations endorsed the proposed transfer of area between Harpenden North ward and Harpenden East ward. However, in order to further improve equality of representation, we proposed two further boundary adjustments: first, that the area between Granary Lane and Dalkeith Road be transferred from Harpenden East ward to Harpenden West ward; and second, that an area to the north of Hollybush Lane be transferred from Harpenden West ward to Harpenden North ward. This scheme would provide a much improved level of electoral equality, resulting in the number of electors per councillor varying by not more than 7 per cent in the proposed four Harpenden wards.

42 At Stage Three, the District Council, Harpenden Town Council, Hitchin & Harpenden Liberal Democrats, Harpenden Liberal Democrats, St Albans Liberal Democrats, Hitchin & Harpenden Conservatives and Councillor Coe supported the proposed transfer of the Porters Hill area from Harpenden North ward to Harpenden East ward. However, of those respondents, only Hitchin & Harpenden Conservative Association supported the other two proposed boundary changes in Harpenden. Generally, it was argued that the improvements in electoral equality achieved by transferring areas between Harpenden East and Harpenden West wards and Harpenden West and Harpenden North wards, did not justify the proposed boundary changes. Furthermore, it was argued that the use of the centre of roads as ward boundaries should be avoided as far as possible because of their impact upon natural communities.

43 Hitchin and Harpenden Constituency Labour Party proposed a substantial rewording of boundaries in the town. It expressed concern over our proposed boundaries, which it argued did not satisfactorily reflect community interests and identities. In particular, it considered that the proposed Harpenden North ward resulted in the 'Westfield' area being completely isolated from the main part of the ward, and that new development on the Lower Luton Road was completely cut off. It also argued that Harpenden South ward had always been two separate communities. In addition, it indicated that it disagreed with our draft recommendations report, which "allowed for no growth" in Harpenden.

44 Having considered the responses received at Stage Three, we have not been persuaded that the wholesale changes proposed by Hitchin and Harpenden Labour Party would offer a better alternative than our draft recommendations. While it achieves good electoral equality, we have reservations over a number of its proposed wards, particularly the proposed Harpenden South West ward, which would merge parts of the town centre with outlying areas to the west.

45 Accordingly, in the light of evidence received on communities, we have decided to endorse our draft recommendation to transfer the Porters Hill area from Harpenden North ward to Harpenden East ward, but are proposing to depart from our other two proposed boundary changes. We note that there is a degree of local opposition to the proposals to transfer part of Harpenden West ward to Harpenden North ward and part of Harpenden East ward to Harpenden West ward, and are sympathetic to those views. However, while we recognise the arguments of local communities, we are concerned to achieve the best level of equality of representation possible. Therefore, on balance, we are not proposing to modify the boundary between Harpenden North and Harpenden West wards. However, we remain persuaded that the boundary between Harpenden East and Harpenden West wards should be modified to secure a better level of electoral equality in Harpenden East ward – if the boundary remained at Granary Lane, the number of electors per councillor in Harpenden East ward would vary by 12 per cent from the district average. Having examined alternative boundaries, and in the light of representations received, we propose that the new boundary between those

two wards should follow the rear line of properties in Overstone Road.

46 We are also proposing to further modify the boundary between Harpenden East and Harpenden West wards in the area of Alzey Gardens because the existing boundary at that point has become obscured by residential development, which has resulted in Alzey Gardens being divided between the two wards. We therefore propose that all the properties in Alzey Gardens should be wholly contained in Harpenden East ward. In our judgement, these proposals would appear to represent the best balance between reflecting the interests and identities of communities in Harpenden and the need to secure electoral equality. The new boundaries for Harpenden are illustrated on the large map at the back of the report.

47 Under these proposals, the number of electors per councillor in Harpenden North, Harpenden East, Harpenden South and Harpenden West wards would vary from the district average by 3 per cent, 8 per cent, 4 per cent and 9 per cent respectively (1 per cent, 5 per cent, 2 per cent and 7 per cent by 2001). These proposals are detailed in Figures 1 and 4, and illustrated on the large map at the back of this report.

Redbourn

48 Under current arrangements, Redbourn ward has 14 per cent fewer electors per councillor than the district average, a level of imbalance which is not projected to improve over the next five years. At Stage One, the District Council and the Liberal Democrats proposed no change to the ward. We noted that there was no obvious solution to improving the current equality of representation within the area without having an adverse impact upon our statutory criteria; the ward is well-defined geographically with clearly identifiable boundaries and a strong sense of association, comprising the three parishes of Redbourn, Harpenden Rural and St Michael. Accordingly, in our draft recommendations report, we proposed no change to the existing warding arrangements in Redbourn.

49 During Stage Three, the District Council argued that the existing boundary between Redbourn and Batchwood wards should be amended to better reflect local ties. It considered that both Batchwood Hall and Townsend School had

strong links with the Batchwood community and should therefore be transferred from Redbourn ward to Batchwood ward. This proposal was supported by Councillor Mills. However, St Michael Parish Council opposed the boundary change, and argued that the Batchwood Hall leisure facilities were available for residents throughout the district and that there was no justification for any boundary change.

50 The District Council also argued that the existing boundary between Redbourn, St Stephen's and Verulam wards in the area of the M10 Motorway/Ragged Hall Lane did not properly reflect community ties. It argued that those residents living in Ragged Hall Lane (including the occupiers of Westfield Farm) identified with St Stephen's ward rather than Redbourn and Verulam wards. Furthermore, it argued that the boundary cut across a field and did not follow any recognisable feature. It proposed that the boundary should be amended to follow the M10 motorway and Footpath 8, transferring some 86 electors from Redbourn ward to St Stephen's ward and some 15 electors from Verulam ward to St Stephen's ward. This proposal was supported by St Albans Conservative Association. However, St Michael Parish Council opposed the boundary change, and argued that a similar proposal had been made some ten years ago, and had been strongly opposed by local residents.

51 Having given careful consideration to the responses received, we consider that there would be some merit in rationalising the current boundaries between Redbourn, St Stephen's and Verulam wards and between Batchwood and Redbourn wards. However, we consider that such changes would be better considered as part of a future parish boundary review and note that, particularly in the light of St Michael Parish Council's submission, there is no consensus over the most appropriate ward boundaries. The proposed boundary changes would have a negligible impact upon electoral equality, and because we are unable to change parish boundaries as part of this review, any transfer of parts of parished areas would entail creating parish wards containing a limited number of electors. Accordingly, we have not been persuaded to make any changes to the existing Redbourn ward, and are content to confirm our draft recommendation as final. This would result in Redbourn ward having 13 per cent fewer electors per councillor than the district average currently, and 12 per cent fewer by 2001.

St Stephen's and Park Street

52 St Stephen's and Park Street wards lie to the south of St Albans city, and comprise St Stephen parish and an unparished area to the south of the North Orbital Road. Currently, while St Stephen's ward has 17 per cent more electors per councillor than the district average, Park Street ward has 14 per cent fewer than average. Both the District Council and the Liberal Democrats proposed no change to the existing arrangements at Stage One.

