

Final recommendations on the future electoral arrangements for Stockport

Report to The Electoral Commission

September 2003

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Contents

	Page
What is The Boundary Committee For England?	5
Summary	7
1 Introduction	11
2 Current electoral arrangements	13
3 Draft recommendations	17
4 Responses to consultation	19
5 Analysis and final recommendations	21
6 What happens next?	45
Appendices	
A Final recommendations for Stockport: Detailed mapping	47
B Guide to interpreting the first draft of the electoral change Order	49
C First draft of the electoral change Order for Stockport	51

What is The Boundary Committee for England?

The Boundary Committee for England is a committee of The Electoral Commission, an independent body set up by Parliament under the Political Parties, Elections and Referendums Act 2000. The functions of the Local Government Commission for England were transferred to The Electoral Commission and its Boundary Committee on 1 April 2002 by the Local Government Commission for England (Transfer of Functions) Order 2001 (SI 2001 No. 3692). The Order also transferred to The Electoral Commission the functions of the Secretary of State in relation to taking decisions on recommendations for changes to local authority electoral arrangements and implementing them.

Members of the Committee are:

Pamela Gordon (Chair)
Professor Michael Clarke CBE
Robin Gray
Joan Jones CBE
Ann M Kelly
Professor Colin Mellors

Archie Gall (Director)

We are required by law to review the electoral arrangements of every principal local authority in England. Our aim is to ensure that the number of electors represented by each councillor in an area is as nearly as possible the same, taking into account local circumstances. We can recommend changes to ward boundaries, the number of councillors and ward names. We can also recommend changes to the electoral arrangements of parish councils.

This report sets out our final recommendations on the electoral arrangements for the borough of Stockport in Greater Manchester.

Summary

We began a review of Stockport's electoral arrangements on 14 May 2002. We published our draft recommendations for electoral arrangements on 25 February 2003, after which we undertook an eight-week period of consultation. We now submit final recommendations to The Electoral Commission.

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

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

- **In 11 of the 21 wards the number of electors represented by each councillor varies by more than 10% from the average for the borough and two wards vary by more than 20%.**
- **By 2006 a similar situation is expected, with the number of electors per councillor forecast to vary by more than 10% from the average in 11 wards and by more than 20% in one ward.**

Our main final recommendations for future electoral arrangements (see Tables 1 and 2 and paragraphs 158 -159) are that:

- **Stockport Borough Council should have 63 councillors, the same as at present;**
- **there should be 21 wards, the same as at present;**
- **the boundaries of all of the existing wards should be modified.**

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

- **In all of the proposed 21 wards the number of electors per councillor would vary by no more than 9% from the borough average.**
- **This improved level of electoral equality is forecast to continue, with the number of electors per councillor in all 21 wards expected to vary by no more than 8% from the average for the borough in 2006.**

All further correspondence on these final recommendations and the matters discussed in this report should be addressed to The Electoral Commission, which will not make an Order implementing them before 11 November 2003. The information in the representations will be available for public access once the Order has been made.

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

Fax: 020 7271 0667

Email: implementation@electoralcommission.org.uk

Table 1: Final recommendations: Summary

	Ward name	Number of councillors	Constituent areas	Large map reference
1	Bramhall Moor	3	Part of Davenport ward, part of East Bramhall ward, part of Great Moor ward and part of Hazel Grove ward	Maps 1 and 3
2	Bramhall North	3	Part of East Bramhall ward and part of West Bramhall ward	Map 3
3	Bramhall South	3	Part of Cheadle Hulme South ward and part of West Bramhall ward	Map 3
4	Bredbury	3	Part of Bredbury ward, part of Brinnington ward and part of Romiley ward	Maps 1 and 2
5	Brinnington & Central	3	Part of Bredbury ward, part of Brinnington ward, part of Cale Green ward, part of Edgeley ward, part of Manor ward and part of South Reddish ward	Map 1
6	Cheadle & Gatley	3	Part of Cheadle ward, part of Cheadle Hulme North ward and Heald Green ward	Maps 1 and 3
7	Cheadle Hulme North	3	Part of Cheadle ward and part of Cheadle Hulme North ward	Maps 1 and 3
8	Cheadle Hulme South	3	Part of Cheadle Hulme North ward, part of Cheadle Hulme South ward, part of Heald Green ward and part of West Bramhall ward	Map 3
9	Davenport & Cale Green	3	Part of Cale Green ward, part of Cheadle Hulme North ward and part of Davenport ward	Maps 1 and 3
10	Edgeley & Cheadle Heath	3	Part of Cale Green ward and part of Edgeley ward	Map 1
11	Hazel Grove	3	Part of East Bramhall ward and part of Hazel Grove ward	Maps 3 and 4
12	Heald Green	3	Part of Cheadle ward, part of Cheadle Hulme North ward, part of Cheadle Hulme South ward and part of Heald Green ward	Map 3
13	Heatons North	3	Part of Heaton Mersey ward, part of Heaton Moor ward and part of South Reddish ward	Map 1
14	Heatons South	3	Part of Heaton Mersey ward and part of South Reddish ward	Map 1
15	Manor	3	Part of Brinnington ward, part of Great Moor ward, part of Manor ward and part of Offerton ward	Map 1
16	Marple North	3	Part of North Marple ward, part of Romiley ward and part of South Marple ward	Maps 2 and 4
17	Marple South	3	Part of Hazel Grove ward, part of North Marple ward and part of South Marple ward	Maps 2 and 4
18	Offerton	3	Part of Great Moor ward (including Offerton Estate parish) and part of Hazel Grove ward	Maps 1,2,3 and 4
19	Reddish North	3	Part of North Reddish ward and part of South Reddish ward	Map 1
20	Reddish South	3	Part of Heaton Moor ward, part of North Reddish ward and part of South Reddish ward	Map 1
21	Romiley & Woodley	3	Part of Bredbury ward and part of Romiley ward	Map 2

Note: Offerton Estate is the only parish in Stockport and forms part of Offerton ward, as indicated above.

Table 2: Final recommendations for Stockport

Ward name	Number of councillors	Electorate (2001)	Number of electors per councillor	Variance from average %	Electorate (2006)	Number of electors per councillor	Variance from average %
1 Bramhall Moor	3	10,212	3,404	-4	10,292	3,431	-4
2 Bramhall North	3	10,734	3,578	1	11,031	3,677	3
3 Bramhall South	3	9,956	3,319	-6	10,079	3,360	-6
4 Bredbury	3	10,708	3,569	1	10,817	3,606	1
5 Brinnington & Central	3	10,612	3,537	0	10,999	3,666	2
6 Cheadle & Gatley	3	11,484	3,828	8	11,575	3,858	8
7 Cheadle Hulme North	3	10,251	3,417	-3	10,330	3,443	-4
8 Cheadle Hulme South	3	10,385	3,462	-2	10,684	3,561	-1
9 Davenport & Cale Green	3	10,645	3,548	0	10,921	3,640	2
10 Edgeley & Cheadle Heath	3	10,962	3,654	3	11,025	3,675	3
11 Hazel Grove	3	11,059	3,686	4	11,114	3,705	3
12 Heald Green	3	10,149	3,383	-4	10,240	3,413	-5
13 Heatons North	3	10,892	3,631	3	11,046	3,682	3
14 Heatons South	3	10,706	3,569	1	10,783	3,594	0
15 Manor	3	10,782	3,594	2	10,832	3,611	1
16 Marple North	3	9,921	3,307	-6	10,051	3,350	-6
17 Marple South	3	9,880	3,293	-7	9,976	3,325	-7
18 Offerton	3	10,577	3,526	0	10,676	3,559	-1
19 Reddish North	3	10,618	3,539	0	10,858	3,619	1
20 Reddish South	3	10,701	3,567	1	10,723	3,574	0
21 Romiley & Woodley	3	11,364	3,788	7	11,522	3,841	7
Totals	63	222,598	-	-	225,574	-	-
Averages	-	-	3,533	-	-	3,581	-

Source: Electorate figures are based on information provided by Stockport Borough Council.

Notes:

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

1 Introduction

1 This report contains our final recommendations for the electoral arrangements for the borough of Stockport in Greater Manchester. We are reviewing the 10 metropolitan boroughs in Greater Manchester as part of our programme of periodic electoral reviews (PERs) of all 386 principal local authority areas in England. The programme started in 1996 and is currently expected to finish in 2004.

2 This is our first review of the electoral arrangements of Stockport. Stockport's last review was undertaken by the Local Government Boundary Commission for England, which reported to the Secretary of State in January 1979 (Report no. 317).

3 In making final recommendations to The Electoral Commission, we have had regard to:

- the statutory criteria contained in section 13(5) of the Local Government Act 1992 (as amended by SI 2001 No. 3692), i.e. the need to:
 - reflect the identities and interests of local communities;
 - secure effective and convenient local government; and
 - achieve equality of representation.
- Schedule 11 to the Local Government Act 1972.
- the general duty set out in section 71(1) of the Race Relations Act 1996 and the statutory Code of Practice on the Duty to Promote Race Equality (Commission for Racial Equality, May 2002), i.e. to have due regard to:
 - eliminate unlawful racial discrimination;
 - promote equality of opportunity; and
 - promote good relations between people of different racial groups.

4 Details of the legislation under which the review of Stockport was conducted are set out in a document entitled *Guidance and Procedural Advice for Periodic Electoral Reviews*. This *Guidance* sets out the approach to the review.

5 Our task is to make recommendations on the number of councillors who should serve on a council, and the number, boundaries and names of wards. We can also propose changes to the electoral arrangements for parish councils in the borough.

6 The broad objective of PERs is to achieve, so far as possible, equal representation across the district as a whole. Schemes which would result in, or retain, an electoral imbalance of over 10% in any ward will have to be fully justified. Any imbalances of 20% or more should only arise in the most exceptional circumstances, and will require the strongest justification.

7 We are not prescriptive on council size. However, we believe that any proposals relating to council size, whether these are for an increase, a reduction or no change, should be supported by evidence and argumentation. Given the stage now reached in the introduction of new political management structures under the provisions of the local Government Act 2000, it is important that whatever council size interested parties may propose to us they can demonstrate that their proposals have been fully thought through, and have been developed in the context of a review of internal political management and the role of councillors in the new structure. However, we have found it necessary to safeguard against upward drift in the number of councillors, and we believe that any proposal for an increase in council size will need to be fully justified. In particular, we do not accept that an increase in electorate should automatically result in an increase in the number of councillors, or that changes should be made to the size of the council simply to make it more consistent with the size of other similar councils.

8 Under the provisions of the Local Government Act 1972 there is no limit to the number of councillors which can be returned from each metropolitan borough ward. However, the figure

must be divisible by three. In practice, all metropolitan borough wards currently return three councillors. Where our recommendation is for multi-member wards, we believe that the number of councillors to be returned from each ward should not exceed three, other than in very exceptional circumstances. Numbers in excess of three could lead to an unacceptable dilution of accountability to the electorate and we have not, to date, proposed any wards with more than three councillors.

9 This review was in four stages. Stage One began on 14 May 2002, when we wrote to Stockport Borough Council inviting proposals for future electoral arrangements. We also notified Greater Manchester Police Authority, the Local Government Association, the National Association of Local Councils, Offerton Estate Parish Council, Members of Parliament with constituency interests in the borough, Members of the European Parliament for the North West Region, and the headquarters of the main political parties. We placed a notice in the local press, issued a press release and invited Stockport Borough Council to publicise the review further. The closing date for receipt of representations, the end of Stage One, was 16 September 2002. At Stage Two we considered all the representations received during Stage One and prepared our draft recommendations.

10 Stage Three began on 25 February 2003 with the publication of the report, *Draft recommendations on the future electoral arrangements for Stockport* and ended on 22 April 2003. During this period comments were sought from the public and any other interested parties on the preliminary conclusions. Finally, during Stage Four the draft recommendations were reconsidered in the light of the Stage Three consultation and we now publish the final recommendations.

2 Current electoral arrangements

11 The metropolitan borough of Stockport covers some 12,605 hectares and has a population of 291,500. It is one of the 10 Metropolitan Districts in Greater Manchester. It was formed in 1974 and comprises the areas formerly administered by the County Borough of Stockport and the urban districts of Bredbury & Romiley, Cheadle & Gatley, Hazel Grove & Bramhall and Marple. The existing ward structure is largely based on the former council areas with smaller wards in the town centre areas and larger wards in the outlying, rural areas.

