

Draft recommendations on the
future electoral arrangements for
Brighton & Hove

February 2001

LOCAL GOVERNMENT COMMISSION FOR ENGLAND

The Local Government Commission for England is an independent body set up by Parliament. Our task is to review and make recommendations to the Government on whether there should be changes to local authorities' electoral arrangements.

Members of the Commission are:

Professor Malcolm Grant (Chairman)
Professor Michael Clarke CBE (Deputy Chairman)
Peter Brokenshire
Kru Desai
Pamela Gordon
Robin Gray
Robert Hughes CBE

Barbara Stephens (Chief Executive)

We are statutorily required to review periodically the electoral arrangements – such as the number of councillors representing electors in each area and the number and boundaries of wards and electoral divisions – of every principal local authority in England. In broad terms our objective 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, and the number of councillors and ward names. We can also make recommendations for change to the electoral arrangements of parish councils in the borough.

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A large map illustrating the existing and proposed ward boundaries for Brighton & Hove is inserted inside the back cover of the report.

SUMMARY

The Commission began a review of the electoral arrangements for Brighton & Hove on 25 July 2000.

- **This report summarises the representations we received during the first stage of the review, and makes draft recommendations for change.**

We found that the existing electoral arrangements provide unequal representation of electors in Brighton & Hove:

- **in seven of the 26 wards the number of electors represented by each councillor varies by more than 10 per cent from the average for the borough;**
- **by 2005 this unequal representation is not expected to improve, with the number of electors per councillor forecast to vary by more than 10 per cent from the average in seven wards.**

Our main draft recommendations for future electoral arrangements (Figures 1 and 2 and paragraphs 86-87) are that:

- **Brighton & Hove Council should have 54 councillors, 24 fewer than at present;**
- **there should be 20 wards, instead of 26 as at present;**
- **the boundaries of 22 of the existing wards should be modified, resulting in a net reduction of six, and four wards should retain their existing boundaries;**
- **elections should continue to be for the whole council.**

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

- **In all of the proposed 20 wards the number of electors per councillor would vary by no more than 7 per cent from the borough average, both initially and by 2005.**

This report sets out our draft recommendations on which comments are invited.

- **We will consult on our draft recommendations for nine weeks from 20 February 2001. Because we take this consultation very seriously, we may move away from our draft recommendations in the light of Stage Three responses. It is therefore important that all interested parties let us have their views and evidence, *whether or not* they agree with our draft recommendations.**

- **After considering local views, we will decide whether to modify our draft recommendations and then make our final recommendations to the Secretary of State for the Environment, Transport and the Regions.**
- **It will then be for the Secretary of State to accept, modify or reject our final recommendations. He will also determine when any changes come into effect.**

You should express your views by writing directly to the Commission at the address below by 23 April 2001:

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Figure 1: The Commission's Draft Recommendations: Summary

	Ward name	Number of councillors	Constituent areas
1	Brunswick & Regency	3	Brunswick & Adelaide ward (part); Regency ward
2	Central Hove	3	Brunswick & Adelaide ward (part); Vallance ward (part)
3	East Brighton	3	King's Cliff ward (part); Marine ward (part)
4	Goldsmid	3	Goldsmid ward; Stanford ward (part); Vallance ward (part)
5	Hangleton & Knoll	3	Hangleton ward; Nevill ward (part); Portslade South (part)
6	Hanover & Elm Grove	3	Hanover ward (part); King's Cliff ward (part); Queen's Park ward (part); Tenantry ward (part)
7	Hollingbury & Stanmer	3	Hollingbury ward (part); Stanmer ward (part)
8	Hove Park	2	Nevill ward (part); Stanford ward (part)
9	Moulsecoomb & Tenantry	3	Moulsecoomb ward; Tenantry ward (part)
10	Patcham	3	Patcham ward; Stanmer ward (part)
11	Portslade North	2	<i>Unchanged</i> (Portslade North ward)
12	Portslade South	2	Portslade South ward (part)
13	Preston Park	3	Preston ward (part); St Peter's ward (part); Seven Dials ward (part); Westdene ward (part)
14	Queen's Park	3	Queen's Park ward (part); Hanover ward (part); King's Cliff ward (part)
15	Rottingdean Coastal	3	Rottingdean ward; Marine ward (part)
16	St Peter's & North Laine	3	St Peter's ward (part); Hollingbury ward (part); Seven Dials ward (part)
17	Westbourne	2	<i>Unchanged</i> (Westbourne ward)
18	Wish	2	<i>Unchanged</i> (Wish ward)
19	Withdean	3	Preston ward (part); Westdene ward (part)
20	Woodingdean	2	<i>Unchanged</i> (Woodingdean ward)

Notes: 1 The parish of Rottingdean is the only parish in Brighton & Hove and is contained within Rottingdean ward.

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

Figure 2: The Commission's Draft Recommendations for Brighton & Hove

Ward name	Number of councillors	Electorate (2000)	Number of electors per councillor	Variance from average %	Electorate (2005)	Number of electors per councillor	Variance from average %
1 Brunswick & Regency	3	10,977	3,659	1	11,077	3,692	2
2 Central Hove	3	10,788	3,596	0	10,849	3,616	0
3 East Brighton	3	10,399	3,466	-4	10,414	3,471	-4
4 Goldsmid	3	10,792	3,597	0	10,805	3,602	0
5 Hangleton & Knoll	3	10,791	3,597	0	10,695	3,565	-1
6 Hanover & Elm Grove	3	10,725	3,575	-1	10,804	3,601	0
7 Hollingbury & Stanmer	3	11,088	3,696	2	10,988	3,663	1
8 Hove Park	2	7,720	3,860	7	7,716	3,858	7
9 Moulsecoomb & Tenantry	3	10,922	3,641	1	10,952	3,651	1
10 Patcham	3	10,735	3,578	-1	10,698	3,566	-1
11 Portslade North	2	7,465	3,733	3	7,466	3,733	3
12 Portslade South	2	6,958	3,479	-4	6,953	3,477	-4
13 Preston Park	3	10,993	3,664	2	10,736	3,579	-1
14 Queen's Park	3	11,076	3,692	2	11,050	3,683	2
15 Rottingdean Coastal	3	10,520	3,507	-3	10,765	3,588	-1
16 St Peter's & North Laine	3	10,506	3,502	-3	10,754	3,585	-1
17 Westbourne	2	7,242	3,621	0	7,240	3,620	0
18 Wish	2	6,871	3,436	-5	6,865	3,433	-5
19 Withdean	3	10,741	3,580	-1	10,834	3,611	0
20 Woodingdean	2	7,463	3,732	3	7,384	3,692	2
Totals	54	194,772	-	-	195,045	-	-
Averages	-	-	3,607	-	-	3,612	-

Source: Electorate figures are based on Brighton & Hove Council's submission.

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

1 INTRODUCTION

1 This report contains our draft recommendations on the electoral arrangements for Brighton & Hove Council on which we are now consulting. We are reviewing Brighton & Hove as part of our programme of periodic electoral reviews (PERs) of all 386 principal local authority areas in England. Our programme started in 1996 and is currently expected to be completed by 2004.

2 This is our first review of the electoral arrangements of Brighton & Hove Council. The last such review was undertaken by our predecessor, the Local Government Boundary Commission (LGBC), which reported to the Secretary of State in January 1978 for Hove (Report No. 275) and November 1979 for Brighton (Report No. 361). Since undertaking that review, Brighton & Hove has become a unitary authority (1997).

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

- the statutory criteria contained in section 13(5) of the Local Government Act 1992, ie the need to:
 - (a) reflect the identities and interests of local communities; and
 - (b) secure effective and convenient local government;
- the *Rules to be Observed in Considering Electoral Arrangements* contained in Schedule 11 to the Local Government Act 1972 (see Appendix B).

4 We are required to make recommendations to the Secretary of State on the number of councillors who should serve on the Council, and the number, boundaries and names of wards. We can also make recommendations on the electoral arrangements for Rottingdean Parish Council, the only parish council in the borough.

5 We also have regard to our *Guidance and Procedural Advice for Local Authorities and Other Interested Parties* (fourth edition published in December 2000). This sets out our approach to the reviews.

6 In our *Guidance*, we state that we wish wherever possible to build on schemes which have been prepared locally on the basis of careful and effective consultation. Local interests are normally in a better position to judge what council size and ward configuration are most likely to secure effective and convenient local government in their areas, while allowing proper reflection of the identities and interests of local communities.

7 The broad objective of PERs is to achieve, as far as possible, equality of representation across the district as a whole. Having regard to the statutory criteria, our aim is to achieve as low a level of electoral imbalance as is practicable. We will require particular justification for schemes which would result in, or retain, an electoral imbalance of over 10 per cent in any ward. Any imbalances of 20 per cent or more should only arise in the most exceptional circumstances, and will require the strongest justification.

8 We are not prescriptive on council size. We start from the general assumption that the existing council size already secures effective and convenient local government in that district but we are willing to look carefully at arguments why this might not be so. 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 a district’s electorate should automatically result in an increase in the number of councillors, nor that changes should be made to the size of a district council simply to make it more consistent with the size of other districts.