53 In our draft recommendations report, we accepted that any proposal for change to the existing warding arrangements was likely to prove contentious, but considered that the current level of electoral inequality in the two wards should be addressed. Having examined a number of possible warding arrangements in the area, we concluded that better electoral equality would be achieved by transferring part of Chiswell Green from St Stephen's ward to Park Street ward. This boundary change would result in significantly improved electoral equality, with the number of electors per councillor in St Stephen's and Park Street wards varying by 1 per cent and 5 per cent from the district average respectively.

54 During Stage Three, our draft recommendations for this area were opposed by the District Council, St Albans Constituency Labour Party, St Albans Conservatives, St Stephen Parish Council, Chiswell Green Residents' Association, Chiswell Green United Reformed Church, Councillor Blackwell and seven local residents. In addition, Councillor Blackwell forwarded a further 15 representations from local residents, all of which expressed opposition to the proposal to split Chiswell Green. It was argued that Chiswell Green has been a residential community for several centuries, situated on what used to be a major carriage road towards London, and that the North Orbital Road (A414) served as an effective boundary between the settlements of Chiswell Green and Park Street. St Stephen Parish Council opposed the proposal to transfer part of Chiswell Green to Park Street ward, and maintained that the Watford Road split the village. It argued that if there was to be a boundary change in this area, it would be more appropriate to transfer the whole of Chiswell Green from St Stephen's ward to Park Street ward.

55 St Albans Constituency Labour Party and five local residents argued that a more appropriate solution would be to transfer part of Bricket Wood

to Park Street ward. It was argued that Bricket Wood had no claim to a residential heritage, that there was easier access between Bricket Wood and Park Street than between Chiswell Green and Park Street, and that much of the housing at the northern end of Bricket Wood had originally been provided for workers from Handley Page Factory in Park Street.

56 We have carefully considered the responses received at Stage Three. We note that there is significant opposition to the proposal to transfer part of Chiswell Green from St Stephen's ward to Park Street ward and have concluded that the North Orbital Road does provide a significant boundary between the communities of Park Street and Chiswell Green. We also recognise that the two wards of St Stephen's and Park Street encompass an area that has changed significantly since the last review. In particular, there are a number of significant trunk roads in this area, such as the M10, the North Orbital Road and the M25. We recognise that St Stephen's and Park Street wards cover three distinctive communities – Chiswell Green and Bricket Wood in St Stephen's ward, and Park Street in Park Street ward, and that Bricket Wood has been the focus for growth. We also note, with some regret, that many respondents have failed to address the issue of electoral inequality in this area.

57 We remain persuaded that the level of electoral inequality in St Stephen's and Park Street wards should be addressed but we also recognise that any proposal that changes the existing warding arrangements is likely to prove contentious. We consider that there is some merit in transferring the whole of Chiswell Green from St Stephen's ward to Park Street ward as proposed by St Stephen Parish Council. Such a proposal would enable the transfer of the whole community of Chiswell Green rather than part of it, but would continue to unite areas divided by the North Orbital Road. In addition, we note that such a change would create a ward which, in order to maintain a reasonable level of electoral equality, would need to be represented by four councillors. However, as indicated in our *Guidance*, we consider that "the number of electors per councillors to be returned from each ward should not exceed three, other than in very exceptional circumstances". We have not been persuaded that the case for a four-member Park Street ward has been made.

58 On balance, we are persuaded that the transfer of the northern end of Bricket Wood from St

Stephen's ward to Park Street ward would represent a better balance between the statutory criteria and the need to secure electoral equality than our draft recommendations. However, we have decided to make some minor amendments to the proposed ward boundary in order to provide a stronger boundary for both wards. This proposed warding arrangement would provide a much improved level of electoral equality, with the number of electors per councillor in St Stephen's and Park Street wards varying by 1 per cent and 6 per cent from the district average respectively (1 per cent and 4 per cent by 2001). While the M25 lies between Bricket Wood and Park Street, we note that there is direct access between the two areas via Park Street Lane. In addition, while we recognise that such a proposal would lead to part of Bricket Wood being separately represented from the rest of the village, we consider that the area would appear to have some links with Park Street and consider that this proposal represents the best available option. The proposals are detailed in Figures 1 and 4, and illustrated on Map A2 at Appendix A.

London Colney and Colney Heath

59 Currently, London Colney ward has 13 per cent more electors per councillor than the district average, while Colney Heath ward has 19 per cent fewer than the district average. At Stage One, the District Council and the Liberal Democrats (in its preferred option) proposed that the existing district ward boundary be modified, and that the area to the north of the North Orbital Road be transferred from London Colney ward to Colney Heath ward. It was argued that residents in the Highfield Farm area had a greater affinity with Colney Heath, and that the road which formerly joined that area to London Colney village had been cut in two by the North Orbital Road. It was also argued that while the area in question was mainly rural, it contained the Cell Barnes Hospital site and Highfield Hall, which were subject to redevelopment for housing, and these proposed developments would exacerbate the current boundary anomaly. In our draft recommendations report, we endorsed the boundary modification between London Colney and Colney Heath wards.

60 At Stage Three, our draft recommendations were supported by the District Council, St Albans Conservative Association, St Albans Constituency Labour Party and Councillor Sanderson. It was hoped that parish boundaries would subsequently

be reviewed to enable them to reflect the proposed district ward boundaries. However, Councillor Sanderson and St Albans Constituency Labour Party did not agree that the proposed Highfield parish ward should be represented by a separate parish councillor because there were insufficient electors in that area. St Albans Liberal Democrats expressed its continued support for the warding of London Colney ward, which provided the area with an additional councillor. It commented that the Council should monitor electorate growth in the area, and implement its warding proposals at such time when electorate numbers become more equitable under ward boundaries proposed in its initial scheme. It also proposed a boundary change to transfer all of St Yon Court from Colney Heath ward to Ashley ward. Representations were also received from two local residents, who agreed that London Colney ward should not be warded, but expressed concern that the parish boundaries had not been modified to reflect the changes at district level. In addition, St Albans Liberal Democrats and another local resident proposed that the administrative boundary between Welwyn Hatfield and St Albans be modified in order to include an area around the Bullen's Green area (currently in North Mymms parish) within Colney Heath parish.

⁶¹ Having considered the representations received at Stage Three, we note that our proposed boundary change between the two wards has met with broad support, and therefore remain satisfied that our draft recommendation represents the best balance between the statutory criteria and the need to secure electoral equality. While a number of representations have expressed concern over the proposed warding of the Highfield area of London Colney parish, we are unable to modify parish boundaries as part of this review, and are therefore statutorily required to create a separate parish ward for the Highfield area. However, we would anticipate that a future review of parish boundaries would align parish boundaries with the proposed new district ward boundaries. Similarly, in relation to the Bullen's Green area, we are unable as part of this review to address anomalies in district boundaries. These may only be considered by the Commission following a direction by the Secretary of State.

⁶² As indicated earlier, we are satisfied that the electorate projections provided by the District Council at Stage One remain the best estimates presently available. Therefore, we have decided to

confirm our draft recommendation that London Colney should continue to be represented by three councillors. While our proposal would result in there continuing to be 13 per cent more electors per councillor than the district average in London Colney ward, the proposed boundary change with Colney Heath ward would result in a better level of electoral equality than the existing warding arrangements in 2001. Similarly, while the number of electors per councillors in Colney Heath ward would be 15 per cent below the district average now, this area is scheduled for major development over the next five years, and this would result in there being 11 per cent more electors per councillor than average by 2001. The proposed boundary between London Colney and Colney Heath wards is illustrated on Map A3 at Appendix A.