12 Stockport is a borough of contrast with the town being largely suburban to the west, quite rural to the east while in the centre and north it is predominantly composed of older-style terraced property. It is at the heart of an excellent communications network: the M60 Motorway traverses the borough, and it is served by a number of major rail routes. It also contains a number of major roads such as the A6, A34 and A560 and major waterways, including the rivers Mersey, Goyt and Tame.

13 The borough contains one parish, which is represented by Offerton Estate Parish Council, which was elected for the first time in May 2002.

14 The electorate of the borough is 222,598 (December 2001). The Council presently has 63 members who are elected from 21 wards, five of which are relatively rural in the east with the remainder being predominantly urban. All wards are three-member wards.

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

16 At present, each councillor represents an average of 3,533 electors, which the Borough Council forecasts will increase to 3,581 by the year 2006 if the present number of councillors is maintained. However, due to demographic and other changes over the past two decades, the number of electors per councillor in 11 of the 21 wards varies by more than 10% from the borough average, two wards by more than 20% and one ward by more than 30%. The worst imbalance is in Brinnington ward where each of the three councillors represents 31% fewer electors than the borough average.

Map 1: Existing wards in Stockport

Table 3: Existing electoral arrangements

	Ward name	Number of councillors	Electorate (2001)	Number of electors per councillor	Variance from average %	Electorate (2006)	Number of electors per councillor	Variance from average %
1	Bredbury	3	11,719	3,906	11	11,817	3,939	10
2	Brinnington	3	7,275	2,425	-31	7,307	2,436	-32
3	Cale Green	3	9,082	3,027	-14	9,534	3,178	-11
4	Cheadle	3	11,673	3,891	10	11,764	3,921	10
5	Cheadle Hulme North	3	11,650	3,883	10	11,731	3,910	9
6	Cheadle Hulme South	3	11,115	3,705	5	11,187	3,729	4
7	Davenport	3	9,161	3,054	-14	9,245	3,082	-14
8	East Bramhall	3	12,811	4,270	21	12,841	4,280	20
9	Edgeley	3	9,223	3,074	-13	9,310	3,103	-13
10	Great Moor	3	10,972	3,657	4	11,088	3,696	3
11	Hazel Grove	3	12,322	4,107	16	12,454	4,151	16
12	Heald Green	3	10,217	3,406	-4	10,543	3,514	-2
13	Heaton Mersey	3	11,951	3,984	13	12,071	4,024	12
14	Heaton Moor	3	10,007	3,336	-6	10,128	3,376	-6
15	Manor	3	9,297	3,099	-12	9,390	3,130	-13
16	North Marple	3	9,338	3,113	-12	9,442	3,147	-12
17	North Reddish	3	11,819	3,940	12	11,947	3,982	11
18	Romiley	3	10,928	3,643	3	11,109	3,703	3
19	South Marple	3	9,690	3,230	-9	9,795	3,265	-9
20	South Reddish	3	10,757	3,586	1	10,881	3,627	1
21	West Bramhall	3	11,591	3,864	9	11,989	3,996	12
	Totals	63	222,598	-	-	225,573	-	-
	Averages	-	-	3,533	-	-	3,581	-

Source: Electorate figures are based on information provided by Stockport Borough Council.

Notes:

- 1) The 'variance from average' column shows by how far, in percentage terms, the number of electors per councillor varies from the average for the borough. The minus symbol (-) denotes a lower than average number of electors. For example, in 2001, electors in Brinnington ward were significantly over-represented by 31%, while electors in East Bramhall ward were significantly under-represented by 21%
- 2) Figures have been rounded to the nearest whole number.

3 Draft recommendations

17 During Stage One, four representations were received, including borough-wide schemes from Stockport Borough Council and the Labour Group. Cheadle Constituency Conservative Association and Stockport Constituency Conservative Association supported the Borough Council's proposals. In the light of these representations and the evidence available to us, we reached preliminary conclusions, which were set out in our report, *Draft recommendations on the future electoral arrangements for Stockport*.

18 Our draft recommendations were based on elements of both the Borough Council's and the Labour Group's proposals, which achieved some improvement in electoral equality. However, we moved away from the Borough Council's scheme in a number of areas, using the consultation scheme generated by Council officers during the early stages of the review process, which had been made available to us, together with some of our own proposals. We proposed that:

- Stockport Borough Council should be served by 63 councillors, representing 21 wards, the same as at present;
- the boundaries of all of the existing wards should be modified.

Draft recommendation

Stockport Borough Council should comprise 63 councillors serving 21 wards.

19 Our proposals would have resulted in significant improvements in electoral equality, with the number of electors per councillor in none of the 21 wards varying by more than 7% from the borough average, both initially and by 2006.

4 Responses to consultation

20 During the consultation on the draft recommendations report, 113 representations were received. A list of all respondents is available from us on request. All representations may be inspected at our offices and those of Stockport Metropolitan Borough Council.

Stockport Metropolitan Borough Council

21 The Borough Council expressed regret that its Stage One borough-wide scheme was not fully adopted as the draft recommendations. It considered that its submission fulfilled the statutory criteria, the council therefore opposed the draft recommendations and recommended again its Stage One scheme. Nevertheless, the Council also put forward three minor amendments to the draft recommendations in order to better reflect community identity. The Conservative, Liberal Democrat and Independent Group supported the Borough Council's representation. The Labour Group submitted separate representations at Stage One and Stage Three.

Political Groups

22 The Conservative Group on the Council stated that, unlike the Stage One scheme submitted by three groups on the Council, the draft recommendations 'do not meet the needs, or indeed the expectations of Stockport'. It considered that the Council's Stage One scheme would overcome the anomalies within the draft recommendations, and therefore recommended that the Council's Stage One proposals should be adopted.

23 Heald Green and Long Lane Ratepayers' Association objected to the draft recommendation to transfer part of Gatley into Heald Green ward, and stated that this proposal would not reflect community identity. It proposed that the area should be included in Cheadle & Gatley ward. Consequently, it proposed that a part of Cheadle & Gatley ward further to the east should be transferred into Heald Green ward.

24 The Labour Group on the Borough Council stated it was disappointed that a number of its proposals had not been adopted under the draft recommendations, particularly regarding the Brinnington area. However, it concluded that, as these proposals had already been rejected, there would be little point in reiterating them and opposing the draft recommendations. Instead, the Labour Group broadly supported the draft recommendations but gave its support to two of the Council's minor Stage Three amendments.

25 Stockport Metropolitan Liberal Democrat Co-ordinating Committee (the Liberal Democrats) submitted six amendments to the draft recommendations primarily to 'tie in a small number of isolated electorate with their appropriate wards'. These included an alternative solution to the 'divided communities' along the Offerton and Great Moor ward boundaries. The Liberal Democrats also put forward alternative ward names.

Other representations

26 A further 108 representations were received in response to our draft recommendations from local organisations, a parish council, borough councillors and residents.

27 Councillor J Humphreys, member for Manor ward, expressed concern regarding the boundaries of Manor ward, and put forward three amendments, to transfer two small areas out of the ward and add the South Heaviley area into Manor ward. Councillor Carter, member for Cheadle, proposed that the existing boundary between Cheadle & Gatley and Cheadle Hulme North wards near the golf course and Bruntwood Park should be retained in order to improve

electoral equality. Councillor Burns, Councillor S Humphreys and Councillor Whitehead (all representing Heald Green ward) supported Heald Green and Long Lane Ratepayers' Association's proposals for Cheadle & Gatley and Heald Green wards.

28 Stockport NHS Primary Care Trust submitted a proposal for an alternative Offerton ward in order to better align the boundary of the ward to the constituent communities.

29 Offerton Estate Parish Council said it had agreed not to make any comments on the draft recommendations.

30 A local resident of Stockport put forward a number of comments on the draft recommendations for Bramhall Moor, Cheadle Hulme North, Cheadle Hulme South, Davenport, Edgeley, Heald Green, Heaton, Reddish South, South Heatons and Tame Valley & Central wards, to facilitate stronger boundaries and better reflect community identity. A local resident of Bredbury put forward three similar options for alternative Bredbury and Romiley wards, which he stated would reflect the Bredbury community more accurately than the draft recommendations.

31 A local resident of Gatley proposed four new ward names in order to more accurately reflect communities. He and a local resident of Marple Bridge also proposed that all ward names should have the denotations 'North' and 'South' at the end of the name in order to be consistent and user friendly.

32 We received 97 representations from local residents of Gatley in response to a circular produced by the Heald Green and Long Lane Ratepayers' Association outlining the draft recommendation to transfer part of Gatley into Heald Green ward. All the local residents who responded, opposed the recommendation and stated that they considered themselves part of the Gatley community, not Heald Green, and so would like to remain as part of the Gatley ward.

5 Analysis and final recommendations

33 As described earlier, our prime objective in considering the most appropriate electoral arrangements for Stockport is to achieve electoral equality. In doing so we have regard to section 13(5) of the Local Government Act 1992 (as amended): the need to secure effective and convenient local government; reflect the identities and interests of local communities; and secure the matters referred to in paragraph 3(2)(a) of Schedule 11 to the Local Government Act 1972 (equality of representation). Schedule 11 to the Local Government Act 1972 refers to the number of electors per councillor being 'as nearly as may be, the same in every ward of the district or borough'.

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

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

36 We accept that the achievement of absolute electoral equality for the authority as a whole is likely to be unattainable. However, we consider that, if electoral imbalances are to be minimised, the aim of electoral equality should be the starting point in any review. We therefore strongly recommend that, in formulating electoral schemes, local authorities and other interested parties should make electoral equality their starting point, and then make adjustments to reflect relevant factors such as community identity and interests. Five-year forecasts of changes in electorate must also be considered and we would aim to recommend a scheme which provides improved electoral equality over this five-year period.

37 The recommendations do not affect county, district or parish external boundaries, local taxes, or result in changes to postcodes. Nor is there any evidence that these recommendations will have an adverse effect on house prices, or car and house insurance premiums. Our proposals do not take account of parliamentary boundaries, and we are not, therefore, able to take into account any representations which are based on these issues.

Electorate forecasts

38 Since 1975 there has been a 5% increase in the electorate of Stockport borough. At Stage One, the Borough Council submitted electorate forecasts for the year 2006, projecting an increase in the electorate of approximately 1% from 222,598 to 225,573 over the five-year period from 2001 to 2006. It expected most of the growth to be in Cale Green ward, although some is also expected in Heald Green and West Bramhall wards. In order to prepare these forecasts, the Council estimated rates and locations of housing development with regard to unitary development plans, the expected rate of building over the five-year period and assumed occupancy rates. Having accepted that this is an inexact science and, having considered the forecast electorates, we stated in our draft recommendations report that we were satisfied that they represented the best estimates that could reasonably be made at the time.

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

Council size

40 Stockport Borough Council presently has 63 members. In the draft recommendations report we adopted the Council and Labour Group's proposal for a council of 63 members as, having considered the Council's political management structure, the size of the electorate and geography of the area, we considered that the statutory criteria would be best met by a council of 63 members.

41 During Stage Three, we received no comments regarding the Council size proposed under our draft recommendations. We therefore propose to confirm our draft recommendation for 63 councillors to represent Stockport as final.

Electoral arrangements

42 Having considered all the representations received at Stage One, we proposed basing our draft recommendations on elements of both the borough-wide schemes received at Stage One, together with part of the consultation scheme (based on the existing council size of 63), which was forwarded to us for information, and our own proposals. In order to provide for the best reflection of the statutory criteria, we proposed adopting the Borough Council's proposals in the more rural, eastern part of the borough, and the Labour Group's proposals in the north of the borough (which were identical to those under the consultation scheme). In the central and southern parts of the borough, we based our draft recommendations on proposals formulated for consultation by the Borough Council during Stage One. These proposals had been made available to us and we considered they provided the best electoral arrangements in these areas. We also utilised some of our own proposals in order to provide for a better reflection of community identity and more identifiable boundaries.

43 Heald Green and Long Lane Ratepayers' Association distributed a leaflet to Gatley electors affected by the draft recommendation to amend the boundary between Cheadle & Gatley and Heald Green wards. The leaflet stated that the area in question would be 'taken over by Heald Green', the 'administrative address will become Heald Green', estate agents 'will advertise your house as being in Heald Green' and 'you will become a remote outpost of Heald Green'. The leaflet also stated that the council, health service and others will allocate resources based on ward boundaries. Such observations are unbalanced and misleading and likely to promote unnecessary concerns regarding the impact of the electoral review process. This review is looking to change local government electoral arrangements and there is no evidence to suggest that any further impact is likely. We find it surprising and unfortunate that an organisation with the standing of the Heald Green and Long Lane Ratepayers' Association should have campaigned among its membership in such a manner.

