

# Final recommendations on the future electoral arrangements for Oldham

Report to The Electoral Commission

*August 2003*

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## 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 and town councils.

This report sets out our final recommendations on the electoral arrangements for the borough of Oldham.



# Summary

We began a review of Oldham'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 Oldham:

- **in six of the 20 wards the number of electors represented by each councillor varies by more than 10% from the average for the borough and one ward varies by more than 20%;**
- **by 2006 this situation is expected to continue, with the number of electors per councillor forecast to vary by more than 10% from the average in six wards and by more than 20% in one ward.**

Our main final recommendations for future electoral arrangements (see Tables 1 and 2 and paragraphs 178–179) are that:

- **Oldham Borough Council should have 60 councillors, the same as at present;**
- **there should be 20 wards, the same as at present;**
- **the boundaries of 18 of the existing wards should be modified, and two wards should retain their existing boundaries.**

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 20 wards the number of electors per councillor would vary by no more than 8% from the borough average.**
- **This level of electoral equality is forecast to improve, with the number of electors per councillor in no ward expected to vary by more than 6% from the average for the borough in 2006.**

Recommendations are also made for changes to parish council electoral arrangements which provide for:

- **new warding arrangements for Saddleworth parish.**

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 8 October 2003. The information in the representations will be available for public access once the Order has been made.

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Table 1: Final recommendations: Summary

	Ward name	Number of councillors	Constituent areas	Large map reference
1	Alexandra	3	Part of Alexandra ward; part of Lees ward; part of St Paul's ward	4
2	Chadderton Central	3	Part of Chadderton Central ward; part of Chadderton South ward	2
3	Chadderton North	3	<i>Unchanged</i> - Chadderton North ward	2
4	Chadderton South	3	Part of Chadderton Central ward; part of Chadderton South ward	2
5	Coldhurst	3	Part of Coldhurst ward; part of Royton South ward; part of St Paul's ward; part of Werneth ward	2, 3 & 4
6	Crompton	3	<i>Unchanged</i> - part of Shaw & Crompton parish (the existing North and West parish wards)	1 & 3
7	Failsworth East	3	Part of Failsworth East ward; part of Failsworth West ward; part of Hollinwood ward; part of St Paul's ward	2 & 4
8	Failsworth West	3	Part of Failsworth East ward; part of Failsworth West ward	2
9	Hathershaw	3	Part of Alexandra ward; part of St Paul's ward	4
10	Hollinwood	3	Part of Hollinwood ward; part of St Paul's ward	2 & 4
11	Royton North	3	Part of Royton North ward	2 & 3
12	Royton South	3	Part of Coldhurst ward; part of Royton North ward; part of Royton South ward	2 & 3
13	Saddleworth North	3	Part of Saddleworth parish (the proposed Delph, Dobcross and Springhead Higher parish wards)	1, 3 & 5
14	Saddleworth South	3	Part of Saddleworth parish (the proposed Greenfield and Uppermill parish wards)	3, 4 & 5
15	Saddleworth West & Lees	3	Part of Saddleworth parish (the proposed Springhead Lower parish ward); part of Lees ward; part of St Mary's ward	3 & 4
16	St James'	3	Part of St James' ward; part of Waterhead ward	3
17	St Mary's	3	Part of Alexandra ward; part of Lees ward; part of St Mary's ward; part of St Paul's ward	3 & 4
18	Shaw	3	Part of St James' ward; part of Shaw & Crompton parish (the existing East and South parish wards)	1 & 3
19	Waterhead	3	Part of St Mary's ward; part of Waterhead ward	3 & 4
20	Werneth	3	Part of St Paul's ward; part of Werneth ward	2 & 4

*Notes:*

1. *Saddleworth and Shaw & Crompton are the only parished parts of the borough, as indicated above.*
2. *The wards on the above table are illustrated on Map 2 and the large maps.*
3. *We have made a number of minor boundary amendments to ensure that existing ward boundaries adhere to ground detail. These changes do not affect any electors.*

Table 2: Final recommendations for Oldham

	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	Alexandra	3	7,546	2,515	-5	7,620	2,540	-5
2	Chadderton Central	3	7,826	2,609	-2	8,159	2,720	1
3	Chadderton North	3	8,157	2,719	2	8,012	2,671	0
4	Chadderton South	3	8,104	2,701	2	7,976	2,659	-1
5	Coldhurst	3	7,992	2,664	0	8,033	2,678	0
6	Crompton	3	8,613	2,871	8	8,496	2,832	6
7	Failsworth East	3	7,813	2,604	-2	7,842	2,614	-2
8	Failsworth West	3	8,017	2,672	0	7,935	2,645	-1
9	Hathershaw	3	7,846	2,615	-2	7,964	2,655	-1
10	Hollinwood	3	7,798	2,599	-2	7,966	2,655	-1
11	Royton North	3	8,232	2,744	3	8,139	2,713	1
12	Royton South	3	8,028	2,676	1	8,225	2,742	2
13	Saddleworth North	3	7,478	2,493	-6	7,826	2,609	-3
14	Saddleworth South	3	7,546	2,515	-5	7,731	2,577	-4
15	Saddleworth West & Lees	3	8,343	2,781	5	8,521	2,840	6
16	St James'	3	8,027	2,676	1	8,233	2,744	2
17	St Mary's	3	8,109	2,703	2	8,003	2,668	0
18	Shaw	3	8,090	2,697	1	8,019	2,673	0
19	Waterhead	3	8,407	2,802	5	8,314	2,771	3
20	Werneth	3	7,691	2,564	-4	7,759	2,586	-3
	<b>Totals</b>	<b>60</b>	<b>159,663</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>160,773</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>
	<b>Averages</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>2,661</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>2,680</b>	<b>-</b>

Source: Electorate figures are based on information provided by Oldham Metropolitan Borough 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. 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 Oldham. 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 Oldham. Oldham's last review was undertaken by the Local Government Boundary Commission for England, which reported to the Secretary of State in July 1977 (Report No. 229).

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 Oldham 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 and town 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, nor 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, prescribed 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 Oldham Metropolitan Borough Council inviting proposals for future electoral arrangements. We also notified Greater Manchester Police Authority, the Local Government Association, Greater Manchester Local Councils Association, parish and town councils in the borough, 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 the 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 Oldham*, 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 borough of Oldham is situated in the north-east of Greater Manchester, bordered by the metropolitan authorities of Rochdale to the north, Kirklees to the north-east, Tameside to the south and Manchester to the south-west, and the borough of High Peak in Derbyshire to the south-east. The borough includes the historic townships of Chadderton, Crompton (Shaw), Failsworth, Lees, Oldham, Royton and the more rural Saddleworth area to the east; it has a population of 219,762 and covers an area of 14,112 hectares. The western area of Oldham is historically part of Lancashire, whereas Saddleworth is historically part of Yorkshire.

12 The main industries of the borough include healthcare products manufacturing, food and clothing manufacturing and commercial vehicle assembly together with electronic and aircraft component manufacturing. Oldham's scenery and good transportation network make it an ideal location for tourists, as do its shopping centres and entertainment, which include art galleries and museums. The borough contains two parishes, but Oldham town itself is unparished.

13 The electorate of the borough is 159,663 (December 2001), which is projected to rise to 160,773 by 2006. The Council presently has 60 members who are elected from 20 wards. All wards are three-member wards.

14 At present, each councillor represents an average of 2,661 electors, which the Borough Council forecasts will increase to 2,680 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 six of the 20 wards varies by more than 10% from the borough average and one ward varies by more than 30%. The worst imbalance is in Saddleworth East ward where each councillor represents 31% more electors than the borough average.

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

*Map 1: Existing wards in Oldham*

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	Alexandra	3	7,043	2,348	-12	6,884	2,295	-14
2	Chadderton Central	3	8,444	2,815	6	8,769	2,923	9
3	Chadderton North	3	8,157	2,719	2	8,012	2,671	0
4	Chadderton South	3	7,486	2,495	-6	7,366	2,455	-8
5	Coldhurst	3	7,988	2,663	0	8,029	2,676	0
6	Crompton	3	8,613	2,871	8	8,496	2,832	6
7	Failsworth East	3	8,204	2,735	3	8,208	2,736	2
8	Failsworth West	3	7,415	2,472	-7	7,332	2,444	-9
9	Hollinwood	3	6,581	2,194	-18	6,800	2,267	-15
10	Lees	3	7,518	2,506	-6	7,776	2,592	-3
11	Royton North	3	8,232	2,744	3	8,139	2,713	1
12	Royton South	3	8,017	2,672	0	8,214	2,738	2
13	Saddleworth East	3	10,492	3,497	31	10,695	3,565	33
14	Saddleworth West	3	9,008	3,003	13	9,365	3,122	16
15	St James'	3	6,371	2,124	-20	6,605	2,202	-18
16	St Mary's	3	7,417	2,472	-7	7,395	2,465	-8
17	St Paul's	3	7,747	2,582	-3	7,866	2,622	-2
18	Shaw	3	8,078	2,693	1	8,007	2,669	0
19	Waterhead	3	9,494	3,165	19	9,383	3,128	17
20	Werneth	3	7,358	2,453	-8	7,432	2,477	-8
	<b>Totals</b>	<b>60</b>	<b>159,663</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>160,773</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>
	<b>Average</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>2,661</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>2,680</b>	<b>-</b>

Source: Electorate figures are based on information provided by Oldham Metropolitan Borough 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 2001, electors in St James' ward were relatively over-represented by 20%, while electors in Saddleworth East ward were relatively under-represented by 31%. Figures have been rounded to the nearest whole number.



### 3 Draft recommendations

16 During Stage One 22 representations were received, including a borough-wide scheme from Oldham Metropolitan Borough Council, and representations from the Labour Group, David Heyes MP and Saddleworth Parish Council. A further 18 submissions were received from the local police authority, two community associations and 15 local residents. In the light of these representations and evidence available to us, we reached preliminary conclusions which were set out in our report, *Draft recommendations on the future electoral arrangements for Oldham*.

17 Our draft recommendations were based on the Borough Council's proposals, which achieved an improvement in electoral equality whilst reflecting community identities and interests. However, we moved away from the Borough Council's scheme in a number of areas, using other locally generated schemes from Saddleworth White Rose Society, the Labour Group and David Heyes MP, as well as some of our own proposals. We proposed that:

- Oldham Metropolitan Borough Council should be served by 60 councillors, the same as at present;
- the boundaries of 18 of the existing wards should be modified, while two wards should retain their existing boundaries;
- there should be new warding arrangements for Saddleworth parish and Shaw & Crompton parish.

*Draft recommendation*

Oldham Borough Council should comprise 60 councillors, serving 20 wards.

18 Our proposals would have resulted in significant improvements in electoral equality, with the number of electors per councillor in all of the 20 wards varying by no more than 8% from the borough average. This level of electoral equality was forecast to improve, with no ward varying by more than 6% from the average in 2006.



## 4 Responses to consultation

19 During the consultation on the draft recommendations report, 11 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 Oldham Metropolitan Borough Council.

### Liberal Democrat Group

20 The Liberal Democrat Group (the Liberal Democrats) commented on the draft recommendations across the borough and proposed several amendments, including three ward name changes. They proposed modifications to the proposed Alexandra, Crompton, Failsworth East, Hollinwood, Lees & Saddleworth West, Royton North, Royton South, Saddleworth North, Saddleworth South, St James', St Mary's and Waterhead wards. We received a further submission from the Leader of the Liberal Democrats outlining the support for the proposed amendments from a number of councillors and groups on the Council.