Marshalswick North and Sandridge

⁶³ Under current arrangements, the number of electors per councillor in Marshalswick North ward is 8 per cent below the district average. However, as a result of the Jersey Farm development, the number of electors per councillor in Sandridge ward has risen sharply, resulting in its electorate becoming substantially under-represented by 128 per cent.

⁶⁴ In our draft recommendations report, we agreed that Sandridge ward should in future be represented by two councillors rather than one, as proposed by both the District Council and the Liberal Democrats. We also proposed to modify the boundary between Marshalswick North and Sandridge wards so that the whole of Laybrook, The Berries and Taylor Close would in future be wholly contained within Sandridge ward.

⁶⁵ During Stage Three, our draft recommendations drew the support of the District Council, St Albans Conservatives and Sandridge Parish Council. However, St Albans Conservatives indicated their support for a further modification to the ward boundary between Marshalswick North and Sandridge wards at the other end of the Jersey Farm development. It noted that currently there is an anomalous boundary that resulted in Southfield Way being divided between the two wards.

⁶⁶ Having considered the representations received at Stage Three, we are content to endorse our draft recommendations for Sandridge and Marshalswick North wards, which have met with broad support. However, we propose that there should be a further boundary change between Sandridge and

Marshalswick North wards, as proposed by St Albans Conservatives. The existing boundary by Southfield Way has become largely obscured as a result of residential development, and our proposed boundary change would provide for all the properties in Southfield Way to be wholly contained within Sandridge ward. As a result of the proposed boundary change, Sandridge ward would have a better level of electoral equality, with the number of electors per councillor varying by 9 per cent from the district average (7 per cent by 2001). Marshalswick North ward would continue to achieve good electoral equality, with the number of electors per councillor varying by 2 per cent from the district average (1 per cent by 2001). These proposed boundary changes between Marshalswick North and Sandridge wards are illustrated on Maps A4 and A5 at Appendix A.

Ashley, Batchwood, Clarence, Cunningham, Marshalswick South, St Peter's, Sopwell and Verulam

67 Currently, the only ward within the centre of St Albans in which the number of electors per councillor varies by more than 10 per cent from the district average is Clarence ward (16 per cent below the average). This level of electoral inequality is projected to worsen marginally over the next five years.

68 At Stage One, while the District Council proposed no change to the current arrangements, the Liberal Democrats (in its third option) suggested that the boundary between Clarence and Ashley wards should be modified to provide for the properties in Beechwood Avenue to be wholly contained within Clarence ward. In our draft recommendations report, we agreed that all the properties in Beechwood Avenue should be contained within Clarence ward. However, we considered that further improvements could be achieved by transferring all the properties to the west of Sutton lane and to the north of the disused railway line from Ashley ward to Clarence ward.

69 At Stage Three, St Albans Conservative Association supported our draft recommendation for Ashley and Clarence wards. However, while St Albans Constituency Labour Party supported the proposed transfer of Beechwood Avenue in Ashley ward to Clarence ward, it opposed the proposed transfer of Albion Road, Cavendish Road, Cecil Road and parts of Camp Road from Ashley ward to Clarence ward. It argued that Hatfield Road formed a natural boundary.

70 In the light of representations received at Stage Three, we are content to confirm our draft recommendations in the area. While we note that St Albans Constituency Labour Party opposed the transfer of part of Ashley ward to Clarence ward, we are persuaded, on balance, that our draft recommendations would represent the best balance between the statutory criteria and the need to secure electoral equality. In our judgement, our proposed boundary changes would secure strong boundaries between the two wards, and substantially improve electoral equality in Clarence ward, which currently has 16 per cent fewer electors per councillor now (18 per cent by 2001).

71 Overall, our final recommendation would provide for reasonable electoral equality, with the number of electors per councillor in all wards varying by less than 7 per cent from the district average. This level of electoral equality is projected to remain over the next five years. The proposed boundary change is illustrated on Map A6 at Appendix A.

Wheathampstead

72 The current Wheathampstead ward has 9 per cent fewer electors per councillor than the district average. This level of electoral equality is expected to remain relatively stable over the next five years. At Stage One, the District Council and the Liberal Democrats proposed no change to the existing arrangements. Wheathampstead Parish Council expressed support for the retention of its existing parish warding arrangements. Accordingly, our draft recommendation was for no change to the present electoral arrangements.

73 At Stage Three, we received no comments on the warding arrangements for Wheathampstead. We are therefore content to confirm our draft recommendation as final, which we consider represents the best balance between securing equality of representation and our statutory criteria.

Electoral Cycle

74 In our draft recommendations report, we proposed that the present system of elections by thirds in St Albans be retained. No representations were received at Stage Three, and we have therefore decided to confirm our draft recommendation as final.

Conclusions

75 Having considered carefully all the evidence and representations received in response to our consultation report, we have concluded that:

- (a) there should be an increase in council size from 57 to 58;
- (b) there should continue to be 20 wards, as at present;
- (c) the boundaries of 11 of the existing wards should be modified;
- (d) elections should continue to take place by thirds.

76 We have decided substantially to endorse our draft recommendations, subject to the amendments indicated in the following areas:

- (a) that part of the Bricket Wood area should be transferred from St Stephen's ward to Park Street ward rather than part of Chiswell Green;
- (b) in Harpenden, we have endorsed our draft recommendation to modify the boundary between Harpenden East and Harpenden North wards, but propose to depart from our draft recommendations in the rest of Harpenden. While we are still persuaded that there should be a boundary change between Harpenden East and Harpenden West wards, we propose that the new boundary should

follow the rear of properties in Overstone Road. We are also proposing to modify the boundary between those two wards in the area of Alzey Gardens, by providing for all properties in Alzey Gardens to be contained within Harpenden East ward. We are not proposing to modify the boundary between Harpenden North and Harpenden West wards;

- (c) the boundary between Sandridge and Marshalswick North wards should be further modified, to provide for all the properties in Southfield Way to be contained within Sandridge ward.

77 Figure 3 shows the impact of our final recommendations on electoral equality, comparing them with the current arrangements, based on 1996 and 2001 electorate figures.

78 As Figure 3 shows, our recommendations would reduce the number of wards with electoral variances greater than 10 per cent from the district average from eight to three. This improved level of electoral equality is expected to be retained over the next five years. Under these proposals, the average number of electors per councillor would decrease from 1,725 to 1,696. We conclude that our recommendations would best meet the need for electoral equality, having regard to the statutory criteria.

*Figure 3:
Comparison of Current and Recommended Electoral Arrangements*

	1996 electorate		2001 projected electorate	
	Current arrangements	Final recommendations	Current arrangements	Final recommendations
Number of councillors	57	58	57	58
Number of wards	20	20	20	20
Average number of electors per councillor	1,725	1,696	1,760	1,730
Number of wards with a variance more than 10 per cent from the average	8	3	7	3
Number of wards with a variance more than 20 per cent from the average	1	0	1	0

Final Recommendation

St Albans City and District Council should comprise 58 councillors, serving 20 wards, as detailed and named in Figures 1 and 5, and illustrated on Map 2, Appendix A and the large map at the back of the report. The Council should continue to be elected by thirds.