44 In response to our draft recommendations, a large number of respondents expressed the view that the Styal Road area of Gatley should not be transferred into Heald Green ward. Other respondents broadly supported our draft recommendations, but submitted minor amendments in order to better reflect community identity, provide clear boundaries or improve electoral equality.

45 At Stage Three, the Borough Council stated that it was not content with the draft recommendations and preferred its Stage One proposals. The Council also submitted minor amendments to the proposed boundaries for the wards of Davenport, Edgeley, Manor, Offerton and Tame Valley & Central, as well as proposing nine new ward names. All four political parties submitted proposals during Stage Three, in many cases reiterating their Stage One submissions.

46 A large number of alternative ward names were put forward, including proposals to ensure that the descriptions of north or south should be placed at the end of any relevant ward name so that the ward names would be consistent across the borough and easily identifiable. We have

adopted eight of the proposed new ward names, which we consider would better reflect the constituent communities and would ensure consistency.

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

- i. Brinnington, North Reddish and South Reddish wards (pages 23-25);
- ii. Edgeley, Heaton Mersey and Heaton Moor wards (pages 25-27);
- iii. Cale Green, Davenport, Great Moor and Manor wards (pages 27-31);
- iv. Cheadle, Cheadle Hulme North, Cheadle Hulme South and Heald Green wards (pages 31-36);
- v. East Bramhall and West Bramhall wards (pages 36-37);
- vi. Bredbury and Romiley wards (pages 37-40);
- vii. Hazel Grove, North Marple and South Marple wards (pages 40-41).

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

Brinnington, North Reddish and South Reddish wards

49 The existing wards of Brinnington, North Reddish and South Reddish are situated in the north of the borough. Each ward is represented by three councillors. Under the current arrangements, Brinnington, North Reddish and South Reddish wards contain 31% fewer, 12% more and 1% more electors per councillor than the borough average respectively (32% fewer, 11% more and 1% more by 2006).

50 At Stage One, Stockport Borough Council proposed broadly retaining the existing North Reddish ward subject to the exclusion of the area surrounding Ambleside Road and Woodstock Avenue. It proposed a revised South Reddish ward comprising parts of the existing ward as well as parts of the existing Heaton Moor and North Reddish wards. The Borough Council also proposed a new Mersey Valley ward, which would be largely based on the existing Brinnington ward and parts of the existing South Reddish and Manor wards. The remaining part of the existing South Reddish ward would form part of a new Heaton North ward.

51 Stockport Labour Group proposed alternative proposals, for a revised North Reddish ward comprising parts of the existing North Reddish and South Reddish wards. It proposed a revised South Reddish ward comprising part of the existing ward and part of Heaton Moor and North Reddish wards. Finally, the Labour Group proposed a new Tame/Goyt ward, which it stated 'is in fact made up of a mixture of communities'. The new ward would comprise parts of the existing Brinnington, Bredbury and Romiley wards. The remaining part of the existing Brinnington ward would form part of a new South Central ward, while the remaining parts of the existing South Reddish ward would be included in new North Heaton, South Central and South Heaton wards.

52 The proposals under the Borough Council's Stage One consultation scheme were identical to those put forward by the Labour Group in relation to the existing North Reddish and South Reddish wards. However, under the consultation scheme they were referred to as Reddish North and Reddish South wards. Under the consultation scheme, a new Tame Valley & Central ward would be formed which would be broadly similar to that put forward by the Borough Council. The new ward would comprise the whole of the existing Brinnington ward, less the small area surrounding Bishop Street, together with part of the existing South Reddish ward, part of the existing Heaton Mersey ward, part of the existing Edgeley ward, part of the existing Cale Green ward and part of the existing Manor ward. The remaining part of the existing Brinnington ward would be included in a revised Manor ward.

53 We received two further representations in relation to this area. Cheadle Constituency Conservative Association and Stockport Constituency Conservative Association both supported the proposals put forward by the Borough Council.

54 Having considered the representations received at Stage One, we proposed basing our draft recommendations for part of this area on the Labour Group's proposals, together with elements of the Borough Council's consultation scheme. In relation to the existing North Reddish and South Reddish wards, we noted that the proposals put forward by the Labour Group and the Borough Council were broadly similar. However, we considered that the proposed boundaries put forward by the Labour Group would be more easily identifiable and would result in a better reflection of community identity. Officers from the Committee visited the area. The Committee concluded that there was merit in the Marbury Estate being contained wholly within a single borough ward and that the railway line formed a strong southern boundary for the revised North Reddish ward. Based on these conclusions, coupled with the level of consensus received, we proposed adopting the Labour Group's revised North Reddish and South Reddish wards. We did, however, propose a minor amendment to the western boundary of the Labour Group's North Reddish ward in order to unite Stitch Lane with the area to the east of Wellington Road North, as proposed by the Borough Council.

55 Officers from the Committee visited the area. It was noted that the areas to be combined in Tame/Goyt ward are somewhat different in character, as well as being physically separated by the motorway. The M60 Motorway was identified as a strong boundary in this area, a view expressed by the Borough Council and under the consultation scheme. Therefore, when formulating our draft recommendations, we were not persuaded that the proposals put forward by the Labour Group were an adequate reflection of the statutory criteria in relation to the proposed Tame/Goyt ward. In addition, we considered that the Brinnington area, also part of the Labour Group's proposed Tame/Goyt ward, has stronger links with central Stockport, as is reflected in the proposals put forward by the Borough Council and under the consultation scheme. Having formed these conclusions and given our proposals in the Reddish area, we proposed basing our draft recommendations in the Brinnington area on the consultation scheme's proposed Tame Valley & Central ward.

56 We noted that there was a lack of agreement as to whether the revised wards should be named North Reddish and South Reddish or Reddish North and Reddish South. We decided to adopt the names of Reddish North and Reddish South for the purposes of our draft recommendations, but sought further views on this issue at Stage Three.

57 Under the draft recommendations, Reddish North, Reddish South and Tame Valley & Central wards would contain equal to the average, 1% more and equal to the average number of electors per councillor than the borough average respectively (1% more, equal to the average and 2% more by 2006).

58 At Stage Three, the Borough Council and Labour Group proposed that the boundary between Edgeley and Tame Valley & Central ward should follow King Street West to the motorway instead of Wood Street and Hollywood Way. The Borough Council stated that only 10 electors would be affected if this amendment were adopted. The Liberal Democrats put forward a similar amendment, but proposed that the boundary between Edgeley and Tame Valley & Central wards should run along the nearby railway line instead of Wood Street or King Street West. They argued that the area to the west of the railway line is predominantly industrial, and that the 'railway line is the clear boundary' and would ensure that electors would be linked with their community. A local resident also questioned why this boundary did not follow the railway line.

59 The Labour Group 'were very surprised' that the draft recommendations for the boundaries of Tame Valley & Central 'go deep into the heart of the Shaw Heath area', and stated that the proposed ward links areas with little 'natural cohesion'. However, it concluded that as a result of

this recommendation, its other proposals could not be implemented, and therefore did not reiterate its original proposals.

60 A local resident of Stockport queried why the draft recommendations split the Heaton Chapel community between Reddish South and South Heatons wards. A local resident of Bredbury proposed that Tame Valley & Central ward should be named Brinnington & Stockport Central ward in order to more accurately reflect the communities. A local resident of Gatley proposed that Tame Valley & Central ward should be named Brinnington & Central, which would provide 'a much clearer view of the area'.

61 Having carefully considered the representations received, we have decided to confirm the draft recommendations for Reddish North and Reddish South wards. We note the Stockport resident's comments regarding the Heaton Chapel area, which would be covered by both South Heatons and Reddish South wards. However, if the area was to be transferred from Reddish South and South Heatons wards back into North Heatons ward, then North Heatons ward would have an electoral variance of 24% above the borough average and Reddish South ward would have a variance of 20% below the borough average (by 2006). Therefore, we do not propose to amend this boundary, as it would adversely affect the electoral equality of both wards.

62 We note the Borough Council and Labour Group's proposal to move the boundary between Edgeley and Tame Valley & Central wards so that it would run along King Street West instead of Wood Street. We judge this to be a slight improvement on the boundary. However, we consider that the proposal of the Liberal Democrats and a local resident of Stockport to run the boundary along the railway line would create a stronger boundary. We have therefore decided to move away from our draft recommendation and modify the proposed boundary between Edgeley and Tame Valley & Central wards so that it runs along the railway line.

63 We note the concerns of the Labour Group regarding the proposed Tame Valley & Central ward. However, we also note it had determined to broadly support the draft recommendations and did not put forward any alternative proposals for this area at Stage Three. We did not adopt the Labour Group's proposal for this ward at Stage One, due to our concerns about the lack of clear boundaries and community links, and in light of our proposals for neighbouring wards. These concerns remain, and we do not propose to amend our recommendations in this area.

64 We note the proposals of proposals to change the name of Tame Valley & Central ward to Brinnington & Central or Brinnington & Stockport Central ward. We also note that the ward would contain the whole of Brinnington, and therefore we propose to change it to Brinnington & Central ward as we consider this to be a logical ward name, which would better reflect the ward's constituent communities.

65 Under our final recommendations, the number of electors per councillor in Brinnington & Central and Reddish North wards would be equal to the borough average (2% and 1% above in 2006) and 1% above the borough average in Reddish South ward (equal to the average in 2006). Our final recommendations are set out in Tables 1 and 2, and illustrated on Map 2 and in Appendix A.

Edgeley, Heaton Mersey and Heaton Moor wards

66 The existing wards of Edgeley, Heaton Mersey and Heaton Moor are situated in the north-west of the borough. Each ward is represented by three councillors. Under the current arrangements, Edgeley, Heaton Mersey and Heaton Moor wards contain 13% fewer, 13% more and 6% fewer electors per councillor than the borough average respectively (13% fewer, 12% more and 6% fewer by 2006).

67 At Stage One, Stockport Borough Council proposed a new Heaton North ward, which would be largely based on the existing Heaton Moor ward as well as parts of the existing Heaton Mersey, and South Reddish wards. The Borough Council proposed a new Heaton South ward, which would be broadly similar to the existing Heaton Mersey ward. Finally, it proposed a revised Edgeley ward, which would be broadly similar to the existing ward, subject to the inclusion of an area of Cale Green ward.

68 Conversely, Stockport Labour Group proposed broadly retaining the existing Edgeley ward, although it did propose including part of Cale Green ward. It proposed a new South Heaton ward, which would be largely based on the existing Heaton Mersey ward together with part of the existing South Reddish ward. Finally, the Labour Group proposed a new North Heaton ward which would be largely based on the existing Heaton Moor ward and parts of the existing South Reddish and Heaton Mersey wards.

69 The proposals for this area under the Borough Council's Stage One consultation scheme were identical in relation to the Labour Group's proposals for the Heaton Mersey and Heaton Moor ward areas, resulting in the creation of two new wards, North Heaton and South Heaton. Under the consultation scheme, however, there would be a marginally different southern boundary for the proposed South Heaton ward resulting in the use of the M60 Motorway as a boundary. Under the consultation scheme, a revised Edgeley ward would be formed, largely based on the existing ward and parts of the existing Cale Green and Heaton Mersey and wards. We received two further representations in relation to this area. Cheadle Constituency Conservative Association and Stockport Constituency Conservative Association both supported the proposals put forward by the Borough Council.

70 We proposed basing our draft recommendations for part of this area on the Labour Group's proposals, together with elements of the consultation scheme. However, while we considered that the proposals put forward by the Borough Council had merit, based on our conclusions in the Reddish area, we were unable to adopt them. Furthermore, based on our decision to adopt the proposed Tame Valley & Central ward, as put forward under the consultation scheme, we were unable to adopt the Labour Group's proposed Edgeley ward. We therefore proposed adopting the proposals for this area put forward under the consultation scheme. We did, however, propose a minor amendment to the boundary between the proposed Reddish South and South Heaton wards in order to unite Stitch Lane with the area to the east of Wellington Road North.

71 Under our draft recommendations, Edgeley, North Heaton and South Heaton wards would contain 4%, 3% and 1% more electors per councillor than the borough average respectively (3% more, 3% more and equal to the average by 2006).