### Labour Group

21 The Labour Group put forward a minor amendment to the boundary between the proposed Hollinwood and St Paul's wards, affecting no electors.

### Shaw & Crompton Parish Council

22 Shaw & Crompton Parish Council objected to the creation of the proposed Fir Lane parish ward in that parish. It also provided details of a change in the allocation of parish councillors in the parish wards of Shaw & Crompton parish, resulting from a recent parish review.

### Member of Parliament

23 We received two submissions from David Heyes MP (Ashton-Under-Lyne): the first put forward the same amendment between the proposed Hollinwood and St Paul's wards as the Labour Group and the second provided evidence in support of the proposed Failsworth East and Hollinwood wards.

### Borough Councillors

24 We received a submission from Councillor Sykes (Shaw ward), representing the views of the councillors of Crompton and Shaw wards. They objected to the creation of the proposed Fir Lane parish ward and notified us of changes in the allocation of parish councillors of Shaw & Crompton parish. They also proposed an amendment to the boundary between the proposed St James' and Shaw wards in the Lower Fullwood area.

### Other representations

25 A further four representations were received in response to our draft recommendations from a local parish councillor and local residents. A parish councillor for Saddleworth parish supported the proposals of the Saddleworth White Rose Society, adopted as part of the draft recommendations. He did however propose an amendment to the boundary between the proposed Lees & Saddleworth West and Saddleworth South wards in the Belmont Avenue and Vicarage Close area, and stated that 'Saddleworth should not be and never should have been part of Oldham MBC.'

26 We received a petition from a local resident with 305 signatures in support of the draft recommendations for the Saddleworth area. It also suggested a name change to Saddleworth West & Lees ward. A local resident supported the adoption of Saddleworth White Rose Society's proposals, and stated that he 'would have preferred a return of our administration to Yorkshire'. However, the resident accepted this is beyond the remit of this review.

27 A resident of the Lower Fullwood area proposed the same amendment to the boundary between the proposed St James' and Shaw wards as Councillor Sykes.

## 5 Analysis and final recommendations

28 As described earlier, our prime objective in considering the most appropriate electoral arrangements for Oldham 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'.

29 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.

30 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.

31 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.

### Electorate forecasts

32 Since 1975 there has been a 2% decrease in the electorate of Oldham borough. The Borough Council submitted electorate forecasts for the year 2006, projecting an increase in the electorate of approximately 1% from 159,663 to 160,773 over the five-year period from 2001 to 2006. It expects most of the growth to be in Chadderton Central, Hollinwood, Lees, Saddleworth East, Saddleworth West, and St James' wards, but also predicts a decline in the electorate of nine wards, most notably Alexandra, Chadderton North, Chadderton South, Crompton and Waterhead 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. Advice from the Borough Council on the likely effect on electorates of changes to ward boundaries has been obtained. 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.

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

### Council size

34 Oldham Metropolitan Borough Council presently has 60 members. In September 2001, it adopted a new constitution setting out a leader and cabinet committee system of political management.

35 At Stage One, we received two representations in relation to council size. The Borough Council proposed to retain a council of 60 members, which they argued provided a 'well run council, striving to achieve continuous improvement in the delivery of national and local priorities through the enabling and delivery of local services to the people of the borough.' It provided examples of its current aims and achievements in areas such as education, social services and housing. The Borough Council considered that it had 'successfully modernised its political management arrangements in a way which has brought real improvements to the Authority's strategic direction.'

36 The Labour Group also submitted proposals based on a 60-member council, serving 20 wards, but did not provide any argumentation in support of the existing council size. We further noted that the Chadderton Historical Society, David Heyes MP and the White Rose Society based their proposals upon the retention of a 60-member council, and that no proposals for alternative council sizes were put forward. However, having carefully considered the proposals regarding council size received during Stage One, we decided that we required further argumentation and evidence as to how the existing 60-member council would secure effective and convenient local government for Oldham.

37 Accordingly, we requested additional information from the Borough Council. It stated that it had developed its new political management structure with the existing number of members in mind. Indeed, the Borough Council emphasised that it had a 'very clear and explicit focus on the different roles of councillors ... and the number of councillors needed to ensure that all these roles can be discharged effectively.' It considered that the council's Overview and Scrutiny Committees and other institutions were of optimum size. In the view of the Borough Council, to reduce the number of members would therefore hamper the effectiveness of the council 'to the extent that both the political management and representational roles ... [would be] put at risk,' and 'might also militate against innovative ways of working.'

38 In support of this view, the Borough Council detailed the roles of members within the new political management system and outlined their internal and external commitments, estimating that there had been 'an increase of member meetings of some 58% over the previous structure.' It considered that all councillors, not just those in the Cabinet, 'have significant roles to play in a modernised structure.' The Borough Council noted in this context the following responsibilities of non-executive members in particular: policy review and development in Overview and Scrutiny Committees; membership of Ordinary and Standards Committees; membership of the six Area Committees, to which it is expected that more decision-making and financial powers will be devolved; the wider community leadership role exercised by councillors; and membership of external local, regional and national bodies. The Borough Council also considered that 'there must be enough councillors to share the workload and represent all sections of society ... to attract younger councillors in particular.'

39 We carefully considered the representations received at Stage One, and were grateful for the co-operation from the Borough Council in providing further evidence and argumentation. We considered that it had put forward a good case for retaining the existing number of councillors based on the evidence provided of councillors' internal and external commitments under the new political management structure. Further, we noted that these new structures have been developed with the existing 60-member council in mind. While the number of meetings has increased by 58%, we were content with the argumentation provided by the Borough Council that this increase has been absorbed by councillors under the new political management structure. We were also persuaded that to reduce the number of councillors would reduce the effectiveness of the council, adversely affecting the quality of services that it provides and its aim of reflecting a wide cross-section of the community. Finally, we noted that we have not received any opposition to the proposed retention of a 60-member council, nor any proposals for an alternative council size during Stage One.

40 During Stage Three, we received one comment on the issue of council size. The Liberal Democrats expressed their support for the proposal 'to retain 20 wards with three elected members per ward.'

41 Having looked at the size and distribution of the electorate, the geography and other characteristics of the area, together with the responses received, we therefore conclude that the statutory criteria would best be met by a council of 60 members as proposed in the draft recommendations.

## Electoral arrangements

42 We gave careful consideration to the representations received at Stage One, including the borough-wide schemes from the Borough Council and the Labour Group. We noted that both schemes would provide improved levels of electoral equality and that there was consensus between the two schemes in eight wards.

43 In the north and west of the borough (the Chadderton, Royton and Shaw & Crompton areas) we noted the consensus between the Borough Council and the Labour Group, and considered that their proposals would generally best achieve electoral equality, reflect community identities and interests and provide effective and convenient local government. However, we proposed minor amendments to the proposed Crompton, Royton North and Royton South wards to better reflect community identities and further improve electoral equality. To the south-west we adopted the Labour Group and David Heyes MP's proposed Failsworth East and Failsworth West wards, subject to minor amendments, considering that they would provide for improved levels of electoral equality in this part of the borough.

44 In the east of the borough, we adopted the Saddleworth White Rose Society's scheme, subject to minor amendments to provide for more clearly defined ward boundaries, as we considered these better resolve the current under-representation of this part of the borough than any of the other proposals received. It is worth noting that we are unable to propose changes to the external boundaries of local authorities and could not therefore give further consideration to the respondents' views on Saddleworth being part of Yorkshire.

45 In the town of Oldham there was little consensus between the Borough Council and the Labour Group, except with regard to the proposed Hollinwood ward. We generally based our draft recommendations on the Borough Council's proposals, subject to amendments. We considered that its scheme would generally provide a better balance between good electoral equality and the need to respect local communities in this area than the current arrangements or other schemes submitted at Stage One.

46 In the south of the town we put forward substantial amendments to the Borough Council's proposed Alexandra and St Paul's wards. We considered that our amendments better reflected community identities in the Bardsley and Glodwick areas, while facilitating both our proposals for the Saddleworth area and improvements in electoral equality in the Borough Council's proposed Hollinwood, St Mary's and Werneth wards. In the north of the Oldham unparished area, we proposed further amendments to the Borough Council's proposed St Mary's, St James' and Waterhead wards to improve electoral equality in St Mary's ward and better reflect community identities in the Moorhey area. Finally, we proposed minor amendments to the proposed wards of Chadderton Central, Chadderton South, Coldhurst, Failsworth East, Hollinwood and Royton South, which had a minimal effect on electoral equality, while in our view providing for more clearly defined ward boundaries.

47 In response to the draft recommendations, the Liberal Democrats proposed borough-wide amendments and nine other respondents proposed a number of minor modifications across the borough, including name changes to three wards.

48 We also received additional comments that the Saddleworth area is historically part of Yorkshire. We can only reiterate that changes to the external boundaries of the borough are beyond the remit of this review.

49 The draft recommendations have been reviewed in the light of further evidence and the representations received during Stage Three and, consequently, we propose to retain the existing Crompton and Shaw wards to provide more effective and convenient local government. We also propose five further minor amendments to ward boundaries to better reflect community identities and two ward name changes. For borough warding purposes, the following areas, based on existing wards, are considered in turn:

- i. Lees, Saddleworth East and Saddleworth West wards (page 24);
- ii. Alexandra and St Mary's wards (page 29);
- iii. St James' and Waterhead wards (page 31);
- iv. Hollinwood and St Paul's wards (page 33);
- v. Coldhurst and Werneth wards (page 36);
- vi. Failsworth East and Failsworth West wards (page 37);
- vii. Chadderton Central, Chadderton North and Chadderton South wards (page 38);
- viii. Crompton and Shaw wards (page 40);
- ix. Royton North and Royton South wards (page 42).

50 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.

### **Lees, Saddleworth East and Saddleworth West wards**

51 Lees, Saddleworth East and Saddleworth West wards lie in the east of the borough. Lees ward comprises part of the Oldham unparished area to the west of Saddleworth parish. Saddleworth East ward comprises the Greenfield, Uppermill and Dobcross parish wards of Saddleworth parish, while Saddleworth West ward comprises the Delph, Springhead Higher and Springhead Lower parish wards of Saddleworth parish. Under the existing electoral arrangements, Saddleworth East and Saddleworth West wards have councillor:elector ratios 31% and 13% above the borough average respectively (33% and 16% above by 2006). Lees ward has a councillor:elector ratio 6% below the borough average (3% below by 2006).

52 At Stage One, Oldham Borough Council proposed modifications to these wards to improve electoral equality, stating that 'Saddleworth is currently too big for two wards and too small for three wards.' It therefore proposed transferring the village of Grasscroft (polling district 69 and part of polling district 71) from the existing Saddleworth East ward to a revised Saddleworth West ward. The Borough Council also proposed to transfer part of the Springhead area of Saddleworth parish adjoining the Lees unparished area, comprising polling districts 77 and 78, from the existing Saddleworth West ward to its proposed Lees ward. The Alt/Pitses area (polling district 65) was transferred out of the existing Lees ward to its proposed Alexandra ward.