Parish and Town Council Electoral Arrangements

79 In undertaking reviews of electoral arrangements, we are required to comply as far as is reasonably practicable with the provisions set out in Schedule 11 to the 1972 Act. The Schedule provides that if a parish is to be divided between different district wards, it must also be divided into parish wards, so that each parish ward lies wholly within a single ward of the district. Accordingly, we propose a number of consequential parish ward changes, as detailed below.

80 In our draft recommendations report, we proposed that Harpenden Town Council should continue to comprise 16 town councillors representing four wards. We further proposed that the parish ward boundaries should be modified to reflect proposed changes to district ward boundaries. We have received no evidence to persuade us to move away from this view.

Final Recommendation

Harpenden Town Council should continue to comprise 16 town councillors representing four wards, with the wards of Harpenden East, Harpenden North, Harpenden South and Harpenden West each returning four town councillors. The town wards should be modified to reflect the proposed district wards, as illustrated on the map at the back of the report

81 In our draft recommendations report, we proposed that London Colney ward should comprise ten parish councillors representing four

wards. We proposed that the boundary of East parish ward should be modified to reflect proposed changes to London Colney's district ward boundary, with the area to the north of the North Orbital Road forming a new Highfield parish ward, which should be represented by one parish councillor. The proposed Highfield parish ward (of London Colney Parish) would form part of Colney Heath district ward, while London Colney East, London Colney South West and London Colney North West parish wards would comprise London Colney district ward. We have received no evidence to persuade us to move away from this view.

Final Recommendation

London Colney Parish Council should comprise ten parish councillors representing four wards, with the wards of London Colney East, London Colney South West and London Colney North West returning three parish councillors, and London Colney Highfield returning one parish councillor. East parish ward should be modified to reflect the proposed new district ward boundary, with the area to the north of the North Orbital Road forming a new Highfield parish ward. There would be no change to other parish wards.

82 In our draft recommendations report, we proposed that St Stephen Parish Council should continue to comprise 12 parish councillors representing four wards. We also proposed that the boundary between Chiswell Green and Park Street parish wards should be modified to reflect the proposed boundary change between St Stephen's and Park Street district wards. However, in the light of representations received at Stage Three, we have decided to modify our draft recommendations at district ward level, and are therefore proposing that the area to be transferred from St Stephen's ward to Park Street ward should form a new Bricket Wood East ward to be represented by one parish councillor. The remainder of the existing Bricket Wood North and Bricket Wood South parish wards should be combined to form a new Bricket Wood Village parish ward, to be represented by three parish councillors. Park Street and Chiswell Green parish wards should remain unchanged.

Final Recommendation

St Stephen Parish Council should continue to comprise 12 parish councillors representing four parish wards, with the wards of Park Street and Chiswell Green each returning four parish councillors, the new Bricket Wood Village ward returning three parish councillors and the new Bricket Wood East parish ward returning one parish councillor. The area being transferred from St Stephen's ward to Park Street ward would form a new Bricket Wood East parish ward, with the remainder of Bricket Wood North and Bricket Wood South parish wards forming a new Bricket Wood Village parish ward.

Final Recommendation

Elections for parish and town councils should take place at the same time as elections for principal authorities.

83 In our draft recommendations report, we proposed that Sandridge Parish Council should continue to comprise 14 parish councillors representing three parish wards. We also proposed that the boundary between Sandridge Village and Marshalswick West parish wards should be modified to reflect the proposed boundary change between Sandridge and Marshalswick North district wards. At Stage Three, we have proposed a further change between Sandridge and Marshalswick North district wards.

Final Recommendation

Sandridge Parish Council should continue to comprise 14 parish councillors representing three parish wards, with Sandridge Village parish ward returning six parish councillors and Marshalswick East and Marshalswick West wards each returning four parish councillors. The parish wards of Sandridge Village and Marshalswick West should be modified to reflect the proposed district wards, as illustrated on Maps A4 and A5 at Appendix A.

84 In our draft recommendations report we proposed that there should be no change to the electoral cycle of parish and town councils in the district. We have not received any evidence to persuade the Commission to move away from this proposal.