72 In response to the draft recommendations, the Borough Council, Liberal Democrats and a resident of Stockport all proposed alternative boundaries between Edgeley and Tame Valley & Central wards, as detailed earlier. The Borough Council, Labour Group and Liberal Democrats also put forward a proposal to transfer a new housing development containing 37 electors situated in our proposed Edgeley ward, into Davenport ward, as there is only road access via Davenport ward. The Liberal Democrats stated that this amendment would keep 'communities intact' and ensure 'voters can easily identify with their ward'.

73 A local resident of Stockport questioned the draft recommendation to move the boundary between Edgeley and South Heaton wards from the River Mersey to the M60, which would transfer the Stockport Trading Estate to Edgeley ward and affect no electors. He stated that the area is 'separated from Edgeley ward by a cliff and the River Mersey which is in a gorge' and most of the 'traffic entering the estate is from the north'.

74 The Borough Council, Liberal Democrats and three local residents of Bredbury, Gatley and Marple Bridge all proposed that North Heaton and South Heaton wards be named Heaton

North and Heatons South, so that all ward names containing compass directions would be consistent and more easily identified with 'North' or 'South' after the place name. The Borough Council and a local resident of Bredbury proposed that Edgeley ward be named Edgeley & Cheadle Heath. The same local resident also proposed that North Heatons ward should be named Heaton Moor, and South Heatons ward should be renamed Heaton Mersey & Norris Bank ward in order to better reflect the constituent communities.

75 We have given careful consideration to the evidence and representations received, and we propose adopting the Liberal Democrats' proposal to use the railway line as the boundary between Edgeley and Tame Valley & Central wards, as described in the previous section, in order to create a stronger boundary. We note the Borough Council, Labour Group and Liberal Democrats' proposal to transfer a small new housing development from Edgeley ward into Davenport ward. We consider that this proposal would better reflect community identities, create a more logical boundary, provide better access for electors and would not affect the electoral variance. We have therefore decided to adopt it as part of our final recommendations and move the boundary between Davenport and Edgeley wards to the west of Swanbourne Gardens.

76 We note the Stockport resident's submission regarding the proposed boundary along the M60 between Edgeley and South Heatons wards. Having visited the area, we noted that no electors would be affected if the boundary were transferred back to the river, which is in a gorge and which creates a clear boundary. We therefore propose to retain the existing boundary between Edgeley and South Heatons ward so that it runs along the River Mersey, which has been adopted elsewhere.

77 A number of alternative ward names were put forward at Stage Three. We consider that the proposal to name North Heatons ward and South Heatons ward, Heatons North and Heatons South, to be sensible. We consider that placing 'North' or 'South' at the end of all of the relevant ward names would ensure consistency with other wards incorporating compass points. We have therefore decided to adopt this proposal in order to ensure consistency. We note the Borough Council and Bredbury resident's proposal to rename Edgeley ward, Edgeley & Cheadle Heath. We consider this name to be a better reflection of the constituent communities within the ward, and have decided to adopt it as part of our final recommendations. We do not propose to adopt the Bredbury resident's proposal to rename North Heatons ward, Heaton Moor, as we consider that Heatons North accurately reflects the ward. We also do not propose to amend the ward name of South Heatons to Heaton Mersey & Norris Bank, as we consider that Heatons South is the most appropriate name for the ward, which reflects its communities.

78 Under our final recommendations, the number of electors per councillor for Edgeley & Cheadle Heath, Heatons North and Heatons South wards, would be 3%, 3% and 1% above the borough average (3%, 3% and equal to, in 2006). Our final recommendations are set out in Tables 1 and 2, and illustrated on Map 2 and in Appendix A.

Cale Green, Davenport, Great Moor and Manor wards

79 The existing wards of Cale Green, Davenport, Great Moor and Manor are situated in the centre of the borough, and three councillors represent each ward. The existing Great Moor ward contains the whole of Offerton Estate parish. Under the current arrangements, Cale Green, Davenport, Great Moor and Manor wards contain 14% fewer, 14% fewer, 4% more and 12% fewer electors per councillor than the borough average respectively (11% fewer, 14% fewer, 3% more and 13% fewer by 2006).

80 At Stage One, Stockport Borough Council proposed a revised Cale Green ward which would be broadly based on the existing ward and parts of the existing Cheadle Hulme North and Davenport wards. It proposed a revised Manor ward, which would broadly comprise the existing ward and part of the existing Great Moor ward. The Borough Council proposed a new Ladybrook

ward which would be largely based on the existing Davenport ward and include parts of the existing West Bramhall and Cheadle Hulme South wards. The remaining parts of the existing Davenport ward would form parts of proposed Ladybrook Valley and Hazel Grove wards. Finally, the Borough Council proposed a new Offerton ward, which would be largely based on the existing Great Moor ward, part of the existing Hazel Grove ward and the whole of Offerton Estate parish currently situated in Great Moor ward. The remaining part of the existing Great Moor ward would form part of a revised Hazel Grove ward.

81 Stockport Labour Group proposed a new Shaw Heath & Heaviley ward, which would be largely based on the existing Cale Green ward and parts of the existing Davenport ward and Manor wards. The remaining part of the existing Cale Green ward would form part of a new Cheadle East ward. The remaining part of the existing Manor ward would form part of a new South Central ward, together with part of the existing Brinnington and South Reddish wards, and the small areas surrounding Curzon Green and Milford Green from the existing Great Moor ward. The Labour Group also proposed a new Mile End ward, which would be largely based on the existing Davenport ward, together with an area of the existing Great Moor ward. The remaining part of the existing Davenport ward would form part of a new Norbury ward. Finally, the Labour Group proposed a new Offerton ward, which would be broadly based on the existing Great Moor ward, less the area bounded by Nangreave Road and Dialstone Lane. The new ward would also contain the whole of Offerton Estate parish.

82 Under the Borough Council's Stage One consultation scheme, a revised Davenport ward would be created based largely on the existing Cale Green ward, and would contain part of the existing Davenport ward. The remaining part of the existing Davenport ward would be combined with part of the existing Great Moor ward, part of the existing Hazel Grove ward and part of the existing East Bramhall ward to form a new Bramhall Moor ward. The majority of the remaining part of the existing Great Moor ward would be combined with the Shearwater Road area from the existing Hazel Grove ward to form a new Offerton ward. This new ward would also contain the whole of Offerton Estate parish. Under the consultation scheme, the existing Manor ward would be broadly retained, together with part of the existing Brinnington and Great Moor wards.

83 We received two further representations in relation to this area. Cheadle Constituency Conservative Association and Stockport Constituency Conservative Association both supported the proposals put forward by the Borough Council.

84 Having considered the representations received at Stage One, we proposed basing our draft recommendations for this area on the proposals submitted under the consultation scheme. We noted that, while all three schemes were fundamentally different in this area, they did all agree on the creation of a new Offerton ward containing the area surrounding Shearwater Road from the existing Hazel Grove ward and the whole of Offerton Estate Parish Council. However, the proposals under the consultation scheme facilitated our proposals to the north and south. In addition, officers from the Committee who visited the area identified that the proposals under the consultation scheme used strong boundaries, such as Nangreave Road and Lowfield Road. In relation to the proposed Bramhall Moor ward, we were initially concerned that it united areas which appeared to be separated by the Woods Moor area. However, officers from the Committee visited the area and identified the areas surrounding Lynchurst Avenue and Woodland Road as being well linked by Bramhall Moor Lane and somewhat similar in character. Therefore, on balance, we were content that the identities and interests of the local communities would not be adversely affected if these two areas were to form part of the same borough ward.

85 Under our draft recommendations, Bramhall Moor, Davenport, Manor and Offerton wards would contain 3% fewer, 1% fewer, 2% more and equal to the average number of electors per councillor than the borough average respectively (3% fewer, 1% more, 1% more and 1% fewer by 2006). Offerton ward would contain the entire Offerton Estate parish.

86 In response to the draft recommendations, the Borough Council, Liberal Democrats, and Councillor J Humphreys put forward identical proposals to transfer the area around Offerton High School from Manor ward into Offerton ward. They proposed that the boundary follow the backs of the houses between Dovedale Road and Kedleston Green and Curzon Green, so that Dovedale Road, The Fairway, Radford Close, Hillside Road, Monsal Avenue, St Elmo Avenue and the schools would be within Offerton ward, and Woodlands Court would be in Manor ward. The Liberal Democrats stated that this proposal would keep 'distinctive communities intact', and Councillor Humphreys noted that Fairway primary school should be in Offerton ward. The Liberal Democrats also stated that the area north of Hillcrest Road should be included in Offerton ward, so that the boundary would continue north along Dialstone Lane and east along Hempshaw Lane. They stated that Hillcrest Road 'is essentially an estate road with domestic housing of comparable style on both sides' and Dialstone Lane and Hempshaw Lane 'form clear community boundaries'.

87 The Liberal Democrats proposed that the area north of Mile End Lane and south of Nangreave Road be transferred from Offerton ward into Manor ward, as the area would be 'virtually detached from the new Offerton ward' under the draft recommendations. They stated this proposal would better reflect community identity, and improve 'numerical consistency'. Councillor Humphreys stated that the draft recommendations for the Heaviley and Mile End area would result in the 'area south of Nangreave Road isolated as a narrow strip of "Offerton", when the shops they use are the Great Moor shops' or the Nangreave Road shops. As part of its proposals for an alternative Offerton ward (detailed below), Stockport NHS Primary Care Trust recommended the transfer of the Mile End area into Manor ward in order to compensate for the transfer of another area into its proposed Offerton ward. The Borough Council noted that there was 'significant debate' about the draft recommendations for the Mile End area, but did not put forward any proposals. The Labour Group noted the Council's recommendation to transfer the area around Offerton High School and the Council's concerns regarding the Mile End area. However, the Group considered that 'these proposals make these wards numerically too different and don't offer any proposals to ameliorate that problem'.

88 Stockport NHS Primary Care Trust put forward a proposal for an alternative Offerton ward based on the its Offerton Neighbourhood which was 'set after careful analysis of community networks'. The new Offerton ward would be based broadly on Offerton and Manor wards and the northern part of South Marple ward. It suggested that, if necessary, the Mile End area could be transferred from Offerton ward into Manor ward, in order to balance the electoral equality.

89 The Borough Council, Labour Group and Liberal Democrats proposed that a new development in Edgeley ward should be included in Davenport ward, as described earlier. The Liberal Democrats and a local resident of Stockport proposed that the boundary between Bramhall Moor and Davenport wards should run along Kennerley Road instead of behind the houses to the north of the road. The Liberal Democrats stated that Kennerley Road would create 'a better-defined boundary' and would keep communities together. The local resident of Stockport noted that 'Kennerley Road itself forms a very distinct boundary between Cale Green to the north and Davenport Park to the south'.

90 Councillor Humphreys expressed concern regarding the draft recommendation to include Higher Hillgate and Charles Street in Manor ward. She stated that this area of 'tiny terraced houses and some modern flats alongside commercial and industrial premises' is 'NOT connected to the Brookfield Avenue estate'. She contended that this area 'would get a better deal if linked with other similar areas, which would allow it to qualify for regeneration or social grants'.

91 The Borough Council proposed that Davenport ward should be renamed Cale Green ward. The Liberal Democrats also proposed that the ward name Davenport be changed to Cale Green ward, and stated that the ward now contained Cale Green and only part of Davenport. A local resident of Gatley noted that there is 'no right answer' as to the most suitable name for

Davenport ward, but concluded that Davenport & Cale Green ward would be the 'best response'. A local resident of Bredbury proposed Davenport & Adswood ward as a 'more appropriate' name for Davenport ward and stated that Adswood has 'a distinct identity of its own'. He also put forward Bramhall Moor & Stepping Hill ward as 'a suitable alternative' to the ward name Bramhall Moor. A Gatley resident proposed that Bramhall Moor ward should be renamed Woodsmoor ward and stated that this name would more clearly define the ward. The Liberal Democrats proposed that Bramhall Moor ward be renamed Stepping Hill ward as this is 'a locally recognised local community area and name'. In place of Manor ward, a local resident of Bredbury put forward Offerton North ward as the 'community of Offerton' extends 'as far north-west as Hempshaw Lane'. Finally, the local resident proposed Offerton South as an alternative ward name for Offerton ward, to avoid confusion amongst the electorate. He noted that the latter new ward name would be particularly appropriate if Manor ward were to be renamed Offerton North ward.