53 The Labour Group proposed a revised Saddleworth East ward and new Saddleworth North and Saddleworth South wards. It proposed that Saddleworth East ward broadly comprise the Diggle, Greenfield and Uppermill areas of Saddleworth parish, and part of the Grasscroft area of the parish. The Labour Group's proposed Saddleworth North ward comprised the Delph, Denshaw and Dobcross areas of Saddleworth parish together with the majority of the existing Waterhead ward (part of the Oldham unparished area) to the north of Herbert Street and Sharples Hall Street.

54 The Labour Group's proposed Saddleworth South ward comprised the Springhead area of Saddleworth parish, the remaining part of the Grasscroft area of the parish, and a small part of the Oldham unparished area currently in Lees ward. Its boundary with Lees ward was the same as under the existing arrangements between the existing Lees and Saddleworth West wards,

except that part of polling district 60 would be transferred to Saddleworth South. This represented one of the two changes made to its proposed Lees ward. The second modification was the transfer of part of polling district 3 (broadly comprising the Fenny Hill area) into the proposed ward from Alexandra ward.

55 Greater Manchester Police put forward proposals for revised Lees and Saddleworth West wards. Saddleworth Parish Council stated that, with the exception of one parish councillor, all its councillors felt that the Borough Council's proposals were 'the best option for Saddleworth and members voted that we accept the proposal.'

56 Saddleworth White Rose Society proposed new Lees & Saddleworth West, Saddleworth North and Saddleworth South wards in this area. Its proposed Lees & Saddleworth West ward comprised the Springhead Lower parish ward of Saddleworth parish (all of the Springhead area except polling districts 75-76) and all of the existing Lees ward except polling districts 63-65 (the Alt, Holts and Pitses areas). Its proposed boundary ran down Lees Brook and Thornleigh Brook, around the village of Grotton, along Wood Brook Lane, westwards along Den Lane and then northwards up Crossbank Avenue, to the south of Dovecoat Lane and up to the west of North Nook. It then ran north of Birks Avenue and New Royd Avenue before rejoining the existing boundary with Waterhead ward.

57 The White Rose Society proposed that its Saddleworth North ward comprise the Delph, Dobcross and Springhead Higher parish wards of Saddleworth parish. Its proposed boundary with Lees & Saddleworth West ward followed the existing boundary, before branching to the west along Den Lane and Wood Brook Road, and running between Load Hill Farm and Platting Farm. Its proposed boundary with Saddleworth South ward ran to the north of Grasscroft and Uppermill villages and then ran westwards to the borough boundary. The White Rose Society proposed that its Saddleworth South ward comprise the Greenfield and Uppermill parish wards of Saddleworth parish, the boundaries of which have already been detailed.

58 We received 11 proforma letters from local residents commenting on Saddleworth's relationship with Oldham. No specific proposals for revised warding arrangements were put forward. A number of these respondents considered that the external boundaries of Oldham borough should be changed to include Saddleworth in Yorkshire for administrative purposes. However, another Saddleworth resident supported the retention of Saddleworth in the borough of Oldham. While we noted these comments, we are unable to recommend changes to the external boundaries of the borough of Oldham as part of this review.

59 A further submission from a local resident proposed that the under-representation of Saddleworth could be resolved by the allocation of further borough councillors to the parish. Finally, another resident proposed a revised warding pattern for the area.

60 We gave careful consideration to the representations received. We adopted the White Rose Society's proposed Lees & Saddleworth West, Saddleworth North and Saddleworth South wards, subject to a number of minor amendments. We noted that Saddleworth parish is currently represented by two borough wards, each returning three councillors, but it is entitled on a 60-member council to 7.3 councillors (7.5 councillors by 2006). We concurred with the view of many respondents that Saddleworth, which is partly rural and historically part of the county of Yorkshire, has to some extent a different character and history from the remainder of the borough, which is predominantly urban and historically part of Lancashire. We therefore endeavoured to put forward proposals in this area that reflected community identities and interests and provided for effective and convenient local government. However, to provide for good electoral equality in Saddleworth parish, we also had to recommend a third borough ward comprising part of Saddleworth and part of another area, since in practice we can only recommend three-member wards in metropolitan authorities.

61 Having visited the area, we considered that this could best be achieved by a ward that links the Lees unparished area and the Springhead area of Saddleworth parish; at no other point does a residential part of Saddleworth parish adjoin another residential area in the borough. We noted that the Borough Council (supported by Saddleworth Parish Council), the White Rose Society, Greater Manchester Police and a local resident all put forward variants of this proposal. We noted that the Borough Council's proposals for this area provided for improved electoral equality in this area, albeit at a level slightly higher than that provided by the White Rose Society's scheme. However, we considered that the Borough Council's proposed Lees ward entailed a more arbitrary division of Springhead between borough wards than that of the White Rose Society's proposals.

62 Although in both cases it is necessary to divide Springhead to provide for good electoral equality, under the Borough Council's proposals two separate areas in the north and south of the village (the Grotton and Austerlands areas, based on polling districts 76 and 79) were retained in Saddleworth West ward. In contrast, only Austerlands would be included in the proposed Saddleworth West ward under the White Rose Society's proposals. We noted that Austerlands is linked to the remainder of the proposed Saddleworth North ward (the villages of Delph, Dobcross and Denshaw) via the A62. We further noted that it forms part of Springhead Higher parish ward together with a rural area of the parish immediately to the north, also to be contained in the proposed Saddleworth North ward. We therefore considered that there was evidence to suggest that the exclusion of the Austerlands area from the proposed Lees & Saddleworth West ward would not adversely affect the provision of effective and convenient local government and would provide the best reflection of community identity in the area, given the constraints of a three-member warding pattern.

63 We were not persuaded that the Labour Group's proposal to link the more rural Delph, Denshaw and Dobcross areas of Saddleworth parish with the majority of the existing Waterhead ward in the Oldham urban unparished area would provide the best reflection of community identities and interests due to the poor links between the constituent parts of the proposed ward, despite the resulting improvement in electoral equality. We were also unable to take into account the issue of regeneration funding entitlements raised by the Labour Group. We further noted that Greater Manchester Police's proposals would, by adding Springhead to the whole of the existing Lees ward, result in significant under-representation in this area, and we were therefore unable to give this proposal further consideration.

64 We noted that under the White Rose Society's proposals the Alt, Holts and Pitses areas (polling districts 63-65) were excluded from the proposed Lees & Saddleworth West ward, but were not assigned to another ward. As discussed in the following section, we proposed that they be included in a revised Alexandra ward. This to some extent reflects the proposal by the Borough Council to transfer Alt and Pitses to Alexandra ward. Having visited this area, we were content that these three areas possess good road links with the remainder of the proposed ward to the west via Lees New Road and the B6194 Abbey Hills Road. In particular, we noted that Holts, situated closest to the remainder of Lees ward to the north, forms a distinct, self-contained estate. We therefore considered that it could be transferred to another ward if necessary to provide for good electoral equality across this part of the borough without a detrimental effect on community identities and interests in the affected area.

65 To the east, we considered that the White Rose Society's proposed Saddleworth North and Saddleworth South wards would divide the remainder of Saddleworth parish in a manner which we considered to better reflect community identities and communication routes along the A62, A669 and A672 than either the current arrangements or the other representations received. We were not convinced that the Borough Council's proposed Saddleworth West ward, comprising the village of Grasscroft in the south of the parish and the villages of Delph and Denshaw in the north of the parish, adequately reflected community identities and main road links within Saddleworth parish. In comparison, we noted that the White Rose Society's proposed

Saddleworth South ward linked Grasscroft with the neighbouring areas of Greenfield and Uppermill to the east.

66 We also put forward a number of minor modifications to the White Rose Society's proposals for these three wards to better reflect community identities and interests, and to tie ward boundaries to better ground detail. We proposed that the new Lees & Saddleworth West ward include all properties in the Lees unparished area to the north and east of Lees Hill Road. This amendment resulted in the inclusion of the Rhodes Hill/Knowles Lane area which, having visited this part of the borough, we did not consider to form part of the Holts estate. In Springhead we also proposed to include Black Leach Farm on Cooper Street, part of Woodbrook Road and Woodleigh Road in Saddleworth North ward rather than Lees & Saddleworth West ward. These minor amendments ensured that all properties on Woodbrook Road were included in a single borough ward and took the boundary along the centre of Cooper Street. We also proposed a minor amendment to include all properties on the High Street, Uppermill in Saddleworth South ward, affecting only Ryefield Lodge, to better reflect the local community.

67 We further noted that the Saddleworth parish boundary divides roads between Austerlands (in the proposed Saddleworth North ward) and Lees (in the proposed Lees & Saddleworth West ward). A number of these roads – Belmont Avenue, Crossbank Avenue, Den Lane, Dovecote Lane, Taylor Green Way and Vicarage Close – are situated directly to the north of the revised ward boundary on Den Lane, which also forms the boundary between Springhead Higher and Springhead Lower parish wards of Saddleworth parish. We therefore proposed to unite these roads in a single borough ward by including the parished parts of these roads in Lees & Saddleworth West ward (and thus also in Springhead Lower parish ward), providing, in our view, for a more effective and clearly identifiable ward boundary. To the north, we identified a number of additional minor parish boundary anomalies on the A62 Huddersfield Road, New Royd Avenue and Temple Close. However, we would not seek to recommend the creation of parish wards containing very few electors, which would be substantially over-represented at parish council level. In our view, these anomalies would best be addressed by a review of external parish boundaries, which lies within the power of the Borough Council to undertake.

68 Under the draft recommendations, the proposed Lees & Saddleworth West ward would have a councillor:elector ratio 5% above the borough average (6% above by 2006). Saddleworth North and Saddleworth South wards would both have councillor:elector ratios 6% below the borough average initially (2% and 4% below by 2006).

69 At Stage Three, we received four submissions regarding this area. The Liberal Democrats put forward three amendments to the proposed Saddleworth wards as well as two ward name changes. They noted that, under the draft recommendations, Ryefields Lodge was included in the proposed Saddleworth South ward and commented that 'it would also make sense to include Ryefields Drive in Saddleworth South [ward]'. The second amendment was to transfer 'a few properties which lie between Waterhead and the proposed Lees & Saddleworth West ward', in the Huddersfield Road area, from the proposed Saddleworth North ward to the proposed Lees & Saddleworth West ward. They argued that this was 'in the interests of reflecting community identity and interests'. Their final modification affected 'a number of farms and cottages (Cockfield, Little Lee Farm) which the Boundary Committee retain in the proposed Lees & Saddleworth West ward.' They stated that 'these properties do not have road access to the remainder of the ward without passing through Holts' and therefore proposed that these properties be transferred to the 'proposed Alexandra ward, along with Holts.'

70 The Liberal Democrats stated that they 'agree with the Boundary Committee's draft recommendation relating to Saddleworth Parish Council.' However, they proposed that Lees & Saddleworth West and Saddleworth South wards be renamed Lees & Springhead and Greenfield & Uppermill or Saddleworth South East respectively.

71 A parish councillor for Saddleworth parish, stated that he wished 'to support the proposals of the Saddleworth White Rose Society' adopted as part of the draft recommendations. However, he expressed his concern 'at the proposals contained in paragraph 73 which refers to Belmont Avenue and others as far as Vicarage Close, and also the references to anomalies on the A62 Huddersfield Road.' He stated 'that [the] proposals would be perceived as moving the county boundary [which] can be an emotive issue to some people.' He also argued that Saddleworth should not be part of Oldham Council and commented that 'Saddleworth should be part of a different unitary authority which could better represent the Yorkshire heritage and mainly rural nature of Saddleworth (and Lees to a lesser extent).'