9 The review is in four stages (Figure 3).

Figure 3: Stages of the Review

Stage	Description
One	Submission of proposals to the Commission
Two	The Commission’s analysis and deliberation
Three	Publication of draft recommendations and consultation on them
Four	Final deliberation and report to the Secretary of State

10 In July 1998 the Government published a White Paper, *Modern Local Government – In Touch with the People*, which set out legislative proposals for local authority electoral arrangements. Following publication of the White Paper, we advised all authorities in our 2000/2001 PER programme, including Brighton & Hove Council, that the Commission would continue to maintain its current approach to PERs as set out in our *Guidance*. Nevertheless, we considered that local authorities and other interested parties might wish to have regard to the Secretary of State’s intentions and legislative proposals in formulating electoral schemes as part of PERs of their areas. The proposals have been taken forward in the Local Government Act 2000 which, among other matters, provides that the Secretary of State may make Orders to change authorities’ electoral cycles. However, until such time as the Secretary of State makes any Order under the 2000 Act, we will continue to operate on the basis of existing legislation, which provides for elections by thirds or whole-council elections, and our present *Guidance*.

11 Stage One began on 25 July 2000, when we wrote to Brighton & Hove Council inviting proposals for future electoral arrangements. We also notified Sussex Police Authority, East Sussex Association of Parish Councils, Rottingdean Parish Council, the Members of Parliament with constituency interests in the district, the Members of the European Parliament for the South East Region, and the headquarters of the main political parties. We placed a notice in the local press, issued a press release and invited Brighton & Hove Council to publicise the review further. The closing date for receipt of representations, the end of Stage One, was 16 October 2000.

12 At Stage Two we considered all the representations received during Stage One and prepared our draft recommendations.

13 Stage Three began on 20 February 2001 and will end on 23 April 2001. This stage involves publishing the draft recommendations in this report and public consultation on them. **We take this consultation very seriously and it is therefore important that all those interested in the review should let us have their views and evidence, whether or not they agree with our draft recommendations.**

14 During Stage Four we will reconsider the draft recommendations in the light of the Stage Three consultation, decide whether to move away from them in any areas, and submit final recommendations to the Secretary of State. Interested parties will have a further six weeks to make representations to the Secretary of State. It will then be for him to accept, modify or reject our final recommendations. If the Secretary of State accepts the recommendations, with or without modification, he will make an Order. The Secretary of State will determine when any changes come into effect.

2 CURRENT ELECTORAL ARRANGEMENTS

15 Brighton & Hove became a unitary authority in 1997, replacing Brighton and Hove borough councils. It is the largest unitary authority along the south coast, covering an area of 8,473 hectares, and comprises a socially and culturally diverse population of 245,000. It has recently been awarded city status; however, as the official date for this has not yet been finalised, we shall refer to Brighton & Hove as a borough in these recommendations. It is a major regional centre for employment, education, shopping, the arts and leisure, attracting over four million visitors each year. Communication links include the A27 and M23 and a fast train service to London, which help to make Brighton & Hove one of the United Kingdom's premier seaside resorts and conference venues. Brighton & Hove has one parish, Rottingdean, situated to the east of Brighton. The remainder of the borough is unparished. The parished area covers part of the existing Rottingdean ward.

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

17 The electorate of the district is 194,772 (February 2000). The Council presently has 78 members who are elected from 26 wards. All of the wards are represented by three councillors each. The Council is elected as a whole every four years.

18 Since the last electoral review there has been a small increase in the electorate in Brighton & Hove. The most notable increases have been in Portslade North and Brunswick & Adelaide wards, while there have been sizeable decreases in Moulsecoomb and Hangleton wards.

19 At present, each councillor represents an average of 2,497 electors, which the Council forecasts will increase to 2,501 by the year 2005 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 seven of the 26 wards varies by more than 10 per cent from the average. The greatest imbalance is in Hangleton ward where each councillor represents 15 per cent fewer electors than the district average. In Marine and Hanover wards each councillor represents 14 per cent more electors than the average.

Map 1: Existing Wards in Brighton & Hove

Figure 4: Existing Electoral Arrangements

Ward name	Number of councillors	Electorate (2000)	Number of electors per councillor	Variance from average %	Electorate (2005)	Number of electors per councillor	Variance from average %
1 Brunswick & Adelaide	3	8,404	2,801	12	8,496	2,832	13
2 Goldsmid	3	7,618	2,539	2	7,621	2,540	2
3 Hangleton	3	6,399	2,133	-15	6,308	2,103	-16
4 Hanover	3	8,561	2,854	14	8,654	2,885	15
5 Hollingbury	3	7,644	2,548	2	7,567	2,522	1
6 King's Cliff	3	7,266	2,422	-3	7,264	2,421	-3
7 Marine	3	8,541	2,847	14	8,795	2,932	17
8 Moulsecoomb	3	6,779	2,260	-10	6,853	2,284	-9
9 Nevill	3	6,554	2,185	-13	6,545	2,182	-13
10 Patcham	3	7,085	2,362	-5	7,082	2,361	-6
11 Portslade North	3	7,465	2,488	0	7,466	2,489	0
12 Portslade South	3	6,958	2,319	-7	6,953	2,318	-7
13 Preston	3	7,869	2,623	5	7,714	2,571	3
14 Queen's Park	3	6,652	2,217	-11	6,644	2,215	-11
15 Regency	3	7,827	2,609	4	7,912	2,637	5
16 Rottingdean	3	7,938	2,646	6	7,945	2,648	6
17 St Peter's	3	7,886	2,629	5	7,892	2,631	5
18 Seven Dials	3	7,976	2,659	6	8,143	2,714	9
19 Stanford	3	6,700	2,233	-11	6,692	2,231	-11
20 Stanmer	3	7,958	2,653	6	7,884	2,628	5
21 Tenantry	3	7,905	2,635	6	7,830	2,610	4
22 Vallance	3	7,566	2,522	1	7,568	2,532	1
23 Westbourne	3	7,242	2,414	-3	7,240	2,413	-4
24 Westdene	3	7,645	2,548	2	7,728	2,576	3

Ward name	Number of councillors	Electorate (2000)	Number of electors per councillor	Variance from average %	Electorate (2005)	Number of electors per councillor	Variance from average %
25 Wish	3	6,871	2,290	-8	6,865	2,288	-9
26 Woodingdean	3	7,463	2,488	0	7,384	2,461	-2
Totals	78	194,772	–	–	195,045	–	–
Averages	–	–	2,497	–	–	2,501	–

Source: Electorate figures are based on information provided by Brighton & Hove Council.

Note: The 'variance from average' column shows by how far, in percentage terms, the number of electors per councillor varies from the average for the borough. The minus symbol (-) denotes a lower than average number of electors. For example, in 2000 electors in Hangleton ward were relatively over-represented by 15 per cent, while electors in Hanover ward were relatively under-represented by 14 per cent. Figures have been rounded to the nearest whole number.

3 REPRESENTATIONS RECEIVED

20 At the start of the review we invited members of the public and other interested parties to write to us giving their views on the future electoral arrangements for Brighton & Hove Council.

21 During this initial stage of the review, officers from the Commission visited the area and met officers and members from the Council. We are grateful to all concerned for their co-operation and assistance. We received 39 representations during Stage One, including borough-wide schemes from the Council, the Conservative Group on the Council, the Brighton & Hove Liberal Democrat Party and the Green Party of Brighton & Hove, all of which may be inspected at the offices of the Council and the Commission.

Brighton & Hove Council

22 The Council proposed a council of 64 members serving 20 three-member wards and two two-member wards, a reduction of 14 councillors and four wards. Under the Council's scheme eight ward names, Marine, Goldsmid, Vallance, Wish, Westbourne, Nevill, Stanford and Westdene, would cease to exist. Goldsmid and Westdene would be renamed County Ground and Withdean respectively with relatively small boundary changes, while the other former wards would be included in new wards. The Council proposed changes in the centres of Brighton and Hove and on the Brighton/Hove boundary, as well as moving part of Woodingdean ward into Rottingdean ward. In the west of the borough, part of the boundary of Portslade South ward would follow the Hangleton link road. The Council's scheme would achieve significant improvements in electoral equality, with no ward varying by more than 10 per cent from the borough average both initially and by 2005. Apart from one ward, South Portslade, all wards would achieve variances of 5 per cent or less. The Council's proposal is summarised in Appendix A.

Brighton & Hove Conservative Group

23 Brighton & Hove Conservative Group ("The Conservatives") proposed a council of 54 members serving 16 three-member and three two-member wards, adapting some aspects of the Council's scheme to 19 proposed wards rather than 22 while also addressing some objections they had to it. Under these proposals the Poets Corner area of Hove would become part of a new Hove Park ward, Woodingdean ward would retain its existing boundaries, Rottingdean ward would be expanded to include part of the existing Marine ward and the name of Goldsmid ward would be retained rather than replaced by County Ground. The Conservative Group's scheme would achieve better electoral equality than the Council's scheme, with no ward varying by more than 3 per cent initially and 2 per cent by 2005.