Map 2:
The Commission's Final Recommendations for St Albans

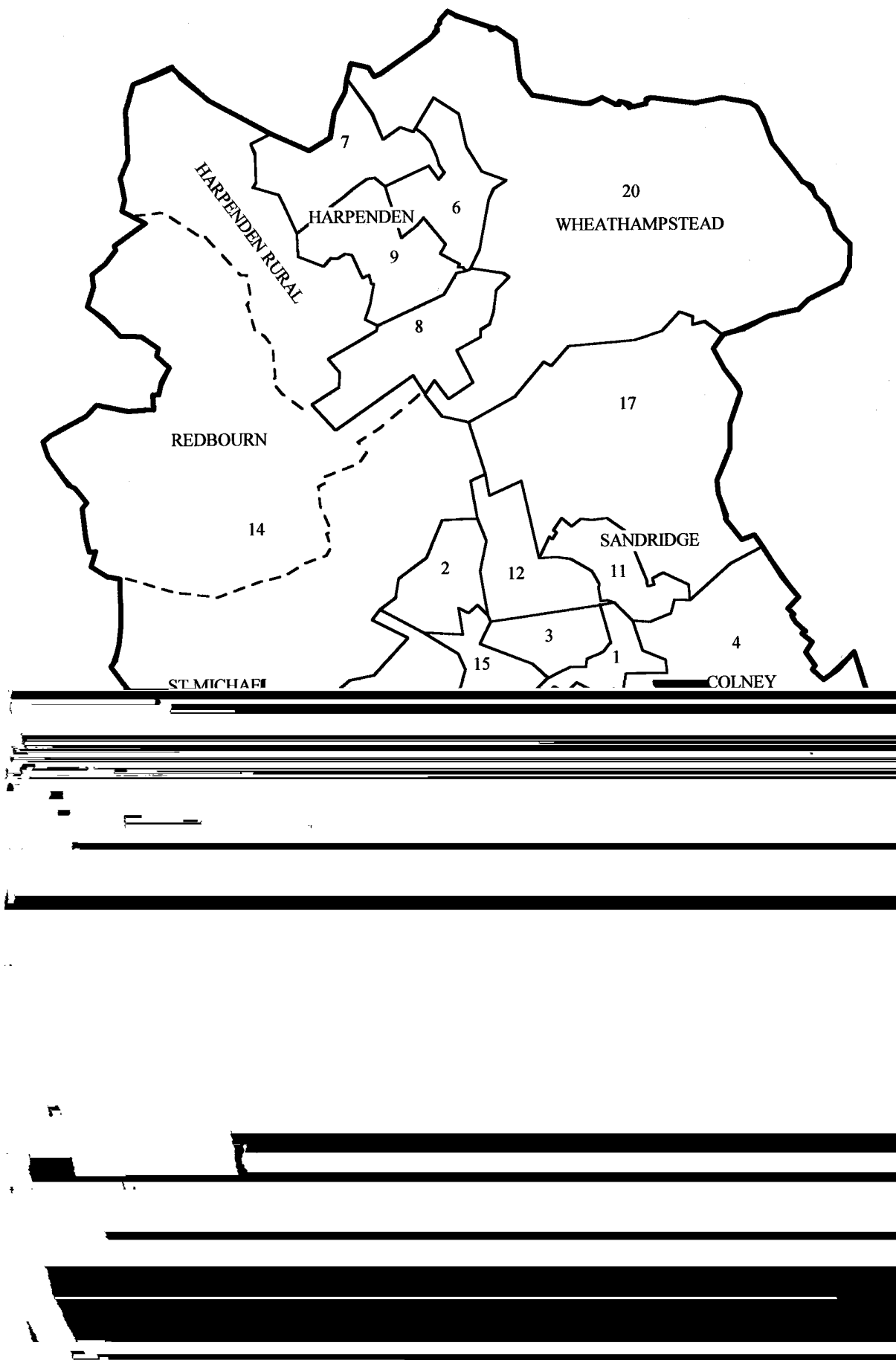


Figure 4:
The Commission's Final Recommendations for St Albans

Ward name	Number of councillors	Electorate (1996)	Number of electors per councillor	Variance from average %	Electorate (2001)	Number of electors per councillor	Variance from average %
1 Ashley (in St Albans)	3	4,763	1,588	-6	5,063	1,688	-2
2 Batchwood (in St Albans)	3	4,930	1,643	-3	4,990	1,663	-4
3 Clarence (in St Albans)	3	4,741	1,580	-7	4,741	1,580	-9
4 Colney Heath	2	2,884	1,442	-15	3,834	1,917	11
5 Cunningham (in St Albans)	3	4,833	1,611	-5	4,833	1,611	-7
6 Harpenden East	3	5,471	1,824	8	5,471	1,824	5
7 Harpenden North	3	5,231	1,744	3	5,231	1,744	1
8 Harpenden South	3	5,270	1,757	4	5,270	1,757	2
9 Harpenden West	3	5,554	1,851	9	5,554	1,851	7
10 London Colney	3	5,749	1,916	13	5,949	1,983	15
11 Marshalswick North (in St Albans)	3	4,991	1,675	-2	5,149	1,728	-1
12 Marshalswick South (in St Albans)	3	5,178	1,726	2	5,276	1,759	2
13 Park Street	3	5,387	1,796	6	5,387	1,796	4
14 Redbourn	3	4,436	1,479	-13	4,562	1,521	-12
15 St Peter's (in St Albans)	3	4,980	1,660	-2	4,980	1,660	-4
16 St Stephen's	3	5,124	1,708	1	5,124	1,708	-1
17 Sandridge	2	3,697	1,849	9	3,697	1,849	7
18 Sopwell (in St Albans)	3	5,178	1,726	2	5,294	1,765	2
19 Verulam (in St Albans)	3	5,208	1,736	2	5,208	1,736	0

Figure 4 (continued):
The Commission's Final Recommendations for St Albans

Ward name	Number of councillors	Electorate (1996)	Number of electors per councillor	Variance from average %	Electorate (2001)	Number of electors per councillor	Variance from average %
20 Wheathampstead	3	4,735	1,578	-7	4,735	1,578	-9
Totals	58	98,340	—	—	100,348	—	—
Averages	—	—	1,696	—	—	—	1,730

Source: Electorate figures are based on St Albans City & District Council's submission.

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

6. NEXT STEPS

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

86 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.

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

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

APPENDIX A

Final Recommendations for St Albans: Detailed Mapping

The following maps illustrate the Commission's proposed ward boundaries for the St Albans area.

Map A1 illustrates, in outline form, the proposed ward boundaries for St Albans and indicates the areas shown in more detail in Maps A2, A3, A4, A5 and A6 and the map at the back of the report.

Map A2 illustrates the proposed boundary changes between St Stephen's and Park Street wards.

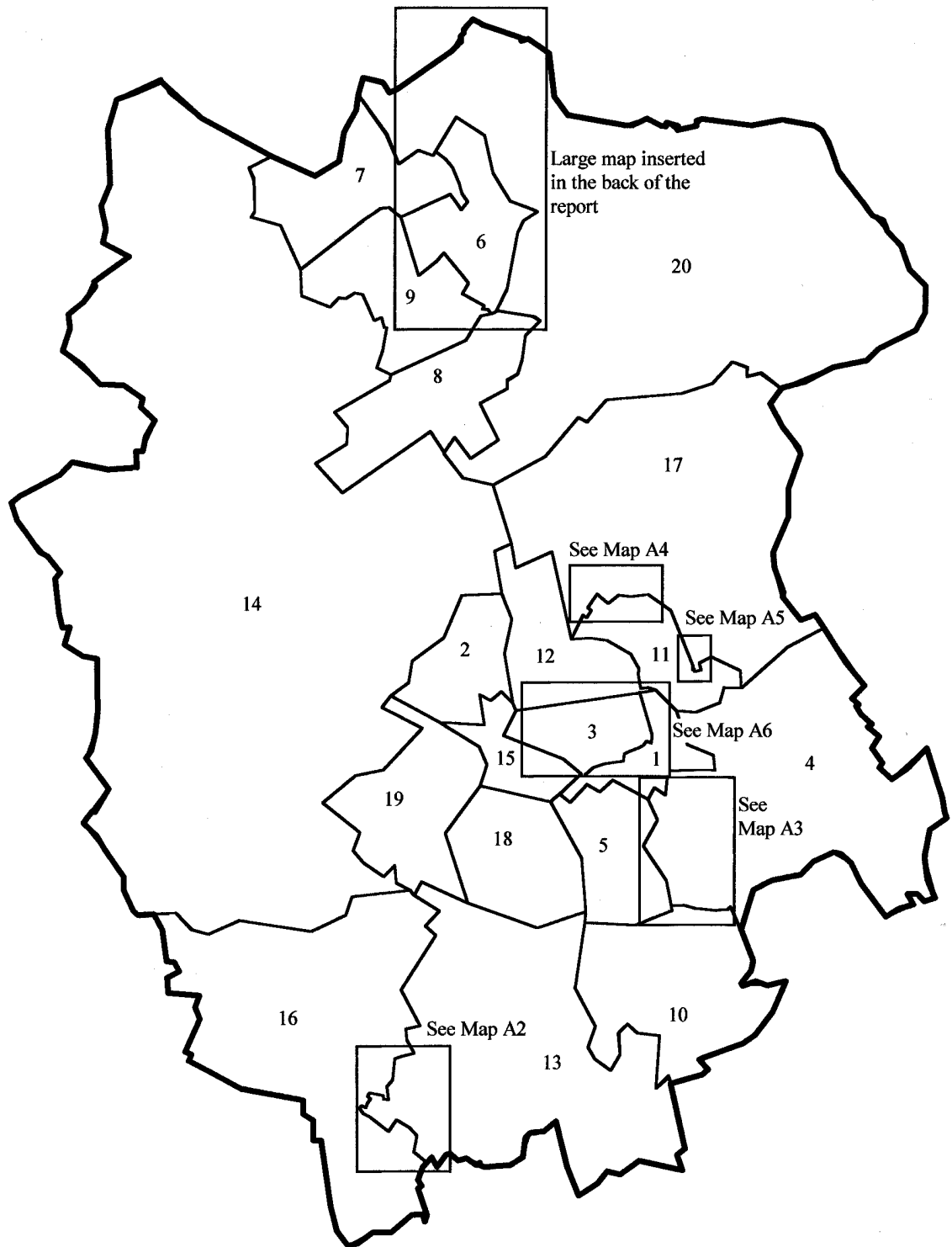
Map A3 illustrates the proposed boundary changes between London Colney and Colney Heath wards.