92 The representations received during Stage Three have been carefully considered. We note that the Borough Council, Liberal Democrats, and Councillor Humphreys proposed that the area around Offerton High School be transferred from Manor ward into Offerton ward in order to better reflect communities. We also note that the Liberal Democrats proposed that the area north of Hillcrest Road should also be transferred into Offerton ward, and the Mile End area south of Nangreave Road should be transferred from Offerton ward into Manor ward to reflect community identity and balance the electorate numbers. We note that Stockport NHS Primary Health Care Trust stated that the Mile End area could be transferred into Manor ward. We further note the concerns of the Borough Council over the debate surrounding proposals for Mile End and Councillor Humphreys' concerns regarding the community identity of the Nangreave Road and Mile End area. We considered that there is a case to transfer the two areas in question between Manor and Offerton wards. Having visited the area, we note that the area to the south-west of Offerton High School appears to look southwards in terms of community identity, and that the housing on either side of the disputed draft boundaries of Nangreave Road and Hillcrest Road is of a similar type. Additionally, we consider it sensible and logical for Offerton High School to be within Offerton ward.

93 We therefore consider that the boundary between Manor and Offerton wards should be amended to follow the Liberal Democrats' proposals, so that the area of Offerton ward south of Nangreave Road and north of Mile End Lane would be transferred into Manor ward. Where Mile End Lane meets Dialstone Lane, the boundary would run north as far as Hempshaw Lane, so that the area south of Hempshaw Lane and north of Hillcrest Road would be transferred into Offerton ward. Although we noted in our draft recommendations that Nangreave Road provided a strong boundary, in the light of representations regarding the community identity on either side of this road, we now consider that Dialstone Lane would provide a more appropriate boundary, which would better reflect community identity. We also propose to adopt the proposal of the Borough Council, Liberal Democrats, and Councillor Humphreys, to transfer Dovedale Road, Monsal Avenue, The Fairway, Radford Close, St Elmo Avenue and Hillside Road, as well as part of Marple Road and the schools, from Manor ward into Offerton ward. In the light of representations, we consider that this boundary would better reflect community identity. However, we propose a slight amendment, that numbers 43 to 49 (inclusive) along the north-eastern part of Marple Road be transferred to Offerton ward. We note the concerns expressed by the Labour Group regarding the possible transfer of the Mile End area from Offerton ward into Manor ward. However, we consider that the numbers of electorate involved would not be too numerically different, and would result in variances (by 2006) of just 1% below the borough average for Offerton ward and 1% above the borough average for Manor ward. We consider that this proposal would provide wards which would better reflect community identities, and would not adversely affect electoral equality, as approximately the same number of electors would be transferred between the two wards.

94 We note the proposal of Stockport NHS Primary Care Trust for a new Offerton ward, based on community analysis. However, we also note that this ward would contain approximately

15,662 electors by 2006, which would result in an electoral variance of approximately 46% over the borough average. We note that if the 1,575 (by 2006) electors in the Mile End area were to be transferred into Manor ward in order to achieve improved electoral equality, the electoral variance would still be unacceptable. We further note that the new Offerton ward would have a considerable impact on neighbouring wards, and on the basis of this and the unacceptable electoral variances, we do not propose to adopt this proposal.

95 We note the Borough Council, Labour Group and Liberal Democrats' proposal referred to earlier, to include a small new development in Davenport ward rather than Edgeley ward. We consider this proposal to be reasonable, as it would better reflect community identities, create a more logical boundary, and better access for electors, therefore we propose to adopt it.

96 We note the proposal of the Liberal Democrats and a Stockport resident, that the boundary between Bramhall Moor and Davenport wards should run along Kennerley Road. We propose to adopt this proposal as we consider that it would better reflect community identities and provide a stronger boundary than under the draft recommendations.

97 We note the concerns of Councillor Humphreys regarding the Higher Hillgate and Charles Street area. However, we consider St Mary's Way to be a clear boundary and that her argument concerning eligibility to claim grants is not a relevant consideration in determining the most suitable electoral arrangements. Therefore, we do not propose to amend the boundary to transfer the area out of Manor ward.

98 A considerable number of alternative ward names were put forward. We propose to amend the name of Davenport ward to Davenport & Cale Green in order to better reflect the constituent communities. We do not propose to alter the name of Bramhall Moor ward, as we are not persuaded that the alternative ward names put forward would more accurately reflect the make-up of the ward. We do not propose to amend the name of Manor ward to Offerton North or South as, our amendments to the ward's boundaries mean that Manor ward would no longer comprise a significant part of Offerton. Nor do we propose to amend the name of Offerton ward to Offerton South, as we do not propose to change Manor ward to Offerton North.

99 Under our final recommendations, the number of electors per councillor for Bramhall Moor, Davenport, Manor and Offerton wards, would be 4% below, equal to, 2% above and equal to the borough average (4% below, 2% above, 1% above and 1% below in 2006). Offerton ward would contain Offerton Estate parish. Our final recommendations are set out in Tables 1 and 2, and illustrated on Map 2 and in Appendix A.

Cheadle, Cheadle Hulme North, Cheadle Hulme South and Heald Green wards

100 The existing wards of Cheadle, Cheadle Hulme North, Cheadle Hulme South and Heald Green are situated in the south-west of the borough. Each ward is represented by three councillors. Under the current arrangements, Cheadle, Cheadle Hulme North, Cheadle Hulme South and Heald Green wards contain 10% more, 10% more, 5% more and 4% fewer electors per councillor than the borough average respectively (10% more, 9% more, 4% more and 2% fewer by 2006).

101 At Stage One, Stockport Borough Council proposed a new Cheadle & Gatley ward, which would be broadly based on the existing Cheadle ward. It proposed broadly retaining the existing Heald Green ward, subject to an amendment to the eastern boundary resulting in the use of Kingsway (A34) as a boundary and the inclusion of the area surrounding The Tarns from the existing Cheadle ward. The Borough Council proposed a revised Cheadle Hulme North ward, which would broadly comprise the existing ward, together with part of the existing Cheadle ward. Finally, the Borough Council proposed a revised Cheadle Hulme South ward which would

be largely based on the existing ward, subject to the exclusion of the area surrounding Ramillies Avenue which would form part of the new Ladybrook ward, and the inclusion of part of the existing West Bramhall ward, the area broadly to the west of Moss Lane.

102 Alternative proposals were put forward by Stockport Labour Group for a new Cheadle West ward, which would broadly comprise the existing Cheadle ward and part of the existing Cheadle Hulme North ward. Part of the remainder of the existing Cheadle ward would form part of a new Cheadle East ward, together with the area to the west of the railway line from the existing Cale Green ward and the majority of the existing Cheadle Hulme North ward. The remaining part of the existing Cheadle Hulme North ward would form part of a new Cheadle Hulme ward, together with part of the existing Cheadle Hulme South ward and part of the existing Heald Green ward. The remaining parts of the existing Cheadle Hulme South ward would form part of new North Bramhall, South Bramhall and Heald Green wards. Finally, the Labour Group proposed broadly retaining the existing Heald Green ward, subject to an amendment to the eastern boundary in order that the A34 be used as a boundary, together with the inclusion of the area surrounding The Tarns from the existing Cheadle ward.

103 Under the Borough Council's Stage One consultation scheme, a new Cheadle & Gatley ward would be created. This ward would be largely based on the existing Cheadle ward, less the area surrounding the northern part of Styal Road. The new ward would include part of the existing Cheadle Hulme North ward, the area surrounding the northern part of Bruntwood Lane. Under the consultation scheme, a revised Cheadle Hulme North ward would be created, largely based on the existing ward, less the area surrounding the northern part of Bruntwood Lane, and part of the existing Cheadle ward. The consultation scheme also provided for a revised Cheadle Hulme South ward, which would again be largely based on the existing ward, together with part of the existing Cheadle Hulme North ward, and a small area from the existing Heald Green ward. Under the consultation scheme, the existing Heald Green ward would be broadly retained, subject to the inclusion of the area surrounding the northern part of Styal Road from the existing Cheadle ward. The remaining part of the existing Cheadle Hulme South ward would form part of a new Bramhall South ward.

104 We received two further representations in relation to this area. Cheadle Constituency Conservative Association and Stockport Constituency Conservative Association both supported the proposals put forward by the Borough Council.

105 Having considered the representations received at Stage One, we proposed basing our draft recommendations for this area on the consultation scheme proposals. We noted that there was limited consensus between the three schemes in this area, with the exception of the use of the A34 as an eastern boundary for a revised Heald Green ward, with which we concurred. Officers from the Committee having visited the area, we identified some areas where we considered that the proposals submitted under the consultation scheme provided for a better reflection of community identity as well as facilitating our proposals in the surrounding wards. We were not persuaded by elements of the Borough Council's proposals, particularly in relation to the northern boundary of its revised Cheadle Hulme South ward. Micker Brook is an identifiable boundary and we were of the view that the area surrounding Station Road would be better served in a ward with the area to its south rather than to its north. This view was reflected in the Labour Group's proposals, while the proposals put forward by the Borough Council breached Micker Brook and in our view, did not utilise an identifiable boundary.

106 While we broadly concurred with the Borough Council's view that the existing boundary between Cheadle Hulme North and Cheadle Hulme South wards (Turves Road) forms an identifiable boundary, officers from the Committee visited the area and noted that the roads to the north-west are all accessed from Turves Road and therefore would be better served in the same borough ward. Again, this was reflected in the proposals submitted by the Labour Group. Finally, we were not persuaded that either of the proposed northern boundaries for the revised Heald Green ward put forward by the Borough Council or the Labour Group were easily

identifiable. We agreed with the consultation scheme proposal that the boundary should be extended northwards to incorporate more of the Styal Road area.

107 Therefore, on balance, and bearing in mind our conclusions elsewhere in the borough, we proposed adopting the Borough Council's consultation scheme proposals as part of our draft recommendations. However, we proposed a minor amendment to the boundary between the proposed Bramhall South and Cheadle Hulme South wards in order for the stream to the rear of properties 2-28 Yew Tree Park Road to be used as a boundary.

108 Under our draft recommendations, Cheadle & Gatley, Cheadle Hulme North, Cheadle Hulme South and Heald Green wards would contain 3% more, 2% fewer, 2% fewer and equal to the average number of electors per councillor than the borough average respectively (2% more, 3% fewer, 1% fewer and equal to the average by 2006).

109 At Stage Three, we received 101 representations opposed to the draft recommendation to transfer the Styal Road area of Gatley into Heald Green ward. Heald Green and Long Lane Ratepayers' Association (the Ratepayers' Association) stated that the electorate of the Styal Road area 'do not regard themselves as part of the Heald Green community but as a part of the Gatley community'. Therefore the draft recommendations would 'weaken the community bonds in both areas' and the 'boundary is indistinguishable on either side of Styal Road'. In order to compensate for the transfer of this area, the Ratepayers' Association proposed that the area south of Wasdale Drive and the neighbouring footpath, north of Oakdale Drive and west of St Ann's Road North should be transferred from Cheadle & Gatley ward into Heald Green ward. It stated that 'this area does not have natural affinity for Gatley Village or for Cheadle' although residents 'use Heald Green facilities above any other' and the area used to be part of Heald Green ward. Therefore the Ratepayers' Association proposed that the boundary between Cheadle & Gatley ward and Heald Green ward should follow the existing boundary from the western perimeter of the borough to the railway line. Then the boundary should follow the railway line north to the public footpath and east along the draft recommendations boundary, then cross between numbers 44 and 46 Grasmere Road, between the backs of the houses on Crummock Road and Wasdale Drive, before returning to the public footpath and the existing boundary. Councillors Burns, S.Humphreys and Whitehead all supported these proposals. Two respondents from Gatley also sent us copies of a leaflet distributed by The Heald Green and Long Lane Ratepayers' Association notifying local residents of the draft recommendation to amend the boundary between Gatley and Heald Green. This leaflet stated that the Styal Road area would be 'taken over by Heald Green', the administrative address of the area would become Heald Green, estate agents will advertise the area as being in Heald Green and the electors will be in a 'remote outpost of Heald Green'.

110 As a result of this leaflet we received 97 representations from local residents, including a petition with 189 signatures, all stating that they regard the Styal Road area as part of the Gatley community and that the area has no links with Heald Green. The local residents stated that they saw no reason for the proposed boundary change, and identified themselves as belonging to the Gatley community using Gatley amenities, to which they have much better access.