Brighton & Hove Liberal Democrats

24 The Liberal Democrats also proposed a council size of 54 members serving 16 three-member wards and three two-member wards. Only two wards would have the same boundaries as the Conservative scheme, while three would have small variations upon it. There were large

differences in the central Hove and Brighton wards. Under these proposals the former Brighton/Hove boundary would remain intact, with 34 members for Brighton and 20 for Hove. The Liberal Democrats included with their submission a petition with 170 pro-forma signatures and printed reply forms with 50 signatures, objecting to the Council's proposals for this area in that they did not "seek to preserve the traditional ward boundaries between Brighton and Hove which reflect natural communities on both sides of the border". There was a measure of agreement with the Conservatives' proposals in that Woodingdean ward would remain unaltered. Unlike the other schemes the Portslade boundary would not be retained in the south. These proposals achieved better electoral equality than the Council's scheme, but slightly worse than the Conservatives' scheme, with no ward varying by more than 4 per cent based on both 2000 and 2005 electorate figures.

The Green Party of Brighton & Hove

25 The Green Party proposed a council size of 75, serving 25 three-member wards. They supported only a slight reduction in council size, contending that Brighton & Hove needed a number close to the existing provision of 78 for effective local government. These proposals would create two new wards, St George's & St James' and College, into which King's Cliff ward and Queen's Park ward would be amalgamated. Nevill ward would be absorbed into surrounding wards. Under these proposals electoral equality would be worse than in the other schemes, although no ward would vary by more than 8 per cent initially and by 2005.

Rottingdean Parish Council

26 Rottingdean Parish Council proposed that there should be no change to the number of parish councillors and was opposed to any parish warding.

Other Representations

27 We received a further 34 representations from local councillors, community groups, political associations and residents. The Council's proposals to split Woodingdean ward met opposition from the three councillors for the ward, Woodingdean Community Association, 11 residents and Saltdean Residents' Association. The latter also opposed the Conservatives' proposals for Rottingdean Coastal ward. A resident of Saltdean wanted either separate representation for Saltdean or to have its name included in the Rottingdean ward. The Association of Harbour Communities and a resident of Portslade opposed proposals for three councillors for North Portslade ward and two for South Portslade ward.

28 The Goldsmid Ward Residents Group was opposed to the ward name changing to County Ground. Three Brunswick residents were opposed to proposals to split Brunswick & Adelaide ward. One Lansdowne resident opposed the proposed Brunswick & Regency ward boundary through Lansdowne Place, suggesting the ward's western boundary should be First Avenue and Selbourne Road. A Hove resident opposed the ward boundary running down Portland Road, arguing that the road provides a focus for the community. The Hanover Community Association requested that their area should not be divided between wards, while the Church of the Annunciation supported the retention of the heartland of Hanover ward but expressed concern

at the inclusion of part of Kemp Town. A Patcham resident opposed the Council's proposals to transfer the Brangwyn Estate to Withdean ward. A Westbourne resident considered splitting the Westbourne area to be ill-conceived. Brighton Kemp Town and Brighton Pavilion Conservative Associations both supported the Conservative Group's proposals. One councillor opposed any reduction in size on the grounds of democracy and representation while a resident thought the present number of councillors to be too high and preferred one councillor per ward.

4 ANALYSIS AND DRAFT RECOMMENDATIONS

29 As described earlier, our prime objective in considering the most appropriate electoral arrangements for Brighton & Hove is, so far as reasonably practicable and consistent with the statutory criteria, to achieve electoral equality. In doing so we have regard to section 13(5) of the Local Government Act 1992 – the need to secure effective and convenient local government, and reflect the identities and interests of local communities – and Schedule 11 to the Local Government Act 1972, which refers to the number of electors per councillor being “as nearly as may be, the same in every ward of the district or borough”.

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

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

32 Our *Guidance* states that 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 kept to the minimum, such an objective should be the starting point in any review. We therefore strongly recommend that, in formulating electoral schemes, local authorities and other interested parties should start from the standpoint of absolute electoral equality, and only then make adjustments to reflect relevant factors, such as community identity and interests. Regard must be had to five-year forecasts of changes in electorates and we would aim to recommend a scheme which provides improved electoral equality over this five-year period.

Electorate Forecasts

33 The Council submitted electorate forecasts for the year 2005, projecting an increase in the electorate of some 0.14 per cent from 194,772 to 195,045 over the five-year period from 2000 to 2005. It expects the growth to be relatively evenly distributed across the borough. The Council has estimated rates and locations of housing development with regard to structure and local plans, the expected rate of building over the five-year period and assumed occupancy rates. Advice from the Council on the likely effect on electorates of changes to ward boundaries has been obtained.

34 We accept that forecasting electorates is an inexact science and, having given consideration to the Council’s figures, are content that they represent the best estimates that can reasonably be made at this time.

Council Size

35 As already explained, the Commission's starting point is to assume that the current council size facilitates effective and convenient local government, although we are willing to look carefully at arguments why this might not be the case.

36 Brighton & Hove Council currently has 78 members, the sum of the number of councillors in the former two boroughs of Brighton and Hove. In its submission the Council proposed a reduction in size, to 64 members. Both the Conservatives and the Liberal Democrats also proposed a significant reduction in council size, to 54 members. The Green Party proposed a council size of 75 members. On the basis of the individual schemes submitted by the Council and the political groups, each of these proposed reductions would provide better levels of electoral representation across the borough than the current arrangements.

37 We noted that there was a general consensus that there should be a reduction in the number of councillors in Brighton & Hove, albeit to varying degrees. However, before reaching conclusions on what might be the most appropriate council size, we felt that we required further information and evidence from each of the participants in support of their proposals. We therefore invited the Council and the three political parties to provide further justification.

38 In response, the Council informed us that, early in the review process, three of the political parties in the area had reached agreement that, to facilitate effective and convenient local government, the number of councillors should be reduced to between 57 and 64 members. It had been acknowledged that the reduction would need to balance the effect of the interim political management structure then in place in the Council and the role of councillors as community leaders. On the basis of that agreement, the Council had aimed to devise an electoral scheme using a council size of 60 members. However, it had found that a 60-member council would not provide for good electoral equality. It therefore considered a number of alternative options, arriving at a council size of 64 members. In relation to the 54-member schemes submitted by the Conservatives and Liberal Democrats, the Council expressed concerns over the extent to which they reflected community interests and identities in a number of the proposed wards.

39 Both the Conservatives and the Liberal Democrats drew our attention to the fact that, when the boroughs of Brighton and Hove were merged and became a unitary authority in 1997, there had been no reduction in the overall number of councillors. This had led to a considerable number of councillors being excluded from the decision-making process within the Council, a situation likely to be exacerbated by the further changes to the authority's structure of political management, required under the Local Government Act 2000. Both parties felt that a reduction to 54 councillors would enable nearly all councillors to participate in the Council's scrutiny or decision-making processes, while generating savings which could be used to improve the level of officer support to members in their representative roles. Only the Green Party considered the present number of councillors to be appropriate, expressing concern that a reduction to 64 members would threaten local democracy and make access to elected members more difficult.

40 With the introduction of the Government's proposals for executive styles of political management in local authorities, with an enhanced scrutiny role for councillors, now contained

in the Local Government Act 2000, it is appropriate for participants in a PER to consider the overall role and number of councillors against the backdrop of those proposals and the implications for the Council. This is the approach which has been taken in Brighton & Hove, and there is a clear consensus among the Council and the political parties that the current council size of 78 members does not, and will not, provide for effective and convenient local government in the area. We accept that to be the case. The question is whether the Council and residents would be better served by a council size of 75, 64 or 54 members, or some other number.

41 When considering the important issue of community identity, we were of the opinion that all of the schemes, while trying to balance electoral equality and community identity, had obvious defects, which were commented upon by those proposing alternative schemes. For example, the Council's proposals necessitated splitting the community of Woodingdean and changing the boundary between Portslade North and Portslade South wards. The Conservatives' proposals included joining the Poets Corner area of Westbourne ward with an area north of the railway line with which it has no common links. The Liberal Democrats, while wishing to retain the former Brighton/Hove boundary, proposed abolishing part of the former Portslade/Hove boundary. The Green Party, while retaining more current wards and proposing a smaller reduction in council size, proposed a number of cross-community links, including adding part of Neville ward to Portslade South ward.

42 In considering the ways in which all the schemes had dealt with community identity issues, we concluded that the Conservatives' proposals would provide the best basis on which to proceed. We noted that they could be modified in such a way as to provide what would be, in our opinion, a better balance between the statutory criteria and electoral equality.

43 Thus, having considered the size and distribution of the electorate, the geography and other characteristics of the area, together with the representations received, we have concluded that the achievement of electoral equality and the reflection of community identity would best be met by a council of 54 members. Accordingly, given the radically different council sizes on which they are based, we were not able to adopt the ward patterns proposed by the Council or the Green Party as part of our draft recommendations, and they are not discussed in detail in the remainder of the report.

Electoral Arrangements

44 We have carefully considered the four borough-wide schemes which were received from the Council, the Conservatives, the Liberal Democrats and the Green Party. We are grateful for the conscientious approach taken by the respondents, who each submitted detailed borough-wide proposals for change to the existing electoral arrangements. From these representations some considerations have emerged which have informed us when preparing our draft recommendations.