Maps A4 and A5 illustrate the proposed boundary changes between Sandridge and Marshalswick North wards.

Map A6 illustrates the proposed boundary changes between Clarence and Ashley wards.

The **large map** inserted at the back of the report illustrates the proposed ward boundary changes in Harpenden.

Map A1:
The Commission's Final Recommendations for St Albans: Key Map

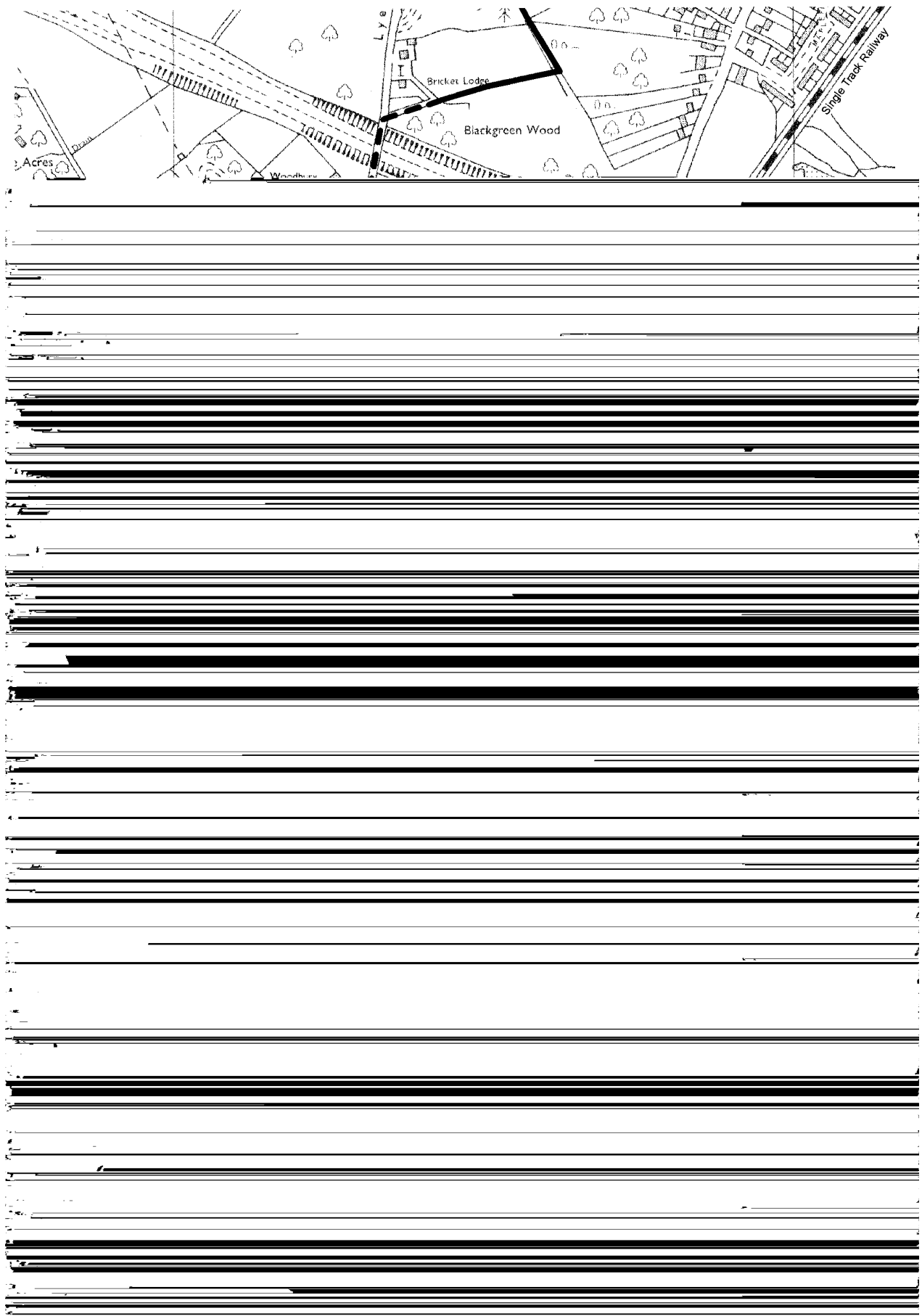


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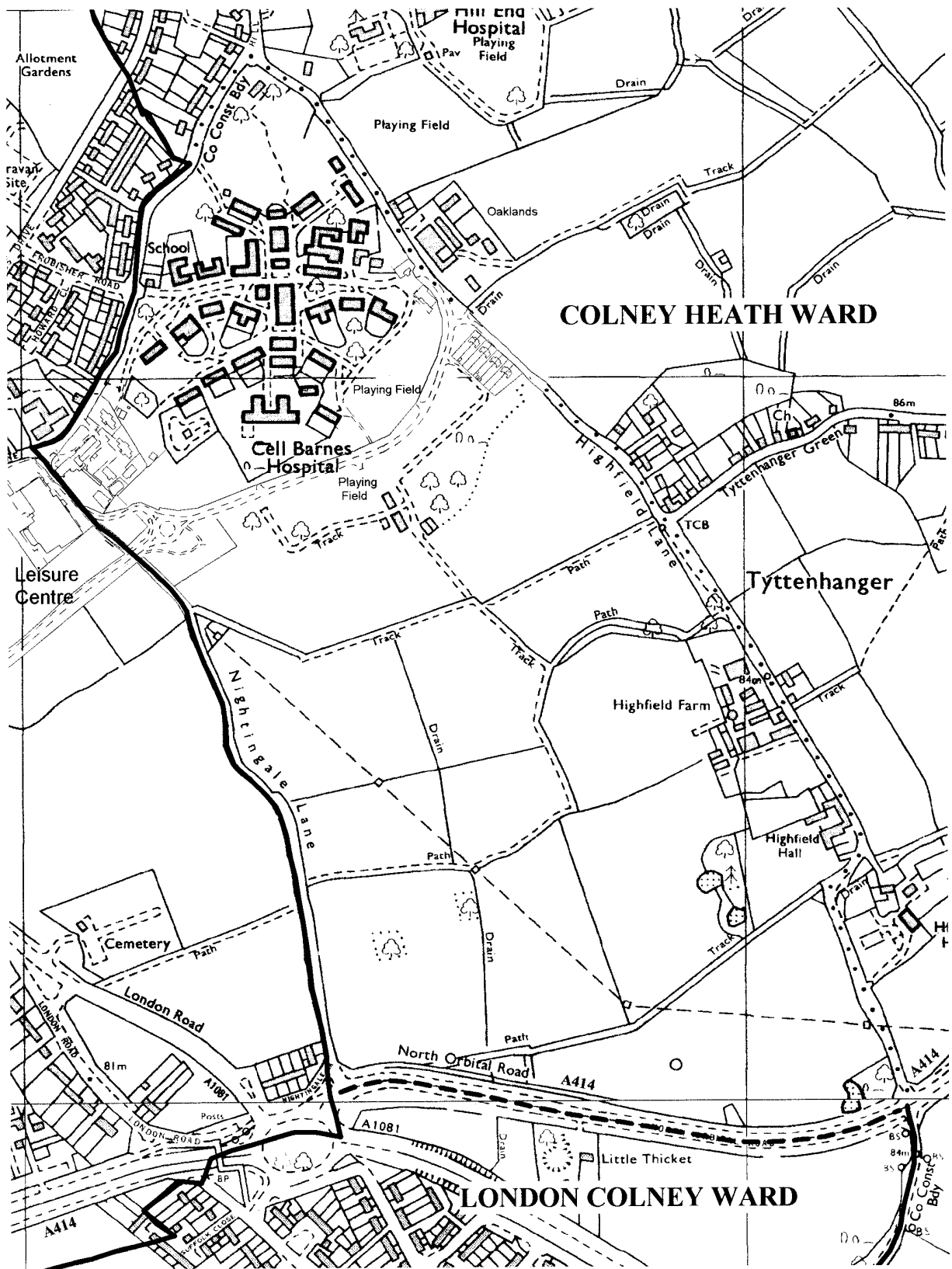
Key to Wards