111 The Liberal Democrats proposed that the existing boundary along Schools Hill between Cheadle & Gatley and Cheadle Hulme North wards should be retained in order to improve electoral equality 'with no detriment to community interests'. Councillor Carter, member for Cheadle, also expressed concern regarding the draft recommendation for the same boundary and 'the swap of the area around the Golf Course' in Cheadle (which would contain 121 electors by 2006) with Bruntwood Park and the nearby roads in Cheadle Hulme North ward. He stated the reinstatement 'of the existing arrangement would more or less equalise the numbers' and 'it would seem sensible to leave that particular arrangement as it is for the sake of a more equitable ration of the numbers'. Councillor Carter and a local resident of Stockport also commented that retaining the existing boundary along Schools Hill would result in the electorate of the two wards being very close to the borough average.

112 The Liberal Democrats and a local resident of Stockport expressed concern regarding the draft recommendation to run the boundary between Cheadle Hulme South and Heald Green wards along the A34 and thus transfer electors to the east of the railway line and west of the A34 from Cheadle Hulme South ward to Heald Green ward. The Liberal Democrats and the Stockport resident stated that the electors in question are part of the community in the south of Cheadle Hulme South ward, use the local facilities there and have no links with Heald Green ward. The Liberal Democrats proposed that the Stockport/Crew railway line should be retained as the boundary between Cheadle Hulme South and Heald Green wards and the 34 electors (by 2006) should be transferred into Cheadle Hulme South ward. They stated that this would ensure communities are kept intact and 'voters can easily identify with their ward'.

113 A local resident of Stockport questioned the draft recommendation to move part of the centre of Cheadle into Cheadle Hulme North ward, and stated that the electors in this area are part of the Cheadle community. The same resident commented on the recommendation to amend the boundary between Cheadle & Gatley and Cheadle Hulme North wards so that the Cheadle Diamond Jubilee Recreation Ground would be transferred into Cheadle Hulme North ward. He stated that the current boundary runs from Stockport Road, south along Park Road and no electors appear to have been transferred under the draft recommendations.

114 The Borough Council put forward Cheadle East as an alternative ward name for Cheadle Hulme North and, along with the Liberal Democrats, also put forward Cheadle West & Gatley as a new ward name for Cheadle & Gatley. The Borough Council proposed Cheadle Hulme as an alternative ward name for Cheadle Hulme South. The Liberal Democrats proposed Cheadle Hulme North & Cheadle East as 'a more suitable name' for Cheadle Hulme North ward, which they stated would be a 'more geographically accurate description' of the ward. A local resident of Bredbury stated that he agreed with the proposed names in the draft recommendations for the three Cheadle wards and Heald Green ward, which he asserted, broadly reflected the constituent communities.

115 The representations received during Stage Three have been carefully considered. We note the concerns put forward in the 101 representations received regarding our draft recommendations for the boundary in the Styal Road area between Cheadle & Gatley and Heald Green wards. We also note that the representations all opposed our draft recommendation for the boundary in the Styal Road area, and broadly proposed that the existing boundary be retained. We further note that the representations stated that the Styal Road electors do not consider themselves to be part of the Heald Green community, but identify with the Gatley community.

116 We have serious concerns regarding the misleading contents of the leaflet distributed by The Heald Green and Long Lane Ratepayers' Association. We wish to make it clear that we do not agree with a number of the claims made in the Ratepayers' Association's leaflet. The leaflet states that the area will be 'taken over by Heald Green', that the administrative address will become Heald Green, and that estate agents will advertise it as such. The leaflet does not make it clear the purpose behind the review of ward boundaries and the true implications of any amendments. We consider the leaflet to be inaccurate and unbalanced. There is no reason to believe that any changes to ward boundaries would necessarily have the impact that the leaflet implies.

117 Despite this, having visited the area, we concur with the view that the Styal Road area is part of the Gatley community, and therefore consider that the area west of the railway line, south of 95 and 98 Styal Road and north of Yew Tree Grove should be transferred from Heald Green ward into Cheadle & Gatley ward. However, we propose to amend the boundary between the two wards so that it would run north-west of Oakdale Drive and along the southern boundary of Gatley Golf Course so that the entire Golf Course would be in Cheadle & Gatley ward. The boundary would then run north along the western edge of the golf course to the footpath at Yew

Tree Grove, run south behind numbers four and two Yew Tree Grove (which are the only two houses in the south of Yew Tree Grove facing onto the Grove) and then south along Styal Road and west along the existing boundary between numbers 158 and 160. We consider that this would create a more clearly defined boundary, which would better reflect community identity. We do not propose to adopt the proposal of Heald Green and Long Lane Ratepayers' Association and Councillors Burns, S.Humphreys and Whitehead, to transfer the area south of Wasdale Drive from Cheadle & Gatley ward into Heald Green ward. We note that the Ratepayers' Association acknowledged that the area does not have a particular affinity to Heald Green or to Gatley. We therefore consider that adopting this amendment would not create a stronger boundary, and could potentially result in the same community identity issues as were raised by the draft recommendations for the Styal Road area proposal detailed above. In this area, we propose to retain the existing boundary between Grasmere Road and Oakdale Drive and along St Ann's Road North.

118 We note the concerns of the Liberal Democrats, Councillor Carter and a Stockport resident regarding the draft recommendation to amend the boundary between Cheadle & Gatley ward and Cheadle Hulme North and Cheadle Hulme South wards. We propose to confirm the draft recommendations to transfer the boundary between Cheadle & Gatley ward and Cheadle Hulme South ward from Schools Hill, to the north of Cheadle RC Junior School. We consider that this boundary better reflects community identity by keeping the immediate areas either side of Schools Hill within the same ward. However, we note the concerns of Councillor Carter relating to the 121 electors (by 2006) resident in the area west of the Golf Course and Old Wool Lane, north of Cheadle Road and south of Micker Brook, and consider that it should be in the same ward as the area south of Schools Hill. Therefore, although we identified Micker Brook as a strong boundary in our draft recommendations, in light of representations received, we now judge in the light of evidence received that the existing boundary to the east of the golf course should be retained and the area should be transferred from Cheadle Hulme North ward into Cheadle & Gatley ward in order to better reflect community identities.

119 We note the proposal by the Liberal Democrats and a Stockport resident to run the southerly boundary between Cheadle Hulme South and Heald Green wards along the railway line; the existing boundary, instead of the A34. We concur with the Liberal Democrats and the local resident that the draft boundary would result in the community to the east of the railway line being isolated from the remainder of the ward, and that community identity would be better served if the boundary were to be retained along the railway line. Therefore, we propose to amend the boundary between Cheadle Hulme South and Heald Green wards, so that it follows the railway line south from where it meets the A34, to the borough boundary.

120 We note the Stockport resident's comment regarding the Diamond Jubilee Recreation Ground on the boundary between Cheadle & Gatley and Cheadle Hulme North wards. Having visited the area, we consider that Park Road creates a strong boundary. We have therefore decided to use Park Road as the boundary between Cheadle & Gatley and Cheadle Hulme North wards. We also propose that the boundary should run west along Stockport Road then south round the buildings to the north-west of the Recreation Ground, before rejoining Stockport Road. We note the same local resident's concern regarding the draft recommendation to transfer the centre of Cheadle into Cheadle Hulme North ward. However, no alternative proposals were submitted at Stage Three. We have therefore decided to confirm our draft recommendation for this area.

121 We note the Bredbury resident's support for the proposed ward names in this area. The Borough Council submitted the ward name Cheadle East in place of Cheadle Hulme North. We do not propose to adopt this ward name as we consider that the name Cheadle Hulme North reflects the ward. The Liberal Democrats also proposed Cheadle Hulme North & Cheadle East as a new name for Cheadle Hulme North ward. However, for similar reasons, we do not propose to adopt this name. The Borough Council also put forward Cheadle Hulme as an alternative name for Cheadle Hulme South. However, as Cheadle Hulme North ward is to retain its name,

we consider that the name Cheadle Hulme South should also be retained. The Borough Council and Liberal Democrats proposed Cheadle West & Gatley as an alternative ward name for Cheadle & Gatley ward. We do not propose to adopt this name as we consider that Cheadle & Gatley is the most appropriate name to describe the ward.

122 Under our final recommendations, Cheadle & Gatley, Cheadle Hulme North, Cheadle Hulme South and Heald Green wards would contain 8% above, 3% below, 2% below and 4% below the number of electors per councillor than the borough average respectively (8% more, 4% fewer, 1% fewer and 5% fewer than the average by 2006). Our final recommendations are set out in Tables 1 and 2, and illustrated on Map 2 and in Appendix A.

East Bramhall and West Bramhall wards

123 The existing wards of East Bramhall and West Bramhall are situated in the south of the borough. Both wards are represented by three councillors. Under the current arrangements, East Bramhall and West Bramhall wards contain 21% and 9% more electors per councillor than the borough average respectively (20% and 12% more by 2006).

124 At Stage One, Stockport Borough Council proposed radical changes in this area. It proposed a new Bramhall ward, which would be centred on Bramhall Village and would comprise the majority of the existing West Bramhall ward and part of the existing East Bramhall ward. The remaining part of the existing East Bramhall ward would be combined with part of the existing Davenport ward and part of the existing Hazel Grove ward to form a new Ladybrook Valley ward. The remaining part of the existing West Bramhall ward would form part of a revised Cheadle Hulme South ward.

125 Stockport Labour Group proposed a new South Bramhall ward, which would comprise part of the existing West Bramhall ward, and part of the existing Cheadle Hulme South ward. The Labour Group proposed a new North Bramhall ward, which would comprise the remaining part of the existing West Bramhall ward, part of the existing Cheadle Hulme South ward and part of the existing East Bramhall ward. The remaining part of the existing East Bramhall ward would form part of a new Norbury ward, together with parts of the existing Davenport and Hazel Grove wards.

126 Under the Borough Council's Stage One consultation scheme, part of the existing East Bramhall ward would form part of a new Bramhall Moor ward. Part of the existing East Bramhall ward would be combined with part of the existing West Bramhall ward, to form a new Bramhall North ward. A further part of East Bramhall ward would be combined with the remainder of the existing West Bramhall ward, together with part of the existing Cheadle Hulme South ward, to form a new Bramhall South ward. The remaining part of the existing East Bramhall ward would form part of a revised Hazel Grove ward.

127 We received two further representations in relation to this area. Cheadle Constituency Conservative Association and Stockport Constituency Conservative Association both supported the proposals put forward by the Borough Council.

128 Having considered the representations received at Stage One, we proposed to base our draft recommendations for this area on the proposals submitted under the Borough Council's Stage One consultation scheme, and incorporate elements of the Labour Group's proposals. We noted that the proposals submitted by the Borough Council were significantly different from those put forward by the Labour Group, and resulted in the Bramhall area being divided among three new borough wards and the breaching of a number of railway lines which in our view formed strong boundaries. Officers from the Committee visited the area and noted that the railway lines which are breached under the Borough Council's proposals are strong boundaries, with limited crossing points. In addition, we were not persuaded that the division of the Bramhall area among three new borough wards would be in the best interests of the local community.

While Bramhall Lane/Bramhall Lane South is a major road, in our view, it serves as more of a focus for, than a division between, communities, with the areas either side being similar in character.

129 Based on these conclusions, we were of the view that the proposals submitted by the Labour Group had merit. However, in light of our proposals to the north and west, we were unable to wholly facilitate the Labour Group's proposals. We therefore proposed adopting the proposals submitted under the consultation scheme for this area. However, we proposed an amendment based on the Labour Group's proposals. We concurred with the view expressed by the Labour Group that the railway line to the north of Adelaide Road forms an identifiable boundary and the area surrounding Ladythorn Road would be better served with the areas to its north. We therefore proposed modifying the boundary between the proposed Bramhall North and Bramhall South wards in order to use the railway line as a boundary.

130 Under our draft recommendations, Bramhall North and Bramhall South wards would contain 1% more and 6% fewer electors per councillor than the borough average respectively (3% more and 6% fewer by 2006).

131 At Stage Three, a resident of Bredbury stated that he agreed with the proposed name of Bramhall North ward, 'which accurately reflects the community covered by the proposed ward'. He also broadly agreed with the ward name Bramhall South 'which generally reflects the community covered by the proposed ward'. However, he also noted that 'purists' might prefer the name of Bramhall South & Woodford ward to reflect the inclusion of the village of Woodford within the ward.

132 We note the broad support of the Bredbury resident for the proposed wards names, which we consider to reflect the communities within the wards. We also note his proposal to rename Bramhall South ward, as Bramhall South & Woodford, however we do not propose to adopt this name as we consider that Bramhall South accurately describes the ward. We received no other representations regarding our draft recommendations for this area, and have decided to confirm them as final.