45 We note, in particular, an area of agreement between three of the borough-wide schemes. As we have seen, there was consensus for a significant decrease in council size, with the Council proposing a 64-member scheme, while the Conservatives and Liberal Democrats opted for 54-member schemes. In deciding which number to adopt we looked at the respective schemes as well as the justifications put forward for the reductions. We were persuaded that a 54-member council

could work efficiently and in the interests of the electorate, with more councillors being actively involved in the working of the council and improved support being provided for councillors. Informal enquiries gave us assurance that this number would gain general support, particularly in the light of support from three of the political parties during initial consultation for a council size of between 57 and 64 members.

46 We noted that both 54-member schemes would secure substantial improvements in electoral equality when compared with the current arrangements. Both offered better electoral equality than the Council's scheme. In comparing the Conservatives' and Liberal Democrats' proposals, we noted that the Conservative scheme reflected some of the thinking behind the Council's proposals and generally more closely met the statutory criteria than the Liberal Democrats' scheme.

47 However, the Commission would not endorse either scheme in its entirety. Each differs in some areas regarding the precise boundaries which it has proposed, and we have noted the arguments put to us concerning community identity issues. We have tried to reflect such considerations in formulating our draft recommendations, although we note that there is no consensus locally on the precise boundaries of some communities.

48 Accordingly, we have concluded that we should base our recommendations on the Conservatives' scheme, but with some substantial amendments which take into account objections received. These recommendations, while generally based on one scheme, reflect consensus where it exists and deal with objections received concerning both 54-member schemes. We consider that our draft recommendations would provide a better balance between electoral equality and the statutory criteria than the current arrangements or other schemes submitted at Stage One. Because the Council and Green Party schemes propose significantly different council sizes from the Conservatives' scheme they are not discussed in detail in the following paragraphs. For borough warding purposes, the following areas, based on existing wards, are considered in turn:

- (a) Portslade North, Portslade South, Rottingdean and Woodingdean wards;
- (b) Hangleton, Nevill, Stanford, Westbourne and Wish wards;
- (c) Brunswick & Adelaide, Goldsmid, Regency and Vallance wards;
- (d) Preston, St Peter's, Seven Dials and Westdene wards;
- (e) Hollingbury, Moulsecoomb, Patcham, Stanmer and Tenantry wards;
- (f) Hanover, King's Cliff, Marine and Queen's Park wards.

49 Details of our draft recommendations are set out in Figures 1 and 2, and illustrated on Map 2, and on the large map inserted at the back of this report.

Portslade North, Portslade South, Rottingdean and Woodingdean wards

50 These wards lie on the fringes of Brighton & Hove, with the Portslade wards to the west and Woodingdean and Rottingdean wards to the east. Currently, the number of electors per councillor is equal to the borough average in Portslade North ward (unchanged in 2005), 7 per cent below the average in Portslade South ward (unchanged in 2005), equal to the average in Woodingdean ward (2 per cent below in 2005) and 6 per cent above the average in Rottingdean ward (unchanged in 2005).

51 At Stage One the Conservatives, the Council and the Green Party all made proposals which broadly retained the Portslade/Hove boundary, with the Conservatives and the Council amending part of it to follow the Hangleton link road. The Conservatives proposed moving a small triangle of Portslade North ward bounded by Fox Way, Foredown Road and Hangleton Lane to Portslade South ward. Under the Conservatives' proposal, Portslade North ward and Portslade South ward would both be two-member wards, while the number of electors per councillor would be 1 per cent above the average in Portslade North ward (unchanged in 2005) and 1 per cent below the average in Portslade South ward (unchanged in 2005).

52 The Liberal Democrats proposed a new three-member ward of Portslade Village which would include Portslade North ward and part of Portslade South ward. The southern boundary would be the Old Shoreham Road. The remainder of Portslade South ward, with the whole of Wish ward, would form a new three-member Harbour ward. Under this proposal the number of electors per councillor would be 1 per cent below the average in Harbour ward (unchanged in 2005) and 2 per cent above in Portslade Village ward (unchanged in 2005).

53 The Conservatives, the Liberal Democrats and the Green Party all proposed retaining the existing boundaries of Woodingdean ward, with the Conservatives proposing a two-member ward. Under the Conservatives' proposal, the number of electors per councillor would be 3 per cent above the average (2 per cent above in 2005). The Conservatives proposed a three-member Rottingdean Coastal ward, which would include Rottingdean and the part of Marine ward comprising Roedean, Brighton Marina and Sussex Square. Under this proposal the number of electors per councillor would be 3 per cent below the average (1 per cent below in 2005).

54 The Liberal Democrats proposed a two-member Woodingdean ward and a two-member Rottingdean ward which would be reduced in size, with the Ovingdean polling district becoming part of an enlarged three-member Marine ward. Under this proposal the number of electors per councillor would be 3 per cent above the average in Woodingdean ward (2 per cent above in 2005) and 4 per cent below the average in Rottingdean ward (unchanged in 2005).

55 We have given careful consideration to the views we have received concerning these areas. With regard to the proposals for the two Portslade wards we agree that, in the interest of community identity, the existing Portslade/Hove boundary should be broadly retained, with part being amended to follow the Hangleton link road. However, we see no need to change the boundary between Portslade North ward and Portslade South ward in the interest of electoral equality. We are therefore putting forward as part of our draft recommendations the retention of the existing Portslade North ward, with a small part of Portslade South ward being transferred to Hangleton & Knoll ward such that the Hangleton link road becomes the new boundary. With regard to the proposal for Woodingdean ward, having visited the area we have seen how it is isolated from the remainder of the borough. We have noted the views of residents and councillors, and agree that the existing ward should be retained. We note that the proposed new Rottingdean Coastal ward would achieve significant improvements in electoral equality while also meeting the statutory criteria. We are therefore adopting the Conservatives' proposals for Woodingdean and Rottingdean Coastal wards as part of our draft recommendations.

56 Under our draft recommendations the number of electors per councillor would be 4 per cent below the borough average in Portslade South ward (unchanged in 2005), 3 per cent above

in Portslade North ward (unchanged in 2005), 3 per cent below in Rottingdean Coastal ward (1 per cent below in 2005) and 3 per cent above in Woodingdean ward (2 per cent above in 2005). Our draft recommendations are illustrated on the large map at the back of this report.

Hangleton, Nevill, Stanford, Westbourne and Wish wards

57 These wards lie in north and west Hove. Wish and Westbourne wards are both coastal wards while Hangleton, Nevill and Stanford wards lie to the north of the Hove to Brighton railway line. Currently the number of electors per councillor is 8 per cent below the average in Wish ward (9 per cent below in 2005), 3 per cent below in Westbourne ward (4 per cent below in 2005), 15 per cent below in Hangleton ward (16 per cent below in 2005), 13 per cent below in Nevill ward (unchanged in 2005) and 11 per cent below in Stanford ward (unchanged in 2005).

58 The Conservatives proposed a new three-member Hangleton & Knoll ward which would include the existing Hangleton ward and the western part of Nevill ward from Holmes Avenue in the east to the railway line in the south. A new three-member Hove Park ward would include the existing Stanford ward except for the part south of Old Shoreham Road between The Drive and Goldstone Lane, together with the part of Nevill ward not included in the proposed Hangleton & Knoll ward, and parts of Wish and Westbourne wards. They also proposed a new three-member Kingsway ward which would include the majority of Wish ward and most of Westbourne ward. Under these proposals the number of electors per councillor would be equal to the average in Hangleton & Knoll ward (1 per cent below in 2005), equal to the average in Hove Park ward (unchanged in 2005) and 2 per cent above in Kingsway ward (1 per cent above in 2005).

59 The Liberal Democrats proposed a two-member Hove Park ward, with different boundaries from the Conservatives, a three-member Harbour ward which would include Wish ward and part of Portslade South ward from Old Shoreham Road, a new three-member Hangleton ward which would include the existing Hangleton ward and part of the existing Nevill ward, and a new three-member Kingsway ward, to include Westbourne ward and part of Vallance ward.

60 We have given careful consideration to the schemes for this area. Under the Conservative proposals the Poet's Corner area, currently in Westbourne ward, would be linked with Nevill ward and Stanford ward to form Hove Park ward. Having visited the area, we are of the opinion that a natural community would be split under this proposal, and that in the interest of community identity it is desirable to keep this area as at present. Therefore we propose to retain Wish ward and Westbourne ward on their existing boundaries rather than adopt the proposal for a Kingsway ward. The rest of the boundary for Hove Park ward would be as proposed by the Conservatives. This would produce three two-member wards in this area rather than two three-member wards. There was unanimity between the schemes for a new ward linking Hangleton ward with part of Nevill ward. In view of the significant improvements in electoral equality we are adopting the Conservatives' proposal for Hangleton & Knoll ward as part of our draft recommendations.

61 Under our draft recommendations the number of electors per councillor would be equal to the average in Hangleton & Knoll ward (1 per cent below in 2005), 7 per cent above in Hove Park ward (unchanged in 2005), equal to the average in Westbourne ward (unchanged in 2005) and 5 per cent below in Wish ward (unchanged in 2005). Our draft recommendations are illustrated on the large map at the back of this report.

Brunswick & Adelaide, Goldsmid, Regency and Vallance wards

62 These four wards are situated generally in the centre of Brighton & Hove, three lying in the former borough of Hove and one, Regency, in the former borough of Brighton. The number of electors per councillor is currently 12 per cent above the average in Brunswick & Adelaide ward (13 per cent above in 2005), 2 per cent above in Goldsmid ward (unchanged in 2005), 4 per cent above in Regency ward (5 per cent above in 2005) and 1 per cent above in Vallance ward (unchanged in 2005).