72 We received a petition from a local resident with 305 signatures in support of the draft recommendations for the Saddleworth area. He stated that 'the petition also supports strong local opinion in favour of naming [Lees & Saddleworth West] ward Saddleworth West & Lees [ward], as Saddleworth West contains more than 50% of the electorate.'

73 A further submission was received from a local resident stating that the draft recommendations 'will very much help to preserve Saddleworth [as a] geographic, cultural and historic entity.' He also stated that he 'would have preferred a return of our administration to Yorkshire [but] accept this is not within the terms of reference of the Committee at this time.'

74 Having carefully considered the representations received and noted the general support for the draft recommendations in this area, we are proposing to endorse the draft recommendations with only two minor amendments and one ward name change. As proposed by the Liberal Democrats, we propose including Ryefields Drive in the proposed Saddleworth South ward to provide a better reflection of community identity. This would unite Ryefields Drive and Ryefields Lodge in the same ward and would reflect access routes in the area without adversely affecting electoral equality. Our proposed boundary would run to the north of the properties along Ryefields Drive. Again as put forward by the Liberal Democrats, we are proposing the transfer of a number of farms and cottages to the proposed Alexandra ward from the proposed Lees & Saddleworth West ward, to reflect road access. The proposed boundary would run to the east of Little Lea Farm and rejoin the boundary proposed in the draft recommendations at the junction of Abbey Hills Road and Lees New Road.

75 As proposed by a local resident and supported by a petition with 305 signatures, we are proposing that Lees & Saddleworth West ward be renamed Saddleworth West & Lees because the Saddleworth West community constitutes the majority of the ward. However, we are not adopting the Liberal Democrats revised names for Lees & Saddleworth West and Saddleworth South wards as the draft recommendations for these wards received local support and we consider that these names provide a good reflection of the communities they encompass.

76 We are also not adopting the Liberal Democrats third amendment to the area, the transfer of properties from Saddleworth North ward to the proposed Lees & Saddleworth West ward, as it would require the creation of an over represented parish ward. As mentioned in the draft recommendations, we consider that these types of anomalies are best addressed as part of a parish review conducted by the Borough Council.

77 We noted the comments that a number of Saddleworth residents would prefer to be part of a Yorkshire authority, but can only reiterate that changes to external borough boundaries are beyond the remit of this review. With reference to the submission from a parish councillor, we looked again at the Belmont Avenue area, but concluded that insufficient argumentation had been provided to persuade us to move away from the draft recommendations.

78 Under the final recommendations, the councillor:elector ratio in the proposed Saddleworth West & Lees ward would be 5% above the borough average (6% above by 2006). The councillor:elector ratios in the proposed Saddleworth North and Saddleworth South wards would be 6% and 5% below the borough average respectively (3% and 4% below by 2006).

## Alexandra and St Mary's wards

79 Alexandra and St Mary's wards lie in the central and southern areas of the borough. Under the existing electoral arrangements, Alexandra and St Mary's wards have councillor:elector ratios 12% and 7% below the borough average respectively (14% and 8% below by 2006).

80 At Stage One, Oldham Borough Council stated that Alexandra ward is 'currently ... too small'. To address this, it proposed including the Alt area (polling district 65) from the existing Lees ward. It also proposed transferring the area north of Honeywell Lane (part of polling district 1) from the existing Alexandra ward to its proposed St Paul's ward. It proposed retaining the existing St Mary's ward.

81 The Labour Group proposed two new wards in this area. It proposed a new Roundthorn ward to replace the existing Alexandra ward, which extended 'from Glodwick into Roundthorn and lower Clarksfield into what is becoming a distinct community in areas of terraced streets' and used 'the expanse of Alexandra Park' as a boundary. The Labour Group also proposed a new Central ward, 'based on its close relationship with the town centre and town centre regeneration areas.'

82 Greater Manchester Police proposed a new St Mary's ward. The changes they recommended were 'in order to bring the community of Glodwick into one ward area and also the generally recognised area of the town centre.' Their proposed St Mary's ward was extended west to the old railway line, along Deanshut Clough. Greater Manchester Police did not provide any electorate figures for their proposals.

83 Having carefully considered all representations received at Stage One, we broadly adopted the Borough Council's proposed St Mary's ward as we considered it to best meet the statutory criteria, subject to two amendments to improve electoral equality and better reflect community identities and interests in the Glodwick and Moorhey areas. We also adopted the Borough Council's proposed Alexandra ward but put forward a substantial number of modifications, in part as a consequence of the proposals for a new Lees & Saddleworth West ward to the east (where we adopted the proposals of the White Rose Society) and for a revised warding pattern to the west of Alexandra Park. We considered that our proposals provided a better balance overall in the south of the Oldham unparished area and in Saddleworth between electoral equality, the need to reflect community identities and interests and the provision of effective and convenient local government.

84 Our decision to broadly adopt the Borough Council's proposals in the Oldham unparished area and the White Rose Society's proposals in Saddleworth parish also limited the extent to which the Labour Group's and the Greater Manchester Police's proposals could be taken into consideration. We noted that both the Labour Group and Greater Manchester Police considered that no ward should bridge Alexandra Park. However, in light of the proposals for the Lees and Saddleworth areas, we found it impossible on a 60-member council to achieve electoral equality and not put forward wards that would cross the park (Alexandra) and the town centre (St Mary's). While the Labour Group's proposals provided for good electoral equality, we were not convinced that the proposed Central ward would adequately reflect community identities and interests, as it comprised parts of three separate communities to the north, south and east of Oldham town centre. We noted the lack of consensus among respondents as to whether Oldham town centre should be included in a single ward, and stated that we would welcome further views and evidence from interested parties at Stage Three.

85 We proposed the following amendments to the Borough Council's proposed Alexandra and St Mary's wards. First, we proposed that the Holts area be transferred from the existing Lees ward into Alexandra ward, as previously discussed. We considered that this change would help

improve electoral equality further to the east without adversely affecting community identities and interests in the affected area.

86 Second, we proposed to transfer that part of the existing Alexandra ward to the south of Dowry Street and west of the Snipe Clough ravine (broadly comprising the Fitton Hill and Hathershaw areas) to St Paul's ward. We also proposed to transfer that part of the existing St Paul's ward to the east of Ashton Road and to the south of Park Road to Alexandra ward. We considered that these amendments would provide for improved electoral equality in our revised Alexandra and St Paul's wards. Having visited the area, we considered that the Bardsley area in the existing St Paul's ward, together with properties on the west side of the A627 Ashton Road, is somewhat isolated from the remainder of the ward to the north, yet adjoins the Fitton Hill area in the existing Alexandra ward. We noted that the Labour Group proposed to include these areas in the existing St Paul's ward. We further noted that access across the north of Alexandra Park, from west to east of the proposed Alexandra ward, via Park Road and Kings Road is as good, if not better than across the south of the park. We therefore considered that our proposed Alexandra ward would also provide for a better reflection of community identities and interests in this part of the borough.

87 Third, we proposed to transfer that part of the existing Alexandra ward to the north of Park Road to the Borough Council's proposed St Mary's ward. We noted the view of the Labour Group and the Greater Manchester Police that the Glodwick area is currently divided between district wards and sought to unite the community in a single ward. Having visited the area, we considered that the current boundary between Alexandra and St Mary's wards, which the Borough Council proposed to retain, divides properties on either side of Waterloo Street, which is predominantly residential in character. In our view this amendment therefore provided a better reflection of community identities and interests in Glodwick. We also noted that Queens Road, situated to the south of Park Road adjoining Alexandra Park, is different in character from roads to the north. We considered that it may be retained in Alexandra ward, facilitating the linkage of the western and eastern sections of the ward along Park Road, without detrimental effect on community identities in this area.

88 Finally, to improve electoral equality in the revised St Mary's ward, we also proposed that the existing northern ward boundary on Ronald Street be adjusted to run to the rear of properties on the A669 Lees Road, resulting in the transfer of Balfour Street, Eric Street, Keverlow Street and Ronald Street to Waterhead ward. Having visited the area, we noted that the current boundary divides Ronald Street, which is a minor road and residential in character, and considered that this amendment better reflected community identities and interests by uniting an estate in a single ward.

89 Under the draft recommendations, St Mary's ward would have a councillor:elector ratio 2% above the borough average (equal to by 2006). Alexandra ward would have a councillor:elector ratio 6% below the borough average (5% below by 2006).

90 At Stage Three, the Liberal Democrats proposed an amendment to the proposed Alexandra ward, as discussed in the previous section. With the exception of this amendment, the Liberal Democrats stated that they 'agree with the Boundary Committee's proposals for Alexandra [ward] and welcome the improved reflection of community identity and interests obtained by uniting Glodwick in one ward, on the whole.' However, they objected to the proposal 'that the existing St Mary's [ward's] northern ward boundary on Roland Street be adjusted to run to the rear of properties on the A669 Lees Road [resulting] in the transfer of Balfour Street, Eric Street, Keverlow Street and Roland Street to Waterhead ward.' They stated that 'Roland Street has been an uncontroversial boundary since 1979 [and,] in the interests of continuity, being a boundary that local people recognise and accept,' recommended that the 'boundary in this area remain as it currently is.'

91 We have given careful consideration to the evidence received at Stage Three. However, apart from the amendment between the proposed Alexandra and Saddleworth West & Lees wards detailed in the previous section, we are not proposing any further modifications in this area. We do not consider that sufficient argumentation was provided by the Liberal Democrats to persuade us that the proposed amendment in the Roland Street area would provide a better reflection of community identity than the draft recommendations. We do not consider that the existing boundary is a strong one and note that it divides streets of a similar character, whereas the draft recommendations would unite these streets in a single ward. We also note the adverse effect retaining the existing boundary would have on electoral equality (St Mary's ward would have a variance of 7% by 2006). We received no other objection to the draft recommendations for these two wards at Stage Three and therefore are confirming them as final.

92 Under the final recommendations the councillor:elector ratio in the proposed St Mary's ward would be 2% above the borough average (equal to by 2006). The proposed Alexandra ward would have a councillor:elector ratio 5% below the borough average, both initially and by 2006.

### **St James' and Waterhead wards**

93 St James' and Waterhead wards lie in the centre of the borough. Under the existing electoral arrangements, Waterhead ward has a councillor:elector ratio 19% above the borough average (17% above by 2006). St James' ward has a councillor:elector ratio 20% below the borough average (18% below by 2006).

94 At Stage One, Oldham Borough Council stated that 'St James' [ward] is currently too small and Waterhead [ward] is too large.' It therefore proposed the transfer of the Moorside and Turf Pit Lane area (polling district 99) from the existing Waterhead ward to its proposed St James' ward. Its proposed boundary ran to the east of Haugh Hill Road and to the north of Higher Count Hill before rejoining the existing boundary. This modification represented the only change proposed to these two wards.

95 The Labour Group proposed one minor modification to St James' ward, noting that the existing Waterhead ward was largely replaced by Saddleworth North ward as previously described. It proposed the transfer to its proposed St James' ward of polling district 102 from the existing Waterhead ward, comprising that part of the ward to the south of Herbert Street and Sharples Hall Street. Its proposed boundary between St James' and Saddleworth North ward thus ran to the east of properties along Herbert Street, down Sharples Hall Street and along Huddersfield Road to rejoin the existing boundary.