1 Ashley	6 Harpenden East	11 Marshalswick North	16 St Stephens
2 Batchwood	7 Harpenden North	12 Marshalswick South	17 Sandridge
3 Clarence	8 Harpenden South	13 Park Street	18 Sopwell
4 Colney Heath	9 Harpenden West	14 Redbourn	19 Verulam
5 Cunningham	10 London Colney	15 St Peter's	20 Wheathampstead

Map A2:
Proposed Boundary Change between St Stephen's and Park Street Wards



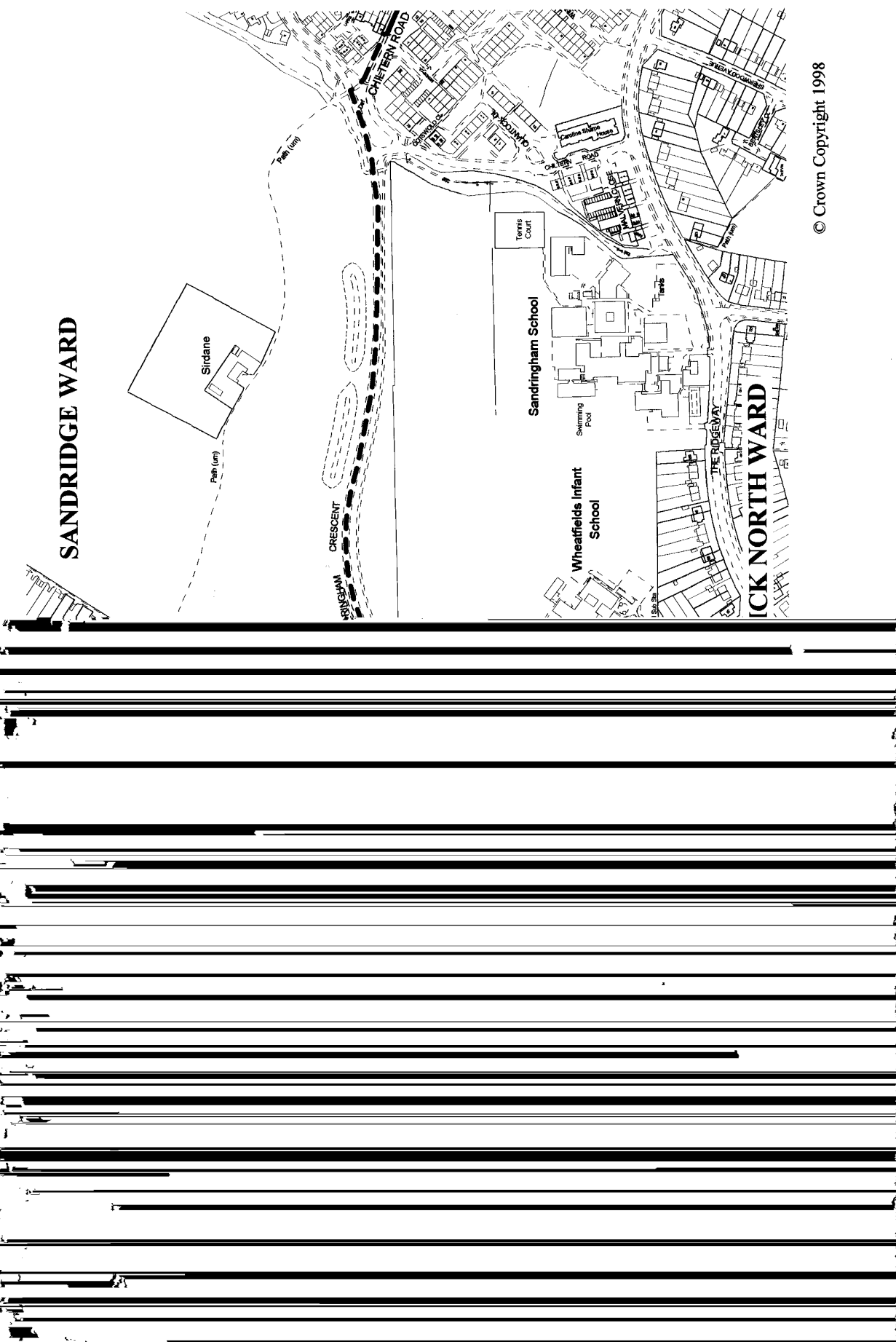
Map A3:
 Proposed Boundary Change between London Colney and Colney Heath Wards



KEY	
EXISTING WARD BOUNDARY	—————
PROPOSED WARD BOUNDARY	- - - - -

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Map A4:
Proposed Boundary Change between Sandridge and Marshalswick North Wards