63 The Conservatives' proposed a three-member Goldsmid ward which would include the existing Goldsmid ward together with part of Stanford ward and part of Vallance ward. The boundaries would follow Sackville Road, Goldstone Lane and Old Shoreham Road. The Conservatives proposed a new three-member ward of Central Hove which would be formed by joining Vallance ward with part of Brunswick & Adelaide, and would run along the seafront from Landsdowne Place to Hove Street/Sackville Road. They also proposed a new three-member ward of Brunswick & Regency which would include the remainder of Brunswick & Adelaide ward up to but not including Landsdowne Place, and the whole of Regency ward. Under the Conservatives' proposals the number of electors per councillor would be 1 per cent above the average in Brunswick & Regency ward (2 per cent above in 2005), equal to the average in Central Hove ward (unchanged in 2005) and equal to the average in Goldsmid ward (unchanged in 2005).

64 The Liberal Democrats were opposed to a new ward crossing the former Brighton/Hove boundary. Their proposal was for this boundary to be retained by also retaining a three-member Brunswick & Adelaide ward while moving its boundary with their proposed three-member Kingsway ward in the west to follow Albany Villas and Ventnor Villas. They also objected to the position of the boundary between the proposed Central Hove and Brunswick & Regency wards. They proposed a three-member County Ground ward which would include most of the existing Goldsmid ward and would extend along Old Shoreham Road to include parts of Nevill and Stanford wards, and part of Vallance ward south of the railway line. Under the Liberal Democrats' proposals the number of electors per councillor would be 2 per cent below the average in Brunswick & Adelaide ward (1 per cent below in 2005), equal to the average in County Ground ward (unchanged in 2005) and 1 per cent below in Kingsway ward (unchanged in 2005).

65 We have given careful consideration to the views which we have received for the four existing wards in this area. We have noted the objections raised by the Liberal Democrats and a number of residents to some of the proposed boundaries. However, we do not accept the argument that the former Brighton/Hove boundary should be retained in its entirety, although Brighton and Hove clearly still exist separately in the perception of some residents. In particular, when looking at the criticism of the boundary between the proposed Brunswick & Regency and Central Hove wards we decided, on the grounds of electoral equality, that it was not possible to move it significantly to the west as some residents had requested. After touring the area, our judgement is that community identity is not quite as clearly defined as some respondents have suggested, and where the line is drawn between communities is far from clear. It is also evident that parts of the former boundary have been lost and can no longer be tied to ground detail. For these reasons we consider that we should include the Conservatives' proposals for Brunswick &

Regency ward and Central Hove ward, and the boundary between them which runs down the rear of houses parallel to Lansdowne Place, as part of our draft recommendations.

66 Both schemes proposed retaining the existing Goldsmid ward in a modified ward. However, we are content to adopt the boundary proposed by the Conservatives as part of our draft proposals, particularly as it is compatible with the ward pattern we are adopting for the rest of this area. We have also been persuaded that there is a strong historical and community-centred argument for retaining the name ‘Goldsmid’ and have decided to make its retention, rather than the name County Ground, part of our draft recommendations.

67 Under our draft recommendations the number of electors per councillor would be 1 per cent above the average in Brunswick & Regency ward (2 per cent above in 2005), equal to the average in Central Hove ward (unchanged in 2005) and equal to the average in Goldsmid ward (unchanged in 2005). Our draft recommendations are illustrated on the large map at the back of this report.

Preston, St Peter’s, Seven Dials and Westdene wards

68 These wards lie in a band which stretches north-west from the centre of Brighton & Hove to the A27 dual carriageway and the Downs in the north. The number of electors per councillor is 5 per cent above the average in Preston ward (3 per cent above in 2005), 5 per cent above in St Peter’s ward (unchanged in 2005), 6 per cent above in Seven Dials ward (9 per cent above in 2005) and 2 per cent above in Westdene ward (3 per cent above in 2005).

69 The Conservatives, the Council and the Liberal Democrats all proposed a new three-member Withdean ward which would include a large part of Westdene ward and part of Preston ward. In the Conservatives’ scheme the pivotal point would be Withdean Stadium, and the whole of Preston Village would be retained in the new ward. The Conservatives also proposed a new three-member ward of Preston Park. The park would be central to this ward, with the Lewes/Brighton railway line to Brighton station forming the boundary with St Peter’s ward. The final part of the Conservatives’ proposals for this area is for a new three-member ward of St Peter’s & North Laine, which would include a large part of the existing St Peter’s ward, together with the part of Hollingbury ward south of the railway line and the North Laine/Brighton station area of Seven Dials ward. Under these proposals the number of electors per councillor would be 2 per cent above the average in Preston Park ward (1 per cent below in 2005), 3 per cent below in St Peter’s & North Laine ward (1 per cent below in 2005) and 1 per cent below in Withdean ward (equal to the average in 2005).

70 The Liberal Democrats’ proposals for Withdean ward differed from the Conservatives’ in that the boundary with their proposed three-member Preston Park ward would not extend as far into the existing Preston ward. In the south it would extend by a narrow corridor to the Old Shoreham Road. The eastern boundary of the proposed Preston Park ward would follow Ditching Road, the existing boundary with Hollingbury ward, taking in one side of the existing St Peter’s ward. A new three-member ward of Montpellier would be formed from parts of the existing Regency, Seven Dials and St Peter’s wards, extending from the seafront to Seven Dials. The remainder of Seven Dials and St Peter’s wards would, together with parts of Hanover, Queen’s

Park and Tenantry wards, form a new three-member Bassam ward. Under these proposals the number of electors per councillor would be 2 per cent above the average in Bassam ward (unchanged in 2005), 1 per cent above in Montpellier ward (2 per cent above in 2005), 1 per cent above in Preston Park ward (unchanged in 2005) and 1 per cent above in Withdean ward (unchanged in 2005).

71 Having given careful consideration to the proposals for this area we note that there is little difference between the Conservative and Liberal Democrat schemes with regard to electoral equality. However, with regard to the statutory criteria we consider the Conservatives' scheme to be preferable in that we consider the boundaries are stronger and natural communities are better preserved under their proposals. We therefore propose adopting the Conservatives' scheme without amendment as our draft proposals.

72 Under our draft recommendations the number of electors per councillor would be 2 per cent above the average in Preston Park ward (1 per cent below in 2005), 3 per cent below in St Peter's & North Laine ward (1 per cent below in 2005) and 1 per cent below in Withdean ward (equal to the average in 2005). Our draft recommendations are illustrated on the large map at the back of this report.

Hollingbury, Moulsecoomb, Patcham, Stanmer and Tenantry wards

73 These five wards form an arc to the north of Brighton town centre, with Patcham, Stanmer and Moulsecoomb wards bordering the Downs to the north. The number of electors is 2 per cent above the average in Hollingbury ward (1 per cent in 2005), 10 per cent below in Moulsecoomb ward (9 per cent below in 2005), 5 per cent below in Patcham ward (6 per cent below in 2005), 6 per cent above in Stanmer ward (5 per cent above in 2005) and 6 per cent above in Tenantry ward (4 per cent above in 2005).

74 The Conservatives and the Liberal Democrats both proposed a new three-member ward bringing together most of the existing ward of Hollingbury and part of Stanmer ward. The only difference in the boundaries would be in the south where, under the Conservative scheme, the boundary would follow the railway line while, under the Liberal Democrat scheme, it would follow Hollingdean Road. To the north the ward would include the rest of Hollingbury ward and the part of Stanmer ward comprising Coldean, Stanmer village and the Sussex University campus. Under the Conservative proposals the number of electors per councillor would be 2 per cent above the average (1 per cent above in 2005); under the Liberal Democrat proposals it would be equal to the average (1 per cent below in 2005). Both schemes achieve good electoral equality, but in our opinion the Conservatives' southern boundary, which follows the railway line, is stronger and more clearly identifiable. For this reason we propose adopting the Conservative scheme for Hollingbury & Stanmer ward as part of our draft proposals.

75 The Conservatives and Liberal Democrats produced identical schemes for a new three-member ward which would include the whole of the existing Moulsecoomb ward and the part of Tenantry ward to the north of Bear Road. Under these proposals the number of electors per councillor would be 1 per cent above the average initially (unchanged in 2005). We propose adopting this revised Moulsecoomb & Tenantry ward as part of our draft proposals.

76 The Conservatives proposed a new three-member Patcham ward which would include the whole of the existing ward together with part of Stanmer ward. The eastern boundary would be Ditchling Road. Under this proposal the number of electors per councillor would be 1 per cent below the average (unchanged in 2005). The Liberal Democrats also proposed a new three-member ward with the same boundaries, apart from making the railway line the western boundary for the whole length of the ward. As we see no need to change the western boundary we propose adopting the Conservative's scheme as part of our draft proposals. In doing so we have addressed concerns expressed by residents about the Council's scheme, namely that the Brangwyn estate continue to be part of Patcham ward.