96 Greater Manchester Police proposed modifications to both of these wards. Their proposed Waterhead ward 'would encompass all of the Clarksfield community north of Lees Road, the Mount Pleasant and Greenacres Moor areas to Mumps.' They proposed that the southern boundary of Waterhead ward be extended to Lees Road, west to Mumps roundabout and then east up Huddersfield Road (A62) to Cross Street. Greater Manchester Police also proposed that the southern boundary of St James' ward be extended from Shaw Road/Cross Street to Mumps and north up Brook Street to Shaw Road. They did not provide any electorate figures for their proposals.

97 After careful consideration of all representations received at Stage One, we adopted the Borough Council's proposed St James' and Waterhead wards, which we considered would improve electoral equality, continue to employ the strong ward boundary of the A672 Ripponden Road up to the junction with Turf Pit Lane, and unite the Moorside community in St James' ward. However, we proposed two modifications to further improve electoral equality in the Oldham unparished area. First, as discussed in the previous section, we proposed that the boundary between Waterhead and St Mary's wards be moved southwards from Ronald Street to the rear of properties on the A669 Lees Road. This amendment improved electoral equality in our

revised St Mary's ward while in our view better reflecting community identities in the Ronald Street area.

98 Second, we proposed a consequential amendment to retain good electoral equality in the proposed Waterhead ward. Under the proposals, an additional part of Waterhead ward to the north of Alexandra Terrace and the Havenside Centre and to the south of Turf Pit Lane was transferred to St James' ward. We noted that we were unable to further consider the Labour Group's proposals for these wards since we did not propose to adopt its Saddleworth North ward. As previously discussed, we were also unable to take into account the issue of regeneration funding raised by the Labour Group. Similarly, as a result of the proposal to adopt the Borough Council's proposed St Mary's and Waterhead wards, we could not give further consideration to Greater Manchester Police's proposed amendments.

99 Under the draft recommendations, St James' and Waterhead wards would have councillor:elector ratios 1% and 5% above the borough average respectively (both 3% above by 2006).

100 In response to the draft recommendations, the Liberal Democrats proposed an amendment to the boundary between the proposed St Mary's and Waterhead wards in the Roland Street area, as previously discussed. They also argued for an amendment to the boundary between the proposed St James' and Waterhead wards, which they considered would better reflect community identities. They stated that the area 'to the north of Alexandra Terrace and the Havenside Centre and to the south of Turf Pit Lane [to] be transferred to St James' ward' in the draft recommendations (part of polling district 100) should remain in Waterhead ward. They argued that 'polling district 100 forms a natural community [and] electors above Alexandra Terrace would have to vote at Moorside Cricket Club on Turf Lane. This is up a steep hill with no easy public transport links.' The Liberal Democrats therefore 'suggest that the St James' and Waterhead ward boundaries originally proposed by Oldham Metropolitan Borough Council should be adopted.'

101 We received representations from Councillor Sykes (writing on behalf of himself and the other five councillors who represent the wards of Crompton and Shaw) and a local resident, regarding the Lower Fullwood area, currently in St James' ward. Councillor Sykes argued that six properties in this area, all of which 'are accessed from Mark Lane which runs directly off Beal Lane, Shaw' have 'no access, unless you are a rambler, ... to the rest of St James' ward and, in particular, to the polling stations which means that ... they have approximately a two and a half to three mile drive' if they wish to vote. He also stated that 'all the residents at these properties consider themselves to be Shaw residents'. A local resident put forward the same arguments and stated that 'on behalf of the residents of our hamlet, I ask that consideration is given to removing us from the St James' ward and placing us in the Crompton and Shaw ward where we will be represented by the councillors for the area in which we live.'

102 The representations received during the consultation period have been carefully considered and we consequently propose one amendment to these wards. We are adopting the amendment proposed by Councillor Sykes and a local resident in the Lower Fullwood area. This amendment involves the transfer of five properties, Bluebell Cottage, Fullwood Farm, Fullwood House, Middle Fullwood Farm and Owlery Cottage, from the proposed St James' ward to the proposed Shaw ward and we consider that it provides a better reflection of community identity by reflecting access routes without adversely affecting electoral equality.

103 We carefully looked at the Liberal Democrats proposed amendments to St James', St Mary's and Waterhead wards, but have not been persuaded to move away from the draft recommendations. We do not consider the location of polling stations when formulating our recommendations and noted that there was little evidence provided to support the argument that 'polling district 100 forms a natural community.' Polling districts are administrative matters to be determined by the local authority once a warding pattern has been established and we do not

consider argumentation based on the existing or future position of polling stations to be persuasive in its own right. Therefore, while we have some sympathy with argumentation based on the location of polling stations, we do not consider this argumentation to be strong enough on its own to persuade us to move away from our draft recommendations. We also note that, in light of our decision to retain the boundary proposed in the draft recommendations between the proposed St Mary's and Waterhead wards, adopting this amendment would adversely affect electoral equality. Therefore, with just the minor amendment outlined above, we are confirming the draft recommendations as final for this area.

104 Under the final recommendations, the proposed St James' and Waterhead wards would have councillor:elector ratios 1% and 5% above the borough average respectively (2% and 3% above by 2006).

### **Hollinwood and St Paul's wards**

105 Hollinwood and St Paul's wards lie to the south of the borough. Under the existing electoral arrangements, Hollinwood and St Paul's wards have councillor:elector ratios 18% and 3% below the borough average respectively (15% and 2% below by 2006).

106 At Stage One, Oldham Metropolitan Borough Council stated that Hollinwood ward is 'currently ... too small.' It addressed this by proposing the transfer of the Garden Suburbs area (polling district 47) from the existing St Paul's ward to its proposed Hollinwood ward. The revised boundary ran to the south of the properties on Green Lane, to the south of the properties at the end of that lane before running up Fieldsway Road, along Nadin Street and down Hollins Road, where it rejoined the existing boundary. The Borough Council also proposed that the Pastures Estate centred on Lime Lane in the existing Hollinwood ward be included in a revised Failsworth East ward, adjusting the ward boundary to follow the M60. However, it added that 'the M60 is a relatively new topographical feature', and considered that it did not accurately divide the Failsworth and Hollinwood communities to the north of this point. It considered that Roman Road linked Kaskenmoor School and Hillingdon Close to the rest of Hollinwood ward.

107 The Borough Council further proposed that part of the town centre (part of polling district 41) be transferred out of the existing St Paul's ward to its proposed Coldhurst ward, affecting few electors. Its proposed boundary ran along the A62 Oldham Way. As previously discussed, the Borough Council also proposed that the area to the north of Honeywell Lane (part of polling district 1) be transferred from the existing Alexandra ward to its proposed St Paul's ward.

108 The Labour Group proposed the same Hollinwood ward as the Borough Council, but proposed 'significant change' to St Paul's ward. 'The re-defined ward [would] straddle Ashton Road (A627) from the Tameside boundary to the town centre.'

109 David Heyes MP supported the Borough Council and the Labour Group's proposed Hollinwood ward. He stated that 'the council's proposals produce a coherent Hollinwood ward ... the Garden Suburbs area ... has always been regarded locally as an integral part of the Hollins/Hollinwood community along the Hollins road corridor.' David Heyes MP acknowledged that the proposed ward would be below the average number of electors, but argued that it was necessary to transfer the Pastures Estate into Failsworth East ward as it was 'severed from the rest of Hollinwood since the opening of the M60 motorway ... and the residents regard themselves as living in Failsworth'.

110 We received one further representation in relation to this area at Stage One. Greater Manchester Police considered that the northern boundary of St Paul's ward should 'run from King Street Roundabout east along Park Road to Kings Road', with the remainder of the existing St Paul's ward to the north transferred to their proposed St Mary's ward. They did not provide any electorate figures for their proposals.

111 Having carefully considered all representations received at Stage One, we broadly adopted the Borough Council's and Labour Group's proposed Hollinwood ward as we considered it to best reflect community identity, subject to a number of amendments to improve electoral equality and provide for more clearly defined ward boundaries. We noted the support of David Heyes MP for this proposal. However, we also put forward a substantial number of modifications to the Borough Council's proposed St Paul's ward. These changes derived in part from the proposals for a new Lees & Saddleworth West ward to the east (based on the White Rose Society's scheme) and a revised Alexandra ward, and in part from the proposals to improve electoral equality in the wards of Hollinwood and Werneth to the west of the ward. We considered that the proposals provide a better balance overall in the south of the Oldham unparished area and Saddleworth parish between electoral equality, the need to reflect community identities and interests and the provision of effective and convenient local government.

112 Our first amendment to the Borough Council's and Labour Group's proposed Hollinwood ward was to improve electoral equality in this ward by transferring that part of St Paul's ward to the west of the B1692 Frederick Street and to the south of Wolverton Avenue and College Avenue to the proposed Hollinwood ward. We noted that, as proposed by the Borough Council and the Labour Group, road links between the Garden Suburbs area and the remainder of Hollinwood ward via Hollins Road would lie in St Paul's ward. The amendment corrected this anomaly.

113 Second, we also proposed that the M60 form the boundary between Hollinwood ward and Failsworth East ward from Cutler Hill Road in the south to the Manchester Victoria to Oldham railway line in the north. While we noted the view of the Borough Council concerning links across the recently built motorway, having visited the area we considered that it is the most effective and convenient ward boundary available in this area. Further, we noted that Hillingdon Drive, where the majority of affected residential properties are located, adjoins other residential properties in Failsworth East ward. However, to the south of Cutler Hill Road, we proposed a minor amendment to Hollinwood ward to include all properties in the small village of Woodhouse Green in Failsworth East ward. We concurred with the decision of the Borough Council and the Labour Group not to use the M60 as the ward boundary at this point, noting that this would divide Woodhouse Green and the nearby village of Woodhouses between borough wards.

114 As previously discussed, we proposed thirdly to transfer to St Paul's ward that part of the existing Alexandra ward to the south of Dowry Street and west of the Snipe Clough ravine (broadly comprising the Fitton Hill and Hathershaw areas) to improve electoral equality. We also proposed to transfer to Alexandra ward that part of the existing St Paul's ward to the east of Ashton Road and to the south of Park Road for the same reason and to reflect community identities. Finally, we also proposed to transfer that part of St Paul's ward to the west of the B1692 but to the north of (and including) Wolverton Avenue and College Avenue to a revised Werneth ward to improve electoral equality.

115 While we noted that the boundaries in the south of our proposed St Paul's ward to some extent reflected those put forward by the Labour Group, in light of the proposals for the Lees and Saddleworth areas, we found it impossible on a 60-member council to achieve electoral equality and not put forward a ward in this area that would either cross Alexandra Park or the town centre. Unlike the Labour Group, we opted to retain the existing link across the park since, as previously discussed, we were concerned that its proposed Central ward would not sufficiently reflect community identities and interests by combining parts of different communities on three sides of the town centre.

116 Under the draft recommendations, Hollinwood and St Paul's wards would both have councillor:elector ratios 2% below the borough average (both 1% below by 2006).