133 Under our final recommendations, Bramhall North and Bramhall South wards would contain 1% more and 6% fewer electors per councillor than the borough average respectively (3% more and 6% fewer by 2006). Our final recommendations are set out in Tables 1 and 2, and illustrated on Map 2 and in Appendix A.

Bredbury and Romiley wards

134 The existing wards of Bredbury and Romiley are situated in the north of the borough and both are represented by three councillors. Under the current arrangements, Bredbury and Romiley wards contain 11% and 3% more electors per councillor than the borough average respectively (10% and 3% more by 2006).

135 At Stage One, Stockport Borough Council proposed broadly retaining the existing Bredbury ward, subject to an amendment to the western boundary in order for the M60 to be used as a boundary, and the transfer of the area surrounding Bank Road into Romiley ward. The Borough Council also proposed broadly retaining the existing Romiley ward, together with the area surrounding Bank Road from the existing Bredbury ward. The remaining part of Romiley ward would form part of a revised North Marple ward.

136 Stockport Labour Group proposed a new Tame/Goyt ward, which would comprise part of the existing Bredbury ward. The remaining part of the existing Bredbury ward would be combined with the Bredbury Green area of the existing Romiley ward to form a new Bredbury Green ward. Part of the existing Romiley ward would be transferred into a new Tame/Goyt ward. The remaining part of the existing Romiley ward would be combined with the settlement of

Marple Bridge from the existing North Marple ward and the settlement of Mellor from the existing South Marple ward to form a new Marple Bridge & Etherow ward. It was argued that the settlements to be combined in this new ward 'are linked through communication routes'.

137 Under the Borough Council's Stage One consultation scheme, a revised Bredbury ward would be created, largely based on the existing ward, less the Woodley area, together with the Bredbury Green area from the existing Romiley ward. The remainder of the existing Bredbury ward, the Woodley area, would be combined with the remainder of the existing Romiley ward (less the settlement of Compstall) to form a revised Romiley ward. The settlement of Compstall would form part of a new Marple Rural ward.

138 We received two further representations in relation to this area. Cheadle Constituency Conservative Association and Stockport Constituency Conservative Association both supported the proposals put forward by the Borough Council.

139 Having considered the representations received at Stage One, we proposed basing our draft recommendations for this area on the Borough Council's proposals. We noted that all three schemes agreed that the River Goyt should be used as a boundary in this area and we concurred with this view. However, we were not persuaded that the Labour Group's proposed Tame/Goyt ward provided for an adequate reflection of the statutory criteria in terms of reflecting community identity. We were of the view that the proposals for this area submitted by the Borough Council and under the consultation scheme both had merit. Officers from the Committee visited the area and noted that there are good communication links between the settlements of Bredbury and Romiley (Stockport Road/ Barrack Hill) and Bredbury and Woodley (Stockport Road/Hyde Road). However, we were not persuaded that the proposals under the consultation scheme for the more rural, eastern part of the borough provided for the best reflection of the statutory criteria. Consequently, we proposed to base our proposals for the revised Bredbury and Romiley wards on the Borough Council's proposals.

140 Under our draft recommendations, Bredbury and Romiley wards would contain 3% and 5% more electors per councillor than the borough average respectively (3% and 5% more by 2006).

141 At Stage Three, a Bredbury resident put forward alternative Bredbury and Romiley wards. He stated that his proposals would 'more accurately reflect the local communities in the area, and better meet the statutory criteria' than the draft recommendations. He proposed to amend the boundary between the two wards so that it would run north-south instead of east-west, and to retain the remaining outer boundaries of the wards. He stated that the 'community of Bredbury is divided in two by the boundary between Bredbury ward and Romiley ward' and the draft recommendations 'transfer a further part of the community of Bredbury from Bredbury ward to Romiley ward'. He maintained that, under the draft recommendations almost half of Bredbury electors would be in Romiley ward, which would increase the current confusion amongst electors, as to which councillor represents them. He further stated that, under the draft recommendations, the majority of Bredbury Shopping Centre would be in Romiley ward, as well as Bredbury Roman Catholic Church, Bredbury Library, Bredbury Post Office and Bredbury Information and Advice Centre. He noted that the Borough Council's consultation scheme, 'sought to rectify' the current division of Bredbury by proposing a wholly Bredbury ward and a Romiley and Woodley ward. He acknowledged that 'Woodley has closer ties to Bredbury than it has to Romiley' and Romiley should ideally be in a ward on its own. However, this arrangement would not be possible due to the numbers of electors involved and the requirement that all metropolitan boroughs must be represented by three councillors. He also noted that 'Romiley and Woodley tend to run into each other' and the two communities are linked by a major road and bus links. He therefore recommended that new Bredbury and Romiley & Woodley wards should be adopted which respect the identities of the three communities, and put forward three similar options (A, B and C) for the two wards, broadly based on the Borough Council's original consultation scheme.

142 The Bredbury resident proposed Option A, which ‘seeks to respect the community boundaries of Bredbury, Woodley and Romiley, even though it will produce slightly less equal representation’. The boundary would run north along Otterspool Road and Hatherlow, then north-east along Gorsey Brow and run north along the Lower Peak Forest Canal to Gilbertbank. The boundary would then run west along Gilbertbank, north along George Lane, east along Hyde Road and then run north along Mill Lane to the railway line. From the railway line the boundary would run along the backs of the houses north of the railway line, then run north along Turner Lane and a track to the River Tame. He stated that his Option B ‘builds on the same principles as Option A, but attempts to reduce the inequality in representation’. The boundary would be the same as that of Option A, but instead of running along Gorsey Brow to the canal, would run along Green Lane (also known as Hurstheads Lane) to the canal. He stated that Option C ‘attempts to reduce the inequality in representation’ but would not accurately reflect the community identity of Woodley. The boundary would differ from Option A in that it would continue north along the canal to Hyde Road, then west along Hyde Road as far as the junction with Mill Lane. He stated that Options A and B ‘would result in more easily understood wards in the Bredbury and Romiley area’ and would meet the statutory requirements, and added that Option C would provide electoral equality, but ‘is not recommended’ as it would divide the community of Woodley. However, it would still be ‘a marked improvement’ on the draft recommendations. The local resident also stated that the former Romiley & Woodley Community Council covered the villages of Romiley and Woodley, and that Bredbury formally had its own council. In order to more accurately reflect the constituent communities of the draft recommendations – if his proposals were not to be adopted – he also put forward the alternative ward names Bredbury North & Woodley in place of Bredbury ward, and Bredbury South & Romiley instead of Romiley ward. He proposed Romiley & Woodley as an appropriate new ward name for Romiley ward, if his proposals were to be adopted.

143 We have carefully considered the local resident’s proposals. We note the local resident of Bredbury argued that, under the draft recommendations, the electors of Bredbury would be split between two wards, and therefore the proposed boundary between Bredbury and Romiley wards would not reflect community identity. He proposed three similar alternative boundaries in order to better reflect community identities and avoid dividing Bredbury, while providing good electoral equality. Having revisited the area, we consider that his proposals would use strong boundaries such as the canal and Otterspool Road and would better reflect the communities than the boundary proposed under the draft recommendations. Having noted the good communication links between Bredbury and Woodley in our draft recommendations, we now note that a clear road link (Werneth Road) exists between Romiley and Woodley and that many Bredbury amenities would be transferred into Romiley ward under the draft recommendations. We note that the local resident also stated that the former Romiley & Woodley Community Council covered Romiley and Woodley, and that Bredbury formally had its own council, which indicates further evidence of community identity. We concur with his argument that it is important that all three communities of Bredbury, Romiley and Woodley are kept together, even though a Romiley and Woodley ward may not be perfect, as Woodley may well have more links with Bredbury. We noted that his Option C would use the clear boundary of the canal, but would encroach into Woodley and transfer part of Woodley into Bredbury ward. We further note that under Option B as compared to Options A and C, the canal would be used to provide a strong boundary, and would not adversely affect community identity. We have been persuaded by the strength of the submission and the clear argument provided. We have decided to adopt the local resident’s Option B as part of our final recommendations, as we consider that this would improve the reflection of the community identity in the two wards at the same time as providing good electoral equality. We have also decided to adopt his proposed ward name of Romiley & Woodley in order to better reflect the constituent communities of the revised Romiley ward. We received no further comments.

144 Under our final recommendations, Bredbury and Romiley & Woodley wards would be 1% and 7% respectively above the borough average number of electors per councillor (1% and 7%

in 2006). Our final recommendations are set out in Tables 1 and 2, and illustrated on Map 2 and in Appendix A.

Hazel Grove, North Marple and South Marple wards

145 The existing wards of Hazel Grove, North Marple and South Marple are situated in the east of the borough. Each ward is represented by three councillors. Under the current arrangements, Hazel Grove, North Marple and South Marple wards contain 16% more, 12% fewer and 9% fewer electors per councillor than the borough average respectively (16% more, 12% fewer and 9% fewer by 2006).

146 At Stage One, Stockport Borough Council proposed a revised Hazel Grove ward, which would be broadly based on the existing ward. It proposed a revised South Marple ward, which would broadly comprise the existing ward, part of the existing Hazel Grove ward and part of the existing North Marple ward. The Borough Council also proposed a revised North Marple ward, which would broadly comprise the existing ward, together with parts of the existing South Marple and Romiley wards.

147 Stockport Labour Group proposed a new Norbury ward, which would comprise part of the existing East Bramhall ward, together with parts of the existing Davenport and Hazel Grove wards. Part of the existing Hazel Grove ward would form a new Offerton ward, while the remaining part of the existing Hazel Grove ward would be combined with the High Lane area from the existing South Marple ward to form a revised Hazel Grove ward. A further part of the existing South Marple ward, the area surrounding the settlement of Mellor, would form part of a new Marple Bridge & Etherow ward. Under the Labour Group's proposals, the remaining part of the existing South Marple ward would be combined with part of the existing North Marple ward to form a new Marple ward. The remainder of the existing North Marple ward would form part of a new Marple Bridge & Etherow ward.

148 Under the Borough Council's Stage One consultation scheme, a revised Hazel Grove ward would be formed which would be broadly based on the existing ward and part of the existing East Bramhall ward. A further part of the existing Hazel Grove ward would be combined with parts of the existing South Marple, North Marple and Romiley wards to form a new Marple Rural ward (or alternatively named Marple Goyt or Goyt ward). The remainder of the existing Hazel Grove ward would be combined with the remainder of the existing South Marple ward and the remainder of the existing North Marple ward to form a new Marple ward.

149 We received two further representations in relation to this area. Cheadle Constituency Conservative Association and Stockport Constituency Conservative Association both supported the proposals put forward by the Borough Council.

150 Having considered the representations received at Stage One, we proposed to base our draft recommendations for this area on elements of the proposals under the consultation scheme and those put forward by the Borough Council. We noted that there was consensus between each of the borough-wide schemes that the areas surrounding Shearwater Road from the existing Hazel Grove ward should form part of a new Offerton ward, and we concurred with this view. However, there was limited consensus regarding the revised warding for the remainder of this proposed ward. Therefore, based on our conclusions regarding the Bramhall area to the west and our proposals to the north, we were unable to adopt the proposals submitted by the Borough Council or the Labour Group. We therefore proposed adopting the revised Hazel Grove ward put forward under the consultation scheme.

151 Having carefully considered the proposals put forward for the more rural, eastern part of the borough and with officers from the Committee having visited the area, we proposed adopting the Borough Council's proposals subject to a minor amendment. We were concerned that the proposed Marple Rural ward put forward under the consultation scheme covered a significantly

large geographical area, stretching from Compstall in the north to Hazel Grove in the south. We were not persuaded that this proposed ward provided for the best reflection of community identity with, in our view, limited links between the settlements of Compstall and High Lane. In addition, we noted that area committees expressed concerns about this proposed ward during the consultation period.

152 In relation to the Labour Group's proposals, we were of the view that they had merit, as they linked settlements, which in our view had good communication links and resulted in the settlement of Marple being retained wholly within a single borough ward. However, in light of our conclusions in the Bredbury and Hazel Grove areas, we were unable to adopt the Labour Group's proposals in this area. Therefore, on balance, we considered that the proposals submitted by the Borough Council provided for the best reflection of the statutory criteria, while facilitating our proposals to the west. We noted that the settlements to be combined under the Borough Council's proposals had good transport and communications links and were similar in character. We did look closely at the division of the settlement of Marple which would occur under the Borough Council's proposals, which in our view, would not have an adverse effect on the local community. We did, however, propose that, in order to make the boundary between the proposed North Marple and South Marple more identifiable, it should be amended to follow the centre of Cross Lane. This amendment would have a negligible effect on electoral equality.