77 Under our draft recommendations the number of electors per councillor would be 2 per cent above the average in Hollingbury & Stanmer ward (1 per cent in 2005), 1 per cent above in Moulsecoomb & Tenantry ward (unchanged in 2005) and 1 per cent below in Patcham ward (unchanged in 2005). Our draft recommendations are illustrated on the large map at the back of this report.

Hanover, Kings Cliff, Marine and Queen's Park wards

78 These wards lie to the east of Brighton town centre, and all except Hanover ward are seafront wards. Brighton Marina is in Marine ward. The number of electors per councillor is 14 per cent above the average in Hanover ward (15 per cent above in 2005), 3 per cent below in King's Cliff ward (unchanged in 2005), 14 per cent above in Marine ward (17 per cent above in 2005) and 11 per cent below in Queen's Park ward (unchanged in 2005).

79 The Conservatives proposed a new three-member Hanover & Elm Grove ward to include the part of the existing Hanover ward north of Albion Hill, part of the existing Tenantry ward south of Bear Road and part of the existing Queen's Park ward north of Down Terrace. The western boundary would be Lewes Road, while the eastern boundary would be Freshfield Road, Tenantry Road and Down Road. They also proposed a new three-member Queen's Park ward, retaining all of the existing ward except the northern part, which would become part of the proposed Hanover & Elm Grove ward. It would also encompass the part of the existing Hanover ward south of Albion Hill and the western part of the existing King's Cliff ward. A new three-member ward of East Brighton was also proposed, including the remainder of the existing King's Cliff ward and most of the existing Marine ward. Under these proposals the southern part of the existing Marine ward, including Roedean, Brighton Marina and Sussex Square, would be transferred to the proposed Rottingdean Coastal ward.

80 Under the Conservatives' proposals the number of electors per councillor would be 1 per cent below the average in East Brighton ward (unchanged in 2005), 1 per cent below the average in Hanover & Elm Grove ward (equal to the average in 2005) and equal to the average in Queen's Park ward (1 per cent below in 2005).

81 The Liberal Democrats proposed retaining the Hanover community in a new three-member Albion ward. Its centre would be the heart of the existing Hanover ward. To the west, part of Seven Dials ward would be included, while to the east and south part of the existing Queen's Park ward would be included. The Liberal Democrats proposed a new three-member Bassam ward

which would include the part of the existing Tenantry ward south of Bear Road, the northern parts of the existing Hanover and Queen's Park wards, the south and eastern parts of the existing St Peter's ward and a small part of Seven Dials ward. A new three-member Madeira ward was also proposed, which would extend along the sea front from the Metropole hotel in the west to the existing King's Cliff ward boundary in the east. It would include a small part of the existing Regency ward, the southern part of the existing Queen's Park ward and the majority of the existing King's Cliff ward. The Liberal Democrats also proposed a new three-member Marine ward, which would include the existing ward, with the addition of Ovingdean from the existing Rottingdean ward in the east and the Bristol estate from King's Cliff ward in the west.

82 Under the Liberal Democrats' proposals the number of electors per councillor would be 2 per cent below the average in Albion ward (equal to the average in 2005), 2 per cent above in Bassam ward (unchanged in 2005), equal to the average in Madeira ward (unchanged in 2005) and 4 per cent below in Marine ward (2 per cent below in 2005).

83 We have given careful consideration to the views which we have received concerning the four existing wards in this area. Both the Conservatives' and the Liberal Democrats' schemes achieve good electoral equality. However, when considering the statutory criteria we are concerned at the lack of community identity in the Liberal Democrats' proposed wards of Albion, Bassam and Madeira, where, in our opinion, existing communities have been split. The Conservatives' proposals in this area seem better in this regard and we propose adopting them as part of our draft recommendations, with one exception. In the interest of community identity we propose amending the boundary between the proposed Queen's Park and East Brighton wards to include in Queen's Park ward Canning Street, Hendon Street, Bute Street, Rochester Street and Livingstone Street and the north side of College Terrace, with all the houses on the east of Walpole Road included in the proposed ward of East Brighton.

84 Under our draft recommendations the number of electors per councillor would be 4 per cent below the average in East Brighton ward (unchanged in 2005), 1 per cent below in Hanover & Elm Grove ward (equal to the average in 2005) and 2 per cent above in Queen's Park ward (unchanged in 2005). Our draft recommendations are illustrated on the large map at the back of this report.

Electoral Cycle

85 At Stage One Brighton & Hove Council, the Conservatives and the Green Party proposed that the council should continue to be elected as a whole every four years. We received no other proposals in relation to the electoral cycle, and accordingly recommend that the present system of whole-council elections every four years should be retained.

Conclusions

86 Having considered all the evidence and representations received during the initial stage of the review, we propose that:

- (a) there should be a reduction in council size from 78 to 54;
- (b) there should be 20 wards;
- (c) the boundaries of 22 of the existing wards should be modified, resulting in a net reduction of six wards;
- (d) elections should continue to be held for the whole council.

87 As already indicated, we have based our draft recommendations on the Conservative Group's proposals, but propose departing from them in the following areas:

- (a) we propose retaining the existing boundary between Portslade North and Portslade South wards;
- (b) we propose retaining Westbourne ward and Wish ward and modifying the southern boundary of Hove Park ward;
- (c) we propose a modification to the boundary between East Brighton ward and Queen's Park ward.

88 Figure 5 shows the impact of our draft recommendations on electoral equality, comparing them with the current arrangements, based on 2000 electorate figures and with forecast electorates for the year 2005.

Figure 5: Comparison of Current and Recommended Electoral Arrangements

	2000 electorate		2005 forecast electorate	
	Current arrangements	Draft recommendations	Current arrangements	Draft recommendations
Number of councillors	78	54	78	54
Number of wards	26	20	26	20
Average number of electors per councillor	2,497	3,607	2,501	3,612
Number of wards with a variance more than 10 per cent from the average	7	0	7	0
Number of wards with a variance more than 20 per cent from the average	0	0	0	0

89 As shown in Figure 5, our draft recommendations for Brighton & Hove Council would result in a reduction in the number of wards varying by more than 10 per cent from the borough average from seven to none, both initially and by 2005.

Draft Recommendation

Brighton & Hove Council should comprise 54 councillors serving 20 wards, as detailed and named in Figures 1 and 2, and illustrated on Map 2 and the large map inside the back cover. The Council should continue to hold whole-council elections every four years.

Parish Council Electoral Arrangements

90 In undertaking reviews of electoral arrangements we are required to comply as far as possible with the provisions set out in Schedule 11 to the 1972 Act. The Schedule provides that if a parish is to be divided between different wards it must also be divided into parish wards, so that each parish ward lies wholly within a single ward of the district. However, we propose to make no changes to the electoral arrangements of Rottingdean Parish Council, as they are unaffected by our proposed borough electoral arrangements, and in response to the specific request of Rottingdean Parish Council.

Draft Recommendation

For Rottingdean Parish Council whole-council elections should continue to take place every four years, on the same cycle as that of Brighton & Hove Council.

91 We have not finalised our conclusions on the electoral arrangements for Brighton & Hove and welcome comments from the Council and others relating to the proposed ward boundaries, number of councillors, electoral cycle, ward names and parish council electoral arrangements. We will consider all the evidence submitted to us during the consultation period before preparing our final recommendations.

Map 2: The Commission's Draft Recommendations for Brighton & Hove

5 NEXT STEPS

92 We are putting forward draft recommendations on future electoral arrangements for consultation. We will take fully into account all representations received by 23 April 2001. Representations received after this date may not be taken into account. All representations will be available for public inspection by appointment at the offices of the Commission and Brighton & Hove Council, and a list of respondents will be available on request from the Commission after the end of the consultation period.

93 Views may be expressed by writing directly to us:

Review Manager
Brighton & Hove Review
Local Government Commission for England
Dolphyn Court
10/11 Great Turnstile
London WC1V 7JU

Fax: 020 7404 6142
E-mail: reviews@lgce.gov.uk
www.lgce.gov.uk

94 In the light of representations received, we will review our draft recommendations to consider whether they should be altered. As indicated earlier, it is therefore important that all interested parties let us have their views and evidence, whether or not they agree with our draft recommendations. We will then submit our final recommendations to the Secretary of State for the Environment, Transport and the Regions. After the publication of our final recommendations, all further correspondence should be sent to the Secretary of State, who cannot make an Order giving effect to our recommendations until six weeks after he receives them.