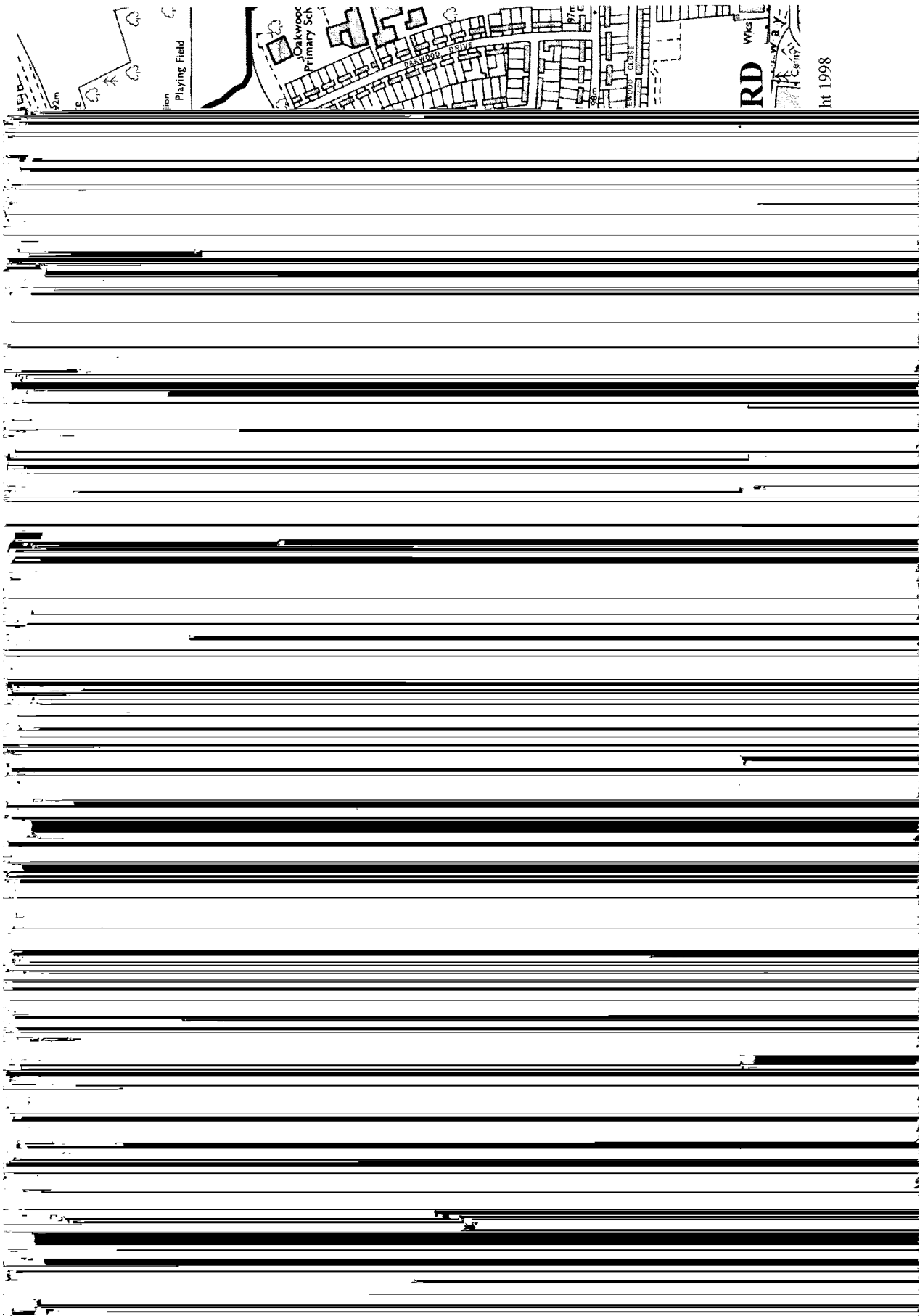
Map A5
 Proposed Boundary Change between Sandridge and Marshalswick North Wards



KEY	
EXISTING WARD BOUNDARY	—————
PROPOSED WARD BOUNDARY	- - - - -

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Map A6
Proposed Boundary Change between Clarence and Ashley Wards



APPENDIX B

Draft Recommendations for St Albans

*Figure B1:
The Commission's Draft Recommendations: Constituent Areas*

	Ward name	Number of councillors	Constituent areas
1	Ashley (in St Albans)	3	Ashley ward (part)
2	Batchwood (in St Albans)	3	<i>Unchanged</i>
3	Clarence (in St Albans)	3	Clarence ward; Ashley ward (part)
4	Colney Heath	2	Colney Heath district ward and parish; London Colney district ward (part – London Colney East ward (part) of London Colney parish)
5	Cunningham (in St Albans)	3	<i>Unchanged</i>
6	Harpenden East	3	Harpenden East district and parish ward (part); Harpenden North district and parish ward (part)
7	Harpenden North	3	Harpenden North district and parish ward (part); Harpenden West district and parish ward (part)
8	Harpenden South	3	<i>Unchanged</i> (Harpenden South district and parish ward)
9	Harpenden West	3	Harpenden West district and parish ward (part); Harpenden East district and parish ward (part)
10	London Colney	3	London Colney ward (part – London Colney North West and London Colney South West wards and London Colney East ward (part) of London Colney parish)
11	Marshalswick North	3	Marshalswick North ward (Marshalswick East and Marshalswick West parish wards of Sandridge parish); Sandridge ward (part – Sandridge Village ward of Sandridge parish (part))
12	Marshalswick South (in St Albans)	3	<i>Unchanged</i>
13	Park Street	3	Park Street ward (Park Street ward of St Stephen parish); St Stephen's ward (part – Chiswell Green ward (part) of St Stephen parish)

Figure B1 (continued):

The Commission's Draft Recommendations: Constituent Areas

	Ward name	Number of councillors	Constituent areas
14	Redbourn	3	<i>Unchanged</i> (the parishes of Harpenden Rural, Redbourn and St Michael)
15	St Peter's (in St Albans)	3	<i>Unchanged</i>
16	St Stephen's	3	St Stephen's ward (part – Bricket Wood (North) and Bricket Wood (South) wards and Chiswell Green ward (part) of St Stephen parish)
17	Sandridge	2	Sandridge ward (part – Sandridge Village ward (part) of Sandridge parish)
18	Sopwell (in St Albans)	3	<i>Unchanged</i>
19	Verulam (in St Albans)	3	<i>Unchanged</i>
20	Wheathampstead	3	<i>Unchanged</i>

Figure B2:
The Commission's Draft Recommendations for St Albans

Ward name	Number of councillors	Electorate (1996)	Number of electors per councillor	Variance from average %	Electorate (2001)	Number of electors per councillor	Variance from average %
1 Ashley (in St Albans)	3	4,763	1,588	-6	5,063	1,688	-2
2 Batchwood (in St Albans)	3	4,930	1,643	-3	4,990	1,663	-4
3 Clarence (in St Albans)	3	4,741	1,580	-7	4,741	1,580	-9
4 Colney Heath	2	2,884	1,442	-15	3,834	1,917	11
5 Cunningham (in St Albans)	3	4,833	1,611	-5	4,833	1,611	-7
6 Harpenden East	3	5,358	1,786	5	5,358	1,786	3
7 Harpenden North	3	5,455	1,818	7	5,455	1,818	5
8 Harpenden South	3	5,270	1,757	4	5,270	1,757	2
9 Harpenden West	3	5,443	1,814	7	5,443	1,814	5
10 London Colney	3	5,749	1,916	13	5,949	1,983	15
11 Marshalswick North	3	4,894	1,631	-4	5,052	1,684	-3
12 Marshalswick South (in St Albans)	3	5,178	1,726	2	5,276	1,759	2
13 Park Street	3	5,350	1,783	5	5,350	1,783	3
14 Redbourn	3	4,436	1,479	-13	4,562	1,521	-12
15 St Peter's (in St Albans)	3	4,980	1,660	-2	4,980	1,660	-4
16 St Stephen	3	5,161	1,720	1	5,161	1,720	-1
17 Sandridge	2	3,794	1,897	12	3,794	1,897	10
18 Sopwell (in St Albans)	3	5,178	1,726	2	5,294	1,765	2
19 Verulam (in St Albans)	3	5,208	1,736	2	5,208	1,736	0

Figure B2 (continued):
 The Commission's Draft Recommendations for St Albans

Ward name	Number of councillors	Electorate (1996)	Number of electors per councillor	Variance from average %	Electorate (2001)	Number of electors per councillor	Variance from average %
20 Wheathampstead	3	4,735	1,578	-7	4,735	1,578	-9
Totals	58	98,340	—	—	100,348	—	—
Averages	—	—	1,696	—	—	1,730	—