153 Under our draft recommendations, Hazel Grove, North Marple and South Marple wards would contain 4% more, 6% fewer and 7% fewer electors per councillor than the borough average respectively (3% more, 6% fewer and 7% fewer by 2006).

154 At Stage Three, the Borough Council, Liberal Democrats, and a local resident of Marple Bridge proposed that North Marple and South Marple wards should be named Marple North and Marple South wards for consistency with other wards containing compass directions. The Liberal Democrats stated that 'the place name should come first so that the location can be easily identified'. This was supported by a local resident of Marple Bridge, who stated that Marple should come first in order to make viewing a list of election results or councillors easier. A local resident of Bredbury proposed that North Marple ward should be named Marple North or preferably Marple North & Compstall ward in order to secure consistency in the style of ward naming and 'effective and convenient local government'. He also proposed Marple South or preferably Marple South & High Lane as alternative ward names for South Marple. He stated that the alternative names would lead to consistency in style and would recognise the distinct village of High Lane.

155 We have carefully considered the representations received at Stage Three. We note the proposal of the Borough Council, Liberal Democrats and local residents of Bredbury, Gatley and Marple Bridge to amend North Marple and South Marple wards to Marple North and Marple South for consistency. We consider that these two alternative names are sensible, and along with our proposals in other areas, would achieve consistency. We have therefore decided to adopt them. We do not propose to adopt Marple North & Compstall as an alternative name for North Marple ward, as we consider the ward name Marple North to accurately reflect the ward. Nor do we propose to adopt the alternative ward name Marple South & High Lane, as we consider South Marple to be the most appropriate name.

156 Under our final recommendations Hazel Grove, Marple North and Marple South wards would contain 4% above, 6% below and 7% below (3% above, 6% below and 7% below by 2006). Our final recommendations are set out in Tables 1 and 2, and illustrated on Map 2 and in Appendix A.

Electoral cycle

157 Under section 7(3) of the Local Government Act 1972, all Metropolitan borough/cities have a system of elections by thirds.

Conclusions

158 We conclude that, in Stockport:

- a council of 63 members should be retained;
- there should be 21 wards, the same as at present and;
- the boundaries of all of the existing wards should be modified;

159 As already indicated, we have based our draft recommendations on elements of both the Borough Council's and the Labour Group's proposals, together with part of the Borough Council's Stage One consultation scheme prepared by officers and four of our own amendments. However, having considered carefully all the representations and evidence received in response to our consultation report, we have decided to substantially endorse those draft recommendations, subject to the following amendments:

- We propose revised Bredbury and Romiley wards in order to better reflect community identity.
- We propose an amendment to the boundary between Cheadle & Gatley and Heald Green wards in order to better reflect community identity. We propose an amendment to the boundary between Cheadle & Gatley and Cheadle Hulme North wards in order to better reflect community identity.
- We propose an amendment to the boundary between Cheadle Hulme South and Heald Green in order to better reflect community identity. We propose an amendment to the boundary between Cheadle & Gatley and Cheadle Hulme North wards in order to use a clearer boundary.
- We propose an amendment to the boundary between Davenport and Bramhall Moor wards in order to utilise a stronger boundary and better reflect community identity. We propose an amendment to the boundary between Davenport and Edgeley wards in order to incorporate a new housing development.
- We propose an amendment to the boundary between Edgeley and South Heatons wards in order to utilise a stronger boundary. We propose an amendment to the boundary between Edgeley and Tame Valley & Central wards in order to utilise a stronger boundary and better reflect community identity.
- We propose two amendments to the boundary between Offerton and Manor wards in order to better reflect community identity.
- We propose an amendment to the boundary between South Heatons and Tame Valley & Central wards in order to utilise a stronger boundary and better reflect community identity.
- We propose eight new ward names in order to better reflect constituent communities or ensure consistency of ward names.

160 Table 4 shows the impact of our final recommendations on electoral equality, comparing them with the current arrangements, based on 2001 and 2006 electorate figures.

Table 4: Comparison of current and recommended electoral arrangements

	2001 electorate		2006 electorate	
	Current arrangements	Final recommendations	Current arrangements	Final recommendations
Number of councillors	63	63	63	63
Number of wards	21	21	21	21
Average number of electors per councillor	3,533	3,553	3,581	3,581
Number of wards with a variance more than 10% from the average	11	0	11	0
Number of wards with a variance more than 20% from the average	2	0	1	0

161 As Table 4 shows, our recommendations would result in a reduction in the number of wards with an electoral variance of more than 10% from 11 to none, and a reduction in the number of wards with an electoral variance of more than 20% from two to none. By 2006 no wards are forecast to have an electoral variance of more than 8%. We conclude that our recommendations would best meet the statutory criteria.

Final recommendation

Stockport Borough Council should comprise 63 councillors serving 21 wards, as detailed and named in Tables 1 and 2, and illustrated on Map 2 and in Appendix A and the large maps.

Map 2: Final recommendations for Stockport

6 What happens next?

162 Having completed our review of electoral arrangements in Stockport and submitted our final recommendations to The Electoral Commission, we have fulfilled our statutory obligation under the Local Government Act 1992 (as amended by SI 2001 No. 3692).

163 It is now up to The Electoral Commission to decide whether to endorse our recommendations, with or without modification, and to implement them by means of an Order. Such an Order will not be made before 11 November 2003, and The Electoral Commission will normally consider all written representations made to them by that date. They particularly welcome any comments on the first draft of the Order, which will implement the new arrangements.

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

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

Fax: 020 7271 0667

Email: implementation@electoralcommission.org.uk

Appendix A

Final recommendations for Stockport: Detailed mapping

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

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

The **large maps** illustrate the proposed warding arrangements for Stockport.

Map A1: Final recommendations for Stockport: Key map

Appendix B

Guide to interpreting the first draft of the electoral change Order

Preamble

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

Citation and commencement

This establishes the name of the Order and when it will come into force.

Interpretation

This defines terms that are used in the Order.

Wards of the borough of Stockport

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

Elections of the council of the borough of Stockport

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

Maps

This requires Stockport Metropolitan Borough Council to make a print of the map available for public inspection.

Electoral registers

This requires the Council to adapt the electoral register to reflect the new wards.

Revocation

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

Explanatory note

This explains the purpose of each article. Text in square brackets will be removed if The Electoral Commission decide not to modify the Final recommendations.

Appendix C

First draft of electoral change Order for Stockport

STATUTORY INSTRUMENTS

2003 No.

LOCAL GOVERNMENT, ENGLAND

The Borough of Stockport (Electoral Changes) Order 2003

Made - - - - *2003*

Coming into force in accordance with article 1(2)

Whereas the Boundary Committee for England(**a**), acting pursuant to section 15(4) of the Local Government Act 1992(**b**), has submitted to the Electoral Commission(**c**) recommendations dated September 2003 on its review of the borough(**d**) of Stockport:

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

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

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

Citation and commencement

- 1.—(1) This Order may be cited as the Borough of Stockport (Electoral Changes) Order 2003.
- (2) This Order shall come into force –
 - (a) for the purpose of proceedings preliminary or relating to any election to be held on the ordinary day of election of councillors in 2004, on the day after that on which it is made;

-
- (a) The Boundary Committee for England is a committee of the Electoral Commission, established by the Electoral Commission in accordance with section 14 of the Political Parties, Elections and Referendums Act 2000 (c.41). The Local Government Commission for England (Transfer of Functions) Order 2001 (S.I. 2001/3962) transferred to the Electoral Commission the functions of the Local Government Commission for England.
- (b) 1992 c.19. This section has been amended by S.I. 2001/3962.
- (c) The Electoral Commission was established by the Political Parties, Elections and Referendums Act 2000 (c.41). The functions of the Secretary of State, under sections 13 to 15 and 17 of the Local Government Act 1992 (c.19), to the extent that they relate to electoral changes within the meaning of that Act, were transferred with modifications to the Electoral Commission on 1st April 2002 (S.I. 2001/3962).
- (d) The metropolitan district of Stockport has the status of a borough.
- (e) This section has been amended by S.I. 2001/3962 and also otherwise in ways not relevant to this Order.
- (f) This section has been amended by S.I. 2001/3962.

- (b) for all other purposes, on the ordinary day of election of councillors in 2004.

Interpretation

2. In this Order –

“borough” means the borough of Stockport;

“existing”, in relation to a ward, means the ward as it exists on the date this Order is made; and

any reference to the map is a reference to the map marked “Map referred to in the Borough of Stockport (Electoral Changes) Order 2003”, of which prints are available for inspection at –

- (a) the principal office of the Electoral Commission; and
- (b) the offices of Stockport Metropolitan Borough Council.

Wards of the borough of Stockport

3.—(1) The existing wards of the borough(a) shall be abolished.

(2) The borough shall be divided into twenty-one wards which shall bear the names set out in the Schedule.

(3) Each ward shall comprise the area designated on the map by reference to the name of the ward and demarcated by red lines; and the number of councillors to be elected for each ward shall be three.

(4) Where a boundary is shown on the map as running along a road, railway line, footway, watercourse or similar geographical feature, it shall be treated as running along the centre line of the feature.

Elections of the council of the borough of Stockport

4.—(1) Elections of all councillors for all wards of the borough shall be held simultaneously on the ordinary day of election of councillors in 2004(b)(c).

(2) The councillors holding office for any ward of the borough immediately before the fourth day after the ordinary day of election of councillors in 2004 shall retire on that date and the newly elected councillors for those wards shall come into office on that date.

(3) Of the councillors elected in 2004 one shall retire in 2006, one in 2007 and one in 2008.

(4) Of the councillors elected in 2004 –

(a) the first to retire shall, subject to paragraphs (6) and (7), be the councillor elected by the smallest number of votes; and

(b) the second to retire shall, subject to those paragraphs, be the councillor elected by the next smallest number of votes.

(5) In the case of an equality of votes between any persons elected which makes it uncertain which of them is to retire in any year, the person to retire in that year shall be determined by lot.

(6) If an election of councillors for any ward is not contested, the person to retire in each year shall be determined by lot.

(7) Where under this article any question is to be determined by lot, the lot shall be drawn at the next practicable meeting of the council after the question has arisen and the drawing shall be conducted under the direction of the person presiding at the meeting.

(a) See the Borough of Stockport (Electoral Arrangements) Order 1979 (S.I. 1979/1324).

(b) Article 4 provides for a single election of all the councillors and for reversion to the system of election by thirds, as established by section 7 of the Local Government Act 1972 (c.70).

(c) For the ordinary day of election of councillors of local government areas, see section 37 of the Representation of the People Act 1983 (c.2), amended by section 18(2) of the Representation of the People Act 1985 (c.50) and section 17 of, and paragraphs 1 and 5 of Schedule 3 to, the Greater London Authority Act 1999 (c.29).

Maps

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

Electoral registers

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

Revocation

7. The Borough of Stockport (Electoral Arrangements) Order 1979(b) is revoked, save for articles 8 and 9(8).

Sealed with the seal of the Electoral Commission on the day of 2003

Date

Name
Chairman of the Commission

Date

Name
Secretary to the Commission

SCHEDULE

article 3

NAMES OF WARDS

Bramhall Moor	Cheadle Hulme South	Manor
Bramhall North	Davenport and Cale Green	Marple North
Bramhall South	Edgeley and Cheadle Heath	Marple South
Bredbury	Hazel Grove	Offerton
Brinnington and Central	Heald Green	Reddish North
Cheadle and Gatley	Heatons North	Reddish South
Cheadle Hulme North	Heatons South	Romiley and Woodley

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

(b) S.I. 1979/1324.

EXPLANATORY NOTE

(This note is not part of the Order)

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

The modifications are *indicate the modifications*.

The changes have effect in relation to local government elections to be held on and after the ordinary day of election of councillors in 2004.

Article 3 abolishes the existing wards of the borough and provides for the creation of 21 new wards. That article and the Schedule also make provision for the names and areas of, and numbers of councillors for, the new wards.

Article 4 makes provision for a whole council election in 2004 and for reversion to the established system of election by thirds in subsequent years.

Article 6 obliges the Electoral Registration Officer to make any necessary amendments to the electoral register to reflect the new electoral arrangements.

Article 7 revokes the Borough of Stockport (Electoral Arrangements) Order 1979, with the exception of articles 8 and 9(8).

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