APPENDIX A

Brighton & Hove Council's Proposed Electoral Arrangements

Our draft recommendations detailed in Figures 1 and 2 differ from those put forward by the Council in all wards, where the Council's proposals were as follows:

Figure A1: Brighton & Hove Council's Proposals: Constituent Areas

Ward name	Constituent areas
Brunswick & Regency	Brunswick & Adelaide ward (part); Regency ward (part); Seven Dials ward (part)
Central Hove	Brunswick & Adelaide ward (part); Vallance ward (part)
County Ground	Brunswick & Adelaide ward (part); Goldsmid ward (part); Regency ward (part); Vallance ward (part)
East Brighton	King's Cliff ward (part); Marine ward
Hangleton & Knoll	Hangleton ward; Nevill ward (part); Portslade South ward (part)
Hanover	Hanover ward (part); Queen's Park ward (part)
Hollingbury & Coldean	Hollingbury ward (part); Stanmer ward (part)
Hove Park	Nevill ward (part); Stanford ward
Kingsway	Westdene ward (part); Wish ward (part)
Moulsecoomb & Bevendean	Moulsecoomb ward; Stanmer ward (part); Tenantry ward (part)
Patcham	Patcham ward (part); Stanmer ward (part)
Portland	Nevill ward (part); Vallance ward (part); Westbourne ward (part); Wish ward (part)
Portslade North	Portslade North ward; Portslade South ward (part)
Portslade South	Portslade South ward (part)
Preston	Preston ward (part); St Peter's ward (part); Westdene ward (part)
Queen's Park	King's Cliff ward (part); Queen's Park ward (part)
Rottingdean	Rottingdean ward; Woodingdean ward (part)
St Peter's	Hanover ward (part); Hollingbury ward (part); St Peter's ward (part); Seven Dials ward (part)
Seven Dials	Regency ward (part); Goldsmid ward (part); Seven Dials ward (part)
Tenantry	Hanover ward (part); Queen's Park ward (part); Tenantry ward (part)
Withdean	Patcham ward (part); Preston ward (part); Stanmer ward (part); Westdene ward (part)
Woodingdean	Woodingdean ward (part)

Figure A2: Brighton & Hove Council's Proposals: Number of Councillors and Electors by Ward

Ward name	Number of councillors	Electorate (2000)	Number of electors per councillor	Variance from average %	Electorate (2005)	Number of electors per councillor	Variance from average %
Brunswick & Regency	3	9,039	3,013	-1	9,139	3,046	0
Central Hove	3	8,631	2,877	-5	8,677	2,892	-5
County Ground	3	8,779	2,926	-4	8,860	2,953	-3
East Brighton	3	9,375	3,125	3	9,631	3,210	5
Hangleton & Knoll	3	9,331	3,110	2	9,235	3,078	1
Hanover	3	9,457	3,152	4	9,471	3,157	4
Hollingbury & Coldean	3	9,341	3,114	2	9,257	3,086	1
Hove Park	3	8,744	2,915	-4	8,734	2,911	-4
Kingsway	3	8,680	2,893	-5	8,674	2,891	-5
Moulsecoomb & Bevendean	3	9,181	3,060	1	9,228	3,076	1
Patcham	3	9,390	3,130	3	9,353	3,118	2
Portland	3	8,762	2,921	-4	8,745	2,915	-4
Portslade North	3	8,825	2,942	-3	8,826	2,942	-3
Portslade South	2	5,598	2,799	-8	5,593	2,797	-8
Preston	3	9,505	3,168	4	9,376	3,125	3
Queen's Park	3	9,609	3,203	5	9,543	3,181	4
Rottingdean	3	9,130	3,043	0	9,121	3,040	0
St Peter's	3	9,237	3,079	1	9,516	3,172	4
Seven Dials	3	9,472	3,157	4	9,363	3,121	2
Tenantry	3	9,108	3,036	0	9,173	3,058	0
Withdean	3	9,307	3,102	2	9,322	3,107	2
Woodingdean	2	6,271	3,136	3	6,208	3,104	2
Totals	64	194,772	-	-	195,045	-	-
Averages	-	-	3,043	-	-	3,048	-

Source: Electorate figures are based on Brighton & Hove Council's submission.

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

Brighton & Hove Council Conservative Group's Proposed Electoral Arrangements

Our draft recommendations detailed in Figures 1 and 2 differ from those put forward by the Conservative Group in six wards, where the Conservative Group's proposals were as follows:

Figure A3: Brighton & Hove Council Conservative Group's Proposals: Constituent Areas

Ward name	Constituent areas
East Brighton	King's Cliff ward (part); Marine ward (part)
Hove Park	Nevill ward (part); Stanford ward (part); Westbourne ward (part); Wish ward (part)
Kingsway	Westbourne ward (part); Wish ward (part)
Portslade North	Portslade North ward (part)
Portslade South	Portslade South ward; Portslade North ward (part)
Queen's Park	Queen's Park ward (part); King's Cliff ward (part)

Figure A4: Brighton & Hove Conservative Group's Proposals: Number of Councillors and Electors by Ward

Ward name	Number of councillors	Electorate (2000)	Number of electors per councillor	Variance from average %	Electorate (2005)	Number of electors per councillor	Variance from average %
East Brighton	3	10,683	3,561	-1	10,698	3,566	-1
Hove Park	3	10,850	3,617	0	10,845	3,615	0
Kingsway	3	10,983	3,661	2	10,976	3,659	1
Portslade North	2	7,298	3,649	1	7,299	3,650	1
Portslade South	2	7,125	3,563	-1	7,120	3,560	-1
Queen's Park	3	10,792	3,597	0	10,766	3,589	-1

Source: Electorate figures are based on Brighton & Hove Council Conservative Group's submission

Brighton & Hove Liberal Democrats' Proposed Electoral Arrangements

Figure A5: Brighton & Hove Liberal Democrats' Proposals: Constituent Areas

Ward name	Constituent areas
Albion	Hanover ward (part); Queen's Park ward (part); Seven Dials ward (part)
Bassam	Hanover ward (part); Hollingbury ward (part); Queen's Park ward (part); St Peter's ward (part); Tenantry ward (part)
Brunswick & Adelaide	Brunswick & Adelaide ward; Goldsmid ward (part); Vallance ward (part)
County Ground	Goldsmid ward (part); Nevill ward (part); Stanford ward (part); Vallance ward (part)
Hangleton	Hangleton ward; Nevill ward (part)
Harbour	Nevill ward (part); Portslade South ward (part); Wish ward (part)
Hollingbury Hill	Hollingbury ward (part); Stanmer ward (part)
Hove Park	Nevill ward (part); Stanford ward (part)
Kingsway	Vallance ward (part); Westbourne ward; Wish ward (part)
Madeira	King's Cliff ward (part); Queen's Park ward (part); Regency ward (part); Seven Dials ward (part)
Marine	King's Cliff ward (part); Marine ward; Rottingdean ward (part)
Montpelier	Regency ward (part); St Peter's ward (part); Seven Dials ward (part)
Moulsecoomb	Moulescoomb ward; Tenantry ward (part)
Patcham	Patcham ward; Stanmer ward (part); Westdene ward (part)
Portslade Village	Portslade North ward; Portslade South ward (part)
Preston Park	Preston ward (part); St Peter's ward (part); Westdene ward (part)
Rottingdean	Rottingdean ward (part)
Withdean	Preston ward (part); Seven Dials ward (part); Westdene ward (part)
Woodingdean	<i>Unchanged</i> (Woodingdean ward)

Figure A6: Brighton & Hove Liberal Democrats' Proposals: Number of Councillors and Electors by Ward

Ward name	Number of councillors	Electorate (2000)	Number of electors per councillor	Variance from average %	Electorate (2005)	Number of electors per councillor	Variance from average %
Albion	3	10,624	3,541	-2	10,806	3,602	0
Bassam	3	11,068	3,689	2	11,022	3,674	2
Brunswick & Adelaide	3	10,576	3,525	-2	10,677	3,559	-1
County Ground	3	10,823	3,608	0	10,812	3,604	0
Hangleton	3	10,791	3,597	0	10,693	3,564	-1
Harbour	3	10,707	3,569	-1	10,698	3,566	-1
Hollingbury Hill	3	10,850	3,617	0	10,760	3,587	-1
Hove Park	2	7,108	3,554	-1	7,105	3,553	-2
Kingsway	3	10,755	3,585	-1	10,714	3,571	-1
Madeira	3	10,863	3,621	0	10,881	3,627	0
Marine	3	10,384	3,461	-4	10,640	3,547	-2
Montpelier	3	10,969	3,656	1	11,005	3,668	2
Moulsecomb	3	10,916	3,639	1	10,952	3,651	1
Patcham	3	11,043	3,681	2	11,006	3,669	2
Portslade Village	3	11,024	3,675	2	11,046	3,682	2
Preston Park	3	10,953	3,651	1	10,892	3,631	1
Rottingdean	2	6,939	3,470	-4	6,944	3,472	-4
Withdean	3	10,918	3,639	1	10,997	3,666	1
Woodingdean	2	7,463	3,732	3	7,384	3,692	2
Totals	54	194,774	-	-	195,034	-	-
Averages	-	-	3,607	-	-	3,612	-

Source: Electorate figures are based on Brighton & Hove Liberal Democrats' submission

Brighton & Hove Green Party's Proposed Electoral Arrangements

Figure A7: Brighton & Hove Green Party's Proposals: Constituent Areas

Ward name	Constituent areas
Brunswick & Adelaide	<i>Unchanged</i> (Brunswick & Adelaide ward)
College	Hanover ward (part); King's Cliff ward (part); Marine ward (part); Queen's Park ward (part)
Goldsmid	<i>Unchanged</i> (Goldsmid ward)
Hangleton	Hangleton ward; Nevill ward (part)
Hanover	Hanover ward (part)
Hollingbury	Hollingbury ward (part)
Marine	Marine ward (part)
Moulsecoomb	Moulsecoomb ward; Tenantry ward (part)
Patcham	Patcham ward; Preston ward (part)
Portslade North	<i>Unchanged</i> (Portslade North ward)
Portslade South	Nevill ward (part); Portslade South ward
Preston	Preston ward (part); St Peter's ward (part)
Regency	<i>Unchanged</i> (Regency ward)
Rottingdean	<i>Unchanged</i> (Rottingdean ward)
Seven Dials	<i>Unchanged</i> (Seven Dials ward)
St James & St George	King's Cliff ward (part); Queen's Park ward (part)
St Peter's	Hollingbury ward (part); St Peter's ward (part)
Stanford	Nevill ward (part); Stanford ward
Stanmer	<i>Unchanged</i> (Stanmer ward)
Tenantry	Hanover ward (part); Tenantry ward (part)
Vallance	Nevill ward (part); Vallance ward
Westbourne	Nevill ward (part); Westbourne ward
Westdene	<i>Unchanged</i> (Westdene ward)
Wish	Nevill ward (part); Wish ward
Woodingdean	<i>Unchanged</i> (Woodingdean ward)