117 At Stage Three, the Liberal Democrats stated they are ‘of the opinion that the M60 should not be used as a boundary between Failsworth East and Hollinwood [wards] north of the Pastures estate. As stated in the Council’s original submission, Roman Road links Kaskenmoor School and Hillingdon Close to the rest of Hollinwood ward.’ Furthermore, ‘at this point the M60 is deep cut and runs under other road links’ and ‘the vast majority of pupils at [Kaskenmoor] school are from Hollinwood ward.’ They also argued that ‘further north, there is also community logic in retaining the area south of the railway line, including Roxy cinema, and the area around the Hollinwood Junction, in Hollinwood [ward].’ They stated that ‘it is notable that the M60 has not been proposed as a boundary where it is a surface road and is actually more of a barrier in the Carmel Crescent/Hollinwood Avenue area. Nor [is it a boundary] in Failsworth East south of Cutler Hill.’

118 The Liberal Democrats supported the proposed St Paul’s ward. However, they pointed out that ‘St Paul’s church no longer falls within the proposed ward’. Consequently, they proposed the alternative names of Medlock Valley, because it is the ‘proposed name for the new primary school’, or Hathershaw for this ward.

119 The Labour Group proposed a minor amendment to the boundary between the proposed Hollinwood and St Paul’s wards. It pointed out that the buildings of Oldham Town Football Club and Werneth Golf Club had been transferred to the proposed Hollinwood ward, whilst ‘the land owned and played by the clubs is in a different polling district, and one that remains in St Paul’s ward.’ It argued that ‘there is a certain logic to saying that the clubs’ premises and their land should be in the same ward.’

120 In his first submission, David Heyes MP proposed the same amendment as the Labour Group detailed above. He argued that ‘the Club House and highway access for Oldham Town Football Club is situated on Whitebank Road. Access to the football ground itself is by the same route’. He stated that ‘whilst there are no consequences for individual electors, this split of these sports premises between two wards has caused practical difficulties in the past.’ For similar reasons, he also proposed the transfer of Werneth Golf Course to Hollinwood ward. With the exception of this modification, David Heyes MP stated that ‘the proposals [for the Failsworth and Hollinwood areas] have my wholehearted endorsement.’

121 We received a second submission from David Heyes MP, in which he commented on the Liberal Democrats’ proposals for these two wards. He stated that ‘the Committee’s original logic, which saw the M60 becoming the natural boundary between Hollinwood and Failsworth, was in my view, a sensible proposition.’ He considered that ‘Hillingdon Close is a remote outpost of the Hollinwood area’ and is ‘immediately adjacent to Roman Road/Massey Avenue, Failsworth and these are its nearest neighbours. The case for transferring the Pastures estate into Failsworth applies equally to Hillingdon Close.’ He also stated that ‘[Kaskenmoor] School has a wide catchment area. Many of its pupils are from Failsworth and beyond.’ He argued that renaming St Paul’s ward Medlock Valley ‘would, in my view, be confusing to local residents and visitors to the area alike. The majority part of the Medlock Valley – including the Visitor Centre and Country Park – lies within Failsworth and Hollinwood wards’.

122 Having carefully considered all representations received regarding this area, we are proposing one amendment in this area, and a ward name change. We are adopting the Labour Group and David Heyes MP’s amendment to the boundary between the proposed Hollinwood and St Paul’s wards. We concur that the sports ground and golf course should remain in the same ward as their respective club houses, both for administrative purposes and to reflect access routes.

123 We agree that St Paul’s ward should be renamed as the church of the same name no longer falls within the proposed ward, as pointed out by the Liberal Democrats. We noted David Heyes MP’s objection to the proposed name of Medlock Valley on the grounds that this name

refers to a wider area than just this proposed ward, and consequently propose that it should be named Hathershaw ward.

124 We noted the Liberal Democrats objection to using the M60 as a boundary between the proposed Failsworth East and Hollinwood wards north of the Pastures estate, but have not been persuaded to move away from the draft recommendations. We note the support for the use of the M60 as a boundary provided by David Heyes MP. We consider that the M60 provides the strongest boundary in the area and, although we do not use it as a boundary in the Chadderton area, this is due to the need to provide electoral equality and the location of these wards on the edge of the borough. We also do not consider school catchment areas as evidence of community identity. We consider that the draft recommendations in this area provide a good balance between electoral equality, the reflection of community identities and interests and the need to provide strong and easily identifiable boundaries and therefore, with only the amendments outlined above, are confirming them as final.

125 Under the final recommendations, the proposed Hathershaw and Hollinwood wards would both have councillor:elector ratios 2% below the borough average (both 1% below by 2006).

### **Coldhurst and Werneth wards**

126 Coldhurst and Werneth wards lie in the centre of the borough. Under the existing electoral arrangements, Coldhurst ward has a councillor:elector ratio equal to the borough average, both initially and by 2006. Werneth ward has a councillor:elector ratio 8% below the borough average, both initially and by 2006.

127 At Stage One, Oldham Borough Council proposed minor modifications to these two wards. It proposed that Coldhurst ward include parts of the town centre, 'containing very few electors', from the existing St Paul's and Werneth wards. It stated that 'this will have the advantage of bringing the town centre into two wards, rather than four as it is currently.' Its proposed boundary between these three wards would run along the A62 Oldham Way.

128 The Labour Group proposed no change to Coldhurst ward and 'significant change' to Werneth ward. The Labour Group stated that 'the re-defined ward includes the relatively discrete Freehold community and then extends across the southern face of the Coppice ridge into former St Paul's [ward] marked by three parallel roads, Heron Street, its bottom boundary, Frederick Street running through the middle and Windsor Road lying adjacent to the top boundary.'

129 We received two further representations in relation to this area. As previously discussed, Greater Manchester Police proposed to transfer to St Mary's ward that part of the existing Werneth ward to the north of the A62 Oldham Way, and that part of the existing Coldhurst ward to the south of St Mary's Way and the A669 Middleton Road. They considered that the revised St Mary's ward would unite the town centre area, but did not provide any electorate figures for their proposals. Chadderton Historical Society put forward an amendment to the boundary between the wards of Chadderton North and Coldhurst, described in a subsequent section of this report.

130 After careful consideration of all representations received at Stage One, we adopted the Borough Council's Coldhurst and Werneth wards as we considered them to best meet the statutory criteria, subject to several minor amendments. We noted that the Labour Group put forward a revised Coldhurst ward identical to that of the Borough Council except in the south of the proposed ward. As previously discussed, we proposed to improve electoral equality in Werneth ward by including that part of St Paul's ward to the west of the B1692 and to the north of (and including) Wolverton Avenue and College Avenue in an amended Werneth ward. We also proposed the transfer of part of Cumberland Drive from the proposed Coldhurst ward to

Royton South ward; this amendment would affect only 11 electors and would unite Cumberland Drive in Royton South ward.

131 Based on the available evidence, we were content that these revised wards provided the best balance between achieving good electoral equality, reflecting community identities and interests and providing effective and convenient local government. We were unable to adopt the Labour Group's wards in this area, as we did not propose to adopt its Central ward, which would span the town centre in a way we did not consider to best reflect community identities and interests. However, noting the lack of consensus among respondents as to whether Oldham town centre should be included in a single ward, we stated that we would welcome further views and evidence from interested parties at Stage Three.

132 Under the draft recommendations, Coldhurst ward would have a councillor:elector ratio equal to the borough average, both initially and by 2006. Werneth ward would have a councillor:elector ratio 4% below the borough average (3% below by 2006).

133 The Liberal Democrats supported the proposed Coldhurst and Werneth wards. They provided further evidence 'as to whether Oldham town centre should be included in a single ward', and argued that 'since 1950 the boundary between the Parliamentary constituencies of Oldham East and Oldham West has run through the town centre, along Lord Street. This is therefore a significant boundary and it would seem appropriate that the town centre lie in two wards along this boundary'.

134 Although we have no regard for parliamentary constituencies when formulating our recommendations, we note the support for the draft recommendations in this area and are therefore confirming them as final.

135 Under the final recommendations, the proposed Coldhurst ward would have a councillor:elector ratio equal to the borough average, both initially and by 2006. The proposed Werneth ward would have a councillor:elector ratio 4% below the borough average (3% below by 2006).

### **Failsworth East and Failsworth West wards**

136 Failsworth East and Failsworth West wards lie to the south-west of the borough. Under the existing electoral arrangements, Failsworth East ward has a councillor:elector ratio 3% above the borough average (2% above by 2006). Failsworth West ward has a councillor:elector ratio 7% below the borough average (9% below by 2006).

137 At Stage One, Oldham Metropolitan Borough Council proposed one modification to the existing Failsworth East ward and no change to the existing Failsworth West ward. As described in a preceding section, its proposed Failsworth East ward would include the Pastures estate (part of polling district 124) from the existing Hollinwood ward. The boundary between these two wards would be moved to the M60 as 'the motorway does effectively divide the community'. However, the Borough Council added that 'the M60 is a relatively new topographical feature', and considered that it did not accurately divide the Failsworth and Hollinwood communities to the north of this point. It considered that Roman Road linked Kaskenmoor School and Hillingdon Close to the rest of Hollinwood ward.

138 The Labour Group also proposed the inclusion of the Pastures estate in an amended Failsworth East ward. However, it also proposed the transfer from Failsworth East ward to Failsworth West ward of part of polling district 113, an area of the Lords Lane estate centred on Alder Road. Its proposed boundary ran to the east of Warwick Road and to the north of Durham Crescent, where it rejoined the existing boundary.

139 David Heyes MP provided argumentation supporting the Labour Group's proposed Failsworth East and Failsworth West wards. He stated that the streets comprising the part of polling district 113 to be transferred 'are all within the Lords Lane estate' and that the properties in these streets 'are similar in style, character and vintage to the rest of the estate' which already lies within Failsworth West ward. David Heyes MP argued that this ward would form a 'coherent whole as a local community and is clearly delineated along both sides of Alder Road' something which 'can be clearly seen on the map and on the ground.' He also considered that these proposals provide for better electoral equality than the Borough Council's proposals. As discussed previously, David Heyes MP supported the Borough Council and the Labour group's proposed Hollinwood ward.

140 Having carefully considered all representations received during Stage One, we adopted the Labour Group's proposed Failsworth East and Failsworth West wards, subject to a number of amendments. We noted the support and argumentation for the Labour Group's proposals provided by David Heyes MP and, having visited the area, concurred that they would best reflect community identities and interests in the area while providing for improved levels of electoral equality in Failsworth West ward. However, we also proposed to transfer part of Cemetery Road and all of Broome Grove from Failsworth West to Failsworth East ward, in order to unite Cemetery Road in a single ward. As previously discussed, we proposed further minor amendments between the wards of Failsworth East and Hollinwood in order to make greater use of the M60 as a clearly identifiable boundary and to include all of Woodhouse Green in Failsworth East ward. These changes would facilitate a slight improvement in electoral equality in Failsworth East ward while in our view providing for more clearly defined and effective ward boundaries in the affected areas.

141 Under the draft recommendations, the proposed Failsworth West ward would have a councillor:elector ratio equal to the borough average (1% below by 2006). Failsworth East would have a councillor:elector ratio 2% below the borough average, both initially and by 2006.

142 At Stage Three, the Liberal Democrats supported the proposed Failsworth East and Failsworth West wards, with the exception of the amendment to the boundary between Failsworth East and Hollinwood wards detailed above. They argued 'that, in order to maintain community links, the M60 should not be used as a ward boundary north of the Pastures estate or around Hollinwood junction.' We received no other submissions regarding this area at Stage Three.

143 The Liberal Democrats proposed amendment to the boundary between the proposed Failsworth East and Hollinwood wards is discussed in the previous section. As we received no further representations regarding this area, we are confirming the draft recommendations for this area as final.

144 Under the final recommendations, the proposed Failsworth East and Failsworth West wards would have councillor:elector ratios 2% below and equal to the borough average respectively (2% and 1% below by 2006).

### **Chadderton Central, Chadderton North and Chadderton South wards**

145 Chadderton Central, Chadderton North and Chadderton South wards lie to the west of the borough. Under the existing electoral arrangements, Chadderton Central and Chadderton North wards have councillor:elector ratios 6% and 2% above the borough average respectively (9% above and equal to by 2006). Chadderton South ward has a councillor:elector ratio 6% below the borough average (8% below by 2006).

146 At Stage One, Oldham Borough Council stated that 'Chadderton Central [ward] is currently too large and Chadderton South [ward] too small.' It therefore proposed the transfer of the area south of Eaves Lane and part of Butler Green (part of polling district 10) and the area of

Broadway south from Eaves Lane and Whitegate Lane (part of polling district 9) from the existing Chadderton Central ward to its proposed Cadderton South ward. Its proposed boundary ran along the railway line, to the south of the recreation ground, through the mills, to the north of the properties along Ravenside Park, down Raven Avenue and along Eaves Lane, before running to the west of the properties along Broadway Road and to the west of the properties on Whitegate Lane. The Labour Group put forward identical proposals to those of the Borough Council, stating that there had been 'consensus' between the main parties in this area.

147 Chadderton Historical Society also put forward proposals for this area. It proposed that polling districts 27 and 28, comprising that part of Coldhurst ward to the east of and accessed from Garforth Street, together with properties numbered 336-358 Middleton Road be transferred to Chadderton North ward. It argued that 'historically and geographically' these two areas 'are considered part of the town of Chadderton.' It argued that these two areas should therefore be transferred from the existing Coldhurst ward to its proposed Chadderton North ward. To achieve better electoral equality, it proposed the transfer of the area bounded by Middleton Road, Garforth Street, Brook Street and Broadway (polling district 14) from Chadderton North ward to Chadderton Central ward and the transfer of the area adjacent to the B6189 Foxdenton Lane (polling district 9) from Chadderton Central ward to Chadderton South ward. It also proposed the transfer of the Greengate area (part of polling district 7), containing few voters, from Chadderton Central ward to Chadderton South ward 'to achieve a more logical boundary between these two wards.'

148 We gave careful consideration to the representations received at Stage One. Noting the consensus between the Borough Council and the Labour Group in this area, we adopted their revised Chadderton Central and Chadderton South wards and their proposal to retain the existing Chadderton North ward. We were content that these proposals would provide for an improved level of electoral equality, while providing a good reflection of community identities and interests in the Chadderton area.

149 However, we proposed several amendments which would affect only a minimal number of electors. First, we proposed to transfer 242-246 Foxdenton Lane (the B6189) from the proposed Chadderton South ward to Chadderton Central ward to retain all properties on this road in a single ward. Second, we proposed to transfer the Boat and Horses public house on the A663 Broadway from Chadderton Central ward to Chadderton South ward to reflect its proximity to residential properties to the south of the Broadway. Finally, we proposed to transfer from Chadderton South ward to Chadderton Central ward the Broadway Business Park area between the Rochdale Canal and the Manchester Victoria to Rochdale railway line, containing no electors. We considered that moving the ward boundary south to the M60 would provide for a more clearly identifiable boundary in this part of the borough, without affecting links between residential areas to either side of the motorway in Chadderton South ward.

150 We did not adopt the amendments put forward by Chadderton Historical Society to the wards of Chadderton Central, Chadderton North, Chadderton South and Coldhurst. Having visited the area to be transferred from Coldhurst to Chadderton North under the Society's proposals, and considering the evidence provided in support of this amendment, we recognised that this proposal had merit. In particular, we noted that the current boundary on Garforth Street appears to divide residential roads that are similar in character. Those roads in Coldhurst ward immediately to the east of the ward boundary are only accessible from the west, and are separated from the remainder of the ward by a small industrial area.

151 Nonetheless, we are unable to consider any single area in isolation when putting forward proposals for new warding arrangements. Rather, we seek to put forward proposals that provide the best balance across the borough as a whole between achieving electoral equality, reflecting community identities and interests and providing effective and convenient local government. We noted that the Society's proposal would lead to either the substantial over-representation of Coldhurst ward (a councillor:elector ratio 13% below the borough average now and 12% below

by 2006) or would entail further consequential changes across the Oldham unparished area to provide for improved electoral equality in Coldhurst ward. We had received no proposals for such changes and noted the support of the Borough Council and the Labour Group for the retention of the existing boundary between Chadderton North and Coldhurst wards. We therefore proposed that it be retained. However, we stated that we would welcome comments from local people and other interested parties during Stage Three.

152 The Society's proposals for the rest of this area assumed the inclusion of part of Coldhurst ward in Chadderton North ward and, as we did not propose this, it was difficult for us to adopt any of their further changes in this area without leading either to a poor level of electoral equality or a poor reflection of community identity. We did not therefore propose that they be adopted as part of our draft recommendations. Further, based on the evidence received, we did not consider that they sufficiently reflected community identities and interests in the Chadderton area or provided for effective and convenient ward boundaries. In particular, we were concerned that the Society's proposed Chadderton Central ward breached the easily identifiable existing boundary with Chadderton North ward on the A669 Middleton Road. We also noted that under the Society's proposals the B6189 Foxdenton Lane residential area was transferred from Chadderton Central to Chadderton South ward. This area would not adjoin other residential areas in the proposed Chadderton South ward, although it would be linked to them via the A663 Broadway.

153 Under the draft recommendations, the proposed Chadderton North and Chadderton South wards would both have a councillor:elector ratio 2% above the borough average (equal to and 1% below by 2006). The proposed Chadderton Central ward would have a councillor:elector ratio 2% below the borough average (1% above by 2006).

154 The Liberal Democrats supported the proposed Chadderton Central, Chadderton North and Chadderton South wards at Stage Three.

155 In light of the support for these wards from the Liberal Democrats, and in the absence of any further comments, we are confirming the draft recommendations for this area as final.

156 Under the final recommendations, the proposed Chadderton North and Chadderton South wards would both have councillor:elector ratios 2% above the borough average (equal to and 1% below by 2006). The proposed Chadderton Central ward would have a councillor:elector ratio 2% below the borough average (1% above by 2006).

### **Crompton and Shaw wards**

157 Crompton and Shaw wards lie in the north of the borough and respectively comprise the North and West parish wards and the East and South parish wards of Shaw & Crompton parish. Under the existing electoral arrangements, Crompton and Shaw wards have councillor:elector ratios 8% and 1% above the borough average respectively (6% above and equal to by 2006).

158 At Stage One, Oldham Borough Council proposed that Crompton and Shaw wards remain unchanged. The Labour Group put forward identical proposals to those of the Borough Council, stating that there had been 'consensus' between the main parties in this area.

159 We received one further submission in relation to this area. A local resident proposed that Crompton and Shaw wards be renamed Crompton West and Crompton East respectively, in line with the existing ward names for Chadderton, Failsworth, Royton and Saddleworth. He provided examples of the usage of Crompton in preference to Shaw in the local community. The resident also considered that Crompton was the historically correct name of the parish and therefore proposed that the parish be renamed accordingly.

160 Having carefully considered the three representations received at Stage One, we adopted the Borough Council and Labour Group's proposals for Crompton and Shaw wards subject to one amendment. We noted that there appeared to be a consensus in support of the retention of the existing warding arrangement, and were generally content on the basis of the available evidence that this reflects community identities and interests and provides for effective and convenient local government. Nonetheless, we would ideally seek to further reduce electoral variance in Crompton ward. Having visited the area, we considered that this could potentially be achieved by means of a transfer of electors to Shaw ward in the Fraser Street area. However, we proposed instead to both improve electoral equality and better reflect community identities and interests in the affected area by transferring that part of Shaw & Crompton parish to the west of (and including) Fir Lane from Crompton ward to Royton North ward. We considered that this area geographically forms part of the town of Royton, but is separated from the Crompton urban area by open space.

161 Our proposal to further divide Shaw & Crompton parish between district wards would require the creation of a relatively over-represented Fir Lane parish ward. Nonetheless, on the basis of the evidence available to us we considered that this proposal would best meet our statutory criteria, as outlined above. We therefore suggested that the Borough Council consider a review of external parish boundaries in this area following the completion of the PER. However, we stated that we would welcome further comments on this matter from local people and other interested parties during Stage Three.

162 We examined the proposal by a local resident to rename Crompton and Shaw wards and the evidence provided in support of this option. We noted that both the Borough Council and the Labour Group supported the retention of the existing ward names, and we would in this instance require evidence of wider support before recommending any change. However, there is no provision in legislation for us to recommend changes to the names of parishes; such a review lies within the remit of the Borough Council to undertake.

163 Under the draft recommendations, the proposed Crompton and Shaw wards would have councillor:elector ratios 3% and 1% above the borough average respectively (1% above and equal to by 2006).

164 At Stage Three, the Liberal Democrats objected to the proposed Fir Lane parish ward of Shaw & Crompton parish, stating that 'Fir Lane has traditionally been linked with Crompton.' They provided details of a recent parish review to redress the electoral imbalances in the parish and opposed the proposal in the draft recommendations to 'create a tiny and vastly over-represented one-member Fir Lane parish council ward.' They also stated that they 'support the retention of the existing ward names' of these two wards.

165 Shaw & Crompton Parish Council also provided details of the recent parish review of Shaw & Crompton parish, stating that 'this adjustment would also make the proposal to create a new Fir Lane parish ward impractical'. It argued that it 'would prefer the Fir Lane area to be totally transferred into Royton with the Parish Council boundary being redrawn to take account of this.' It went on to state that 'the Parish Council is in agreement with both the Borough Council and the Labour Group in supporting the retention of the existing ward names'.

166 Councillor Sykes also informed us of the recent parish review undertaken in this area and argued that the Fir Lane area should remain in Crompton ward. He stated that 'that particular polling district in Crompton around the Fir Lane area has always been in the historical part of Crompton as far as records go back and, while accepting geographically it may be closer to Royton than Shaw, many parts of that area have the address Low Crompton and it would be a great shame if the historic parts of Crompton were dissected as part of this boundary review.' He provided an alternative amendment to the existing Crompton ward, which involved the Shaw Road and Blackshaw Lane area of the existing Crompton ward being transferred to the proposed Royton South ward, 'if changes need to be made for numeric reasons'. He also stated

that ‘my colleagues and I would strongly support your view that the ward names of Crompton and Shaw be retained.’

167 After careful consideration of all the representations received at Stage Three, we are proposing one amendment to this area. We were not aware of the recent parish review that had been carried out in this area when formulating the draft recommendations and are grateful for the details provided regarding this review. We would not seek to further ward a parish that has only recently undergone such a review and therefore concur with the Liberal Democrats, Shaw & Crompton Parish Council and Councillor Sykes that we should not create an over-represented Fir Lane parish ward. We consequently propose to retain the Fir Lane area in an unchanged Crompton ward. With regard to Shaw & Crompton Parish Council’s comments that they would like to see the parish boundary redrawn so that the Fir Lane area be transferred to Royton, we can only state that this is beyond the remit of this review and recommend another parish review of the area by the Borough Council. This review may also seek to address other anomalies regarding the external parish boundary such as those to the south, in the Fullwood area.