Figure A8: Brighton & Hove Green Party's Proposals: Number of Councillors and Electors by Ward

Ward name	Number of councillors	Electorate (2000)	Number of electors per councillor	Variance from average %	Electorate (2005)	Number of electors per councillor	Variance from average %
Brunswick & Adelaide	3	8,404	2,801	8	8,416	2,805	8
College	3	7,492	2,497	-4	7,502	2,501	-4
Goldsmid	3	7,618	2,539	-2	7,629	2,543	-2
Hangleton	3	7,970	2,657	2	7,981	2,660	2
Hanover	3	7,318	2,439	-6	7,328	2,443	-6
Hollingbury Hill	3	7,708	2,569	-1	7,719	2,573	-1
Marine	3	7,797	2,599	0	7,808	2,603	0
Moulsecoomb	3	7,420	2,473	-5	7,430	2,477	-5
Patcham	3	7,761	2,587	0	7,772	2,591	0
Portslade North	3	7,465	2,488	-4	7,475	2,492	-4
Portslade South	3	7,907	2,636	1	7,918	2,639	1
Preston	3	7,538	2,513	-3	7,549	2,516	-3
Regency	3	7,847	2,616	1	7,858	2,619	1
Rottingdean	3	7,938	2,646	2	7,949	2,650	2
Seven Dials	3	7,976	2,659	2	7,987	2,662	2
St James & St George	3	8,097	2,699	4	8,108	2,703	4
St Peter's	3	7,457	2,486	-4	7,467	2,489	-4
Stanford	3	8,000	2,667	3	8,011	2,670	3
Stanmer	3	7,958	2,653	2	7,969	2,656	2
Tenantry	3	7,514	2,505	-4	7,525	2,508	-4
Vallance	3	8,194	2,731	5	8,205	2,735	5
Westbourne	3	7,932	2,644	2	7,943	2,648	2
Westdene	3	7,796	2,599	0	7,807	2,602	0

Ward name	Number of councillors	Electorate (2000)	Number of electors per councillor	Variance from average %	Electorate (2005)	Number of electors per councillor	Variance from average %
Wish	3	8,202	2,734	5	8,213	2,738	5
Woodingdean	3	7,463	2,488	-4	7,473	2,491	-4
Totals	75	194,772	-	-	195,042	-	-
Averages	-	-	2,597	-	-	2,601	-

Source: Electorate figures are based on Brighton & Hove Green Party's submission.

APPENDIX B

The Statutory Provisions

Local Government Act 1992: the Commission's Role

1 Section 13(2) of the Local Government Act 1992 places a duty on the Commission to undertake periodic electoral reviews of each principal local authority area in England, and to make recommendations to the Secretary of State. Section 13(3) provides that, so far as reasonably practicable, the first such review of any area should be undertaken not less than 10 years, and not more than 15 years, after this Commission's predecessor, the Local Government Boundary Commission (LGBC), submitted an initial electoral review report on the county within which that area, or the larger part of the area, was located. This timetable applies to districts within shire and metropolitan counties, although not to South Yorkshire and Tyne and Wear¹. Nor does the timetable apply to London boroughs; the 1992 Act is silent on the timing of periodic electoral reviews in Greater London. Nevertheless, these areas will be included in the Commission's review programme. The Commission has no power to review the electoral arrangements of the City of London.

2 Under section 13(5) of the 1992 Act, the Commission is required to make recommendations to the Secretary of State for any changes to the electoral arrangements within the areas of English principal authorities as appear desirable to it, having regard to the need to:

- (a) reflect the identities and interests of local communities; and
- (b) secure effective and convenient local government.

3 In reporting to the Secretary of State, the Commission may make recommendations for such changes to electoral arrangements as are specified in section 14(4) of the 1992 Act. In relation to principal authorities, these are:

- the total number of councillors to be elected to the council;
- the number and boundaries of electoral areas (wards or divisions);
- the number of councillors to be elected for each electoral area, and the years in which they are to be elected; and
- the name of any electoral area.

4 Unlike the LGBC, the Commission may also make recommendations for changes in respect of electoral arrangements within parish and town council areas. Accordingly, in relation to parish or town councils within a principal authority's area, the Commission may make recommendations relating to:

¹ The Local Government Boundary Commission did not submit reports on the counties of South Yorkshire and Tyne and Wear.

- the number of councillors;
- the need for parish wards;
- the number and boundaries of any such wards;
- the number of councillors to be elected for any such ward or, in the case of a common parish, for each parish; and
- the name of any such ward.

5 In conducting the review, section 27 of the 1992 Act requires the Commission to comply, so far as is practicable, with the rules given in Schedule 11 to the Local Government Act 1972 for the conduct of electoral reviews.

Local Government Act 1972: Rules to be Observed in Considering Electoral Arrangements

6 By virtue of section 27 of the Local Government Act 1992, in undertaking a review of electoral arrangements the Commission is required to comply so far as is reasonably practicable with the rules set out in Schedule 11 to the 1972 Act. For ease of reference, those provisions of Schedule 11 which are relevant to this review are set out below.

7 In relation to shire districts:

Having regard to any changes in the number or distribution of the local government electors of the district likely to take place within the period of five years immediately following the consideration (by the Secretary of State or the Commission):

- (a) the ratio of the number of local government electors to the number of councillors to be elected shall be, as nearly as may be, the same in every ward in the district;
- (b) in a district every ward of a parish council shall lie wholly within a single ward of the district;
- (c) in a district every parish which is not divided into parish wards shall lie wholly within a single ward of the district.

8 The Schedule also provides that, subject to (a)–(c) above, regard should be had to:

- (d) the desirability of fixing ward boundaries which are and will remain easily identifiable; and
- (e) any local ties which would be broken by the fixing of any particular ward boundary.

9 The Schedule provides that, in considering whether a parish should be divided into wards, regard shall be had to whether:

- (f) the number or distribution of electors in the parish is such as to make a single election of parish councillors impracticable or inconvenient; and
- (g) it is desirable that any area or areas of the parish should be separately represented on the parish council.

10 Where it is decided to divide any such parish into parish wards, in considering the size and boundaries of the wards and fixing the number of parish councillors to be elected for each ward, regard shall be had to:

- (h) any change in the number or distribution of electors of the parish which is likely to take place within the period of five years immediately following the consideration;
- (i) the desirability of fixing boundaries which are and will remain easily identifiable; and
- (j) any local ties which will be broken by the fixing of any particular boundaries.

11 Where it is decided not to divide the parish into parish wards, in fixing the number of councillors to be elected for each parish regard shall be had to the number and distribution of electors of the parish and any change which is likely to take place within the period of five years immediately following the fixing of the number of parish councillors.

APPENDIX C

Code of Practice on Written Consultation

The Cabinet Office's November 2000 *Code of Practice on Written Consultation*, www.cabinet-office.gov.uk/servicefirst/index/consultation.htm, requires all Government Departments and Agencies to adhere to certain criteria, set out below, on the conduct of public consultations. Non-Departmental Public Bodies, such as the Local Government Commission, are encouraged to follow the Code.

The Code of Practice applies to consultation documents published after 1 January 2001, which should reproduce the criteria, give explanations of any departures, and confirm that the criteria have otherwise been followed.

Commission compliance with Code criteria

Criteria	Compliance/departure
Timing of consultation should be built into the planning process for a policy (including legislation) or service from the start, so that it has the best prospect of improving the proposals concerned, and so that sufficient time is left for it at each stage	The Commission complies with this requirement
It should be clear who is being consulted, about what questions, in what timescale and for what purpose	The Commission complies with this requirement
A consultation document should be as simple and concise as possible. It should include a summary, in two pages at most, of the main questions it seeks views on. It should make it as easy as possible for readers to respond, make contact or complain	The Commission complies with this requirement
Documents should be made widely available, with the fullest use of electronic means (though not to the exclusion of others), and effectively drawn to the attention of all interested groups and individuals	The Commission complies with this requirement
Sufficient time should be allowed for considered responses from all groups with an interest. Twelve weeks should be the standard minimum period for a consultation	The Commission consults on draft recommendations for a minimum of eight weeks, but may extend the period if consultations take place over holiday periods
Responses should be carefully and open-mindedly analysed, and the results made widely available, with an account of the views expressed, and reasons for decisions finally taken	The Commission complies with this requirement
Departments should monitor and evaluate consultations, designating a consultation coordinator who will ensure the lessons are disseminated	The Commission complies with this requirement