168 We note the strong support for retaining the ward names of Crompton and Shaw, and so propose to confirm these names as final.

169 Under the final recommendations, the proposed Crompton and Shaw wards would have councillor:elector ratios 8% and 1% above the borough average respectively (6% above and equal to by 2006).

### **Royton North and Royton South wards**

170 Royton North and Royton South wards lie in the north-west of the borough. Under the existing electoral arrangements, Royton North and Royton South wards have councillor:elector ratios 3% above and equal to the borough average respectively (1% and 2% above by 2006).

171 At Stage One, Oldham Borough Council proposed that Royton North and Royton South wards remained unchanged. The Labour Group put forward identical proposals to those of the Borough Council, stating that there had been ‘consensus’ between the main parties in this area.

172 Having carefully considered the two representations received at Stage One, we adopted the Borough Council and the Labour Group’s proposals for the retention of the existing Royton North and Royton South wards as they provided for electoral equality and use good boundaries, subject to four amendments. As described in the previous section, we proposed to transfer the Fir Lane area of Shaw & Crompton parish from Crompton ward to Royton North ward to better reflect community identities and interests in this part of the borough. We also proposed a consequential amendment between Royton North and Royton South wards to retain good electoral equality in Royton North ward, entailing the transfer to Royton South ward of a small area to the south of Middleton Road (the B6195), east of Union Street, and west of the A671 Oldham Road. We also proposed two further minor changes to provide for effective and convenient ward boundaries: the transfer of part of Cumberland Drive from Coldhurst ward to the proposed Royton South ward, as previously discussed; and the inclusion in Royton South ward of all of Cavendish Way, which is currently divided between the two wards of Royton. We were content on the basis of the available evidence that these modifications ensured the best available balance between achieving electoral equality, reflecting community identities and interests, and providing effective and convenient local government.

173 Under the draft recommendations, the proposed Royton North and Royton South wards would have councillor:elector ratios 5% and 3% above the borough average respectively (3% and 5% above by 2006).

174 At Stage Three, the Liberal Democrats, having proposed the retention of the Fir Lane area in the proposed Crompton ward as discussed in the previous section, argued for the

reversal of the consequential amendment between Royton North and Royton South wards. This is the transfer of the Union Street area to the proposed Royton South ward and is a modification that they view 'as an unnecessary change.' With the exception of this amendment, they supported the proposed Royton North and Royton South wards as proposed in the draft recommendations.

175 After careful consideration of the Liberal Democrats submission, and in light of the proposal to retain the Fir Lane area in an unchanged Crompton ward, we are reversing the amendment in the Union Street area proposed in the draft recommendations. This is to improve electoral equality in the light of our proposals for Crompton and Shaw wards. With the exception of this amendment, we are endorsing the draft recommendations for this area as final.

176 Under the final recommendations, the proposed Royton North and Royton South would have councillor:elector ratios 3% and 1% above the borough average respectively (1% and 2% above by 2006).

## Electoral cycle

177 Under section 7(3) of the Local Government Act 1972, all metropolitan boroughs have a system of elections by thirds.

## Conclusions

178 Having considered carefully all the representations and evidence received in response to the consultation report, we have decided substantially to endorse the draft recommendations, subject to the following amendments:

- we are retaining the existing Crompton and Shaw wards and consequentially are amending the boundary between the proposed Royton North and Royton South wards to improve electoral equality;
- we propose minor modifications to the boundaries between the proposed Alexandra and Lees & Saddleworth West wards and the proposed Saddleworth North and Saddleworth South wards to better reflect community identities and access routes;
- we propose a further minor amendment to the boundary between the proposed St James' and Shaw wards, in the Fullwood area, to reflect access routes;
- we propose a small modification to the boundary between the proposed Hollinwood and St Paul's wards, affecting no electors;
- we propose that Lees & Saddleworth West and St Paul's wards be renamed Saddleworth West & Lees and Hathershaw respectively.

179 We conclude that, in Oldham:

- there should be 60 councillors, the same as at present;
- there should be 20 wards, the same as at present;
- the boundaries of 18 of the existing wards should be modified.

180 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	60	60	60	60
Number of wards	20	20	20	20
Average number of electors per councillor	2,661	2,661	2,680	2,680
Number of wards with a variance more than 10% from the average	6	0	6	0
Number of wards with a variance more than 20% from the average	1	0	1	0

181 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 the borough average from six to none. This level of electoral equality would improve further by 2006, with no ward varying by more than 6% from the average. We conclude that our recommendations would best meet the statutory criteria.

*Final recommendation*

Oldham Borough Council should comprise 60 councillors serving 20 wards, as detailed and named in Tables 1 and 2, and illustrated on Map 2 and in Appendix A and the large maps.

## Parish and town council electoral arrangements

182 When reviewing electoral arrangements, we are required to comply as far as possible with the rules set out in Schedule 11 to the 1972 Act. The Schedule provides that if a parish is to be divided between different borough wards it must also be divided into parish wards, so that each parish ward lies wholly within a single ward of the borough. Accordingly, we propose consequential warding arrangements for the parish of Saddleworth to reflect the proposed borough wards.

183 The parish of Saddleworth is currently served by 20 councillors representing six wards: Greenfield and Springhead Lower (each returning five parish councillors); Delph and Dobcross (each returning three parish councillors); and Springhead Higher and Upper mill (each returning two parish councillors). In light of the draft recommendations in this area, we proposed minor modifications to the boundaries between the parish wards to reflect the new borough warding. We also proposed a further minor amendment to transfer Halls Way from Upper mill parish ward to Greenfield parish ward to reflect road access. We did not propose to modify the level of representation of any of the wards concerned.

184 At Stage Three we received support from the Liberal Democrats, who stated that they 'agree with the Boundary Committee's draft recommendation relating to Saddleworth Parish

Council.’ Consequently, with the exception of a minor amendment to the boundary between Dobcross and Uppermill parish wards in the Ryefields Drive area, we propose to confirm the draft recommendations for Saddleworth parish as final.

*Final recommendation*

Saddleworth Parish Council should comprise 20 councillors, as at present, representing six wards: Delph (returning three councillors), Dobcross (returning three councillors), Greenfield (returning five councillors), Springhead Higher (returning two councillors), Springhead Lower (returning five councillors) and Uppermill (returning two councillors). The boundary between these parish wards should reflect the proposed borough ward boundaries, as illustrated and named on the large maps in Appendix A.

185 The parish of Shaw & Crompton is currently served by 14 councillors representing four wards: East, North, South and West. At Stage Three, we were notified of a recent parish review undertaken in this parish. East and North parish wards now return four councillors each (a transfer of one parish councillor from North to East parish wards), and South and West parish wards return three councillors each. In the draft recommendations, we proposed the creation of a new parish ward, Fir Lane parish ward, to reflect the inclusion of part of the parish in Royton North borough ward. We recommended that the new Fir Lane parish ward be represented by one councillor, but that the total number of councillors for the whole parish should remain unchanged. This would entail a consequential reduction of the representation of North parish ward from five councillors to four councillors, to which it is entitled based upon its share of the parish electorate. We stated that we would welcome views on these proposals for Shaw & Crompton parish at Stage Three.

186 At Stage Three, we received details of a recent parish review undertaken in this area. The Liberal Democrats, Shaw & Crompton Parish Council and Councillor Sykes opposed the creation of an over represented Fir Lane parish. It was argued by the Liberal Democrats and Councillor Sykes that the area had close links with the rest of the existing Crompton ward. Therefore, in light of our proposals for borough ward boundaries in the area, we are proposing to retain the Fir Lane area in an unchanged Crompton ward.

187 Shaw & Crompton Parish Council commented that they would like to see the parish boundary redrawn so that the Fir Lane area be transferred to Royton. However, this is beyond the remit of this review and changes to the external boundaries of a parish can only be made following another parish review. This review could also address the anomalies in the south of the parish.

*Final recommendation*

Shaw & Crompton Parish Council should comprise 14 councillors, as at present, representing four wards: East (returning four councillors), North (returning four councillors), South (returning three councillors) and West (returning three councillors). The parish ward boundaries should remain unchanged, as illustrated and named on the large maps in Appendix A.

*Map 2: Final recommendations for Oldham*

## 6 What happens next?

188 Having completed our review of electoral arrangements in Oldham 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).

189 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 8 October 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.

190 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](mailto:implementation@electoralcommission.org.uk)  
(This address should only be used for this purpose)**



# Appendix A

## Final recommendations for Oldham: **Detailed mapping**

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

**Map A1** illustrates, in outline form, the proposed ward boundaries.

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

*Map A1: Final recommendations for Oldham: Key map*

# 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 Oldham**

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 Oldham**

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.

## **Wards of the parish of Saddleworth**

This describes how one parish in Oldham is being changed.

## **Maps**

This requires Oldham 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 Oldham

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### STATUTORY INSTRUMENTS

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**2003 No.**

## **LOCAL GOVERNMENT, ENGLAND**

### **The Borough of Oldham (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 August 2003 on its review of the borough(**d**) of Oldham:

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 Oldham (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 Oldham 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 Oldham;

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

any reference to the map is a reference to the map marked “Map referred to in the Borough of Oldham (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 Oldham Metropolitan Borough Council; and

any reference to a numbered sheet is a reference to the sheet of the map which bears that number.

## **Wards of the borough of Oldham**

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

- (2) The borough shall be divided into twenty 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 Oldham**

### **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.

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(a) See the Borough of Oldham (Electoral Arrangements) Order 1978 (S.I. 1978/1605).

(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).

- (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.

### **Wards of the parish of Saddleworth**

- 5.—(1) The existing wards of the parish of Saddleworth shall be abolished.
- (2) The parish shall be divided into six parish wards which shall bear the names Delph, Dobcross, Greenfield, Springhead Higher, Springhead Lower and Uppermill; and the wards shall comprise the areas designated on sheets 1, 3, 4 and 5 by reference to the name of the ward and demarcated by orange lines.
- (3) The number of councillors to be elected for each of the Greenfield and Springhead Lower parish wards shall be five, for each of the Delph and Dobcross parish wards shall be three, and for each of the Springhead Higher and Uppermill parish wards shall be two.

### **Maps**

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

### **Electoral registers**

7. 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**

8. The Borough of Oldham (Electoral Arrangements) Order 1978(b) is revoked, save for articles 8 and 9(10).

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

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(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. 1978/1605.

Chairman of the Commission

Secretary to the Commission

## SCHEDULE

article 3

### NAMES OF WARDS

Alexandra	Failsworth West	Saddleworth West and Lees
Chadderton Central	Hathershaw	St James'
Chadderton North	Hollinwood	St Mary's
Chadderton South	Royton North	Shaw
Coldhurst	Royton South	Waterhead
Crompton	Saddleworth North	Werneth
Failsworth East	Saddleworth South	

#### 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 Oldham.

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 20 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 5 makes electoral changes in the parish of Saddleworth.

Article 7 obliges the Electoral Registration Officer to make any necessary amendments to the electoral register to reflect the new electoral arrangements.

Article 8 revokes the Borough of Oldham (Electoral Arrangements) Order 1978, with the exception of articles 8 and 9(10).

The areas of the new borough and parish 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 Oldham Metropolitan Borough Council and at the principal office of the Electoral Commission at Trevelyan House, Great Peter Street, London SW1P 2HW.