

Final recommendations on the
future electoral arrangements
for Brighton & Hove

Report to the Secretary of State for
Transport, Local Government and the Regions

August 2001

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

WHAT IS THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT COMMISSION FOR ENGLAND?

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

Members of the Commission are:

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

Barbara Stephens (Chief Executive)

We are 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, ward names and the frequency of elections. We can also recommend changes to the electoral arrangements of parish councils.

This report sets out the Commission's final recommendations on the electoral arrangements for the city of Brighton & Hove.

SUMMARY

We began a review of Brighton & Hove's electoral arrangements on 25 July 2000. We published our draft recommendations for electoral arrangements on 20 February 2001, after which we undertook an eight-week period of consultation.

- **This report summarises the representations we received during consultation on our draft recommendations, and contains our final recommendations to the Secretary of State.**

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

- **in seven of the 26 wards the number of electors represented by each councillor varies by more than 10 per cent from the average for the city;**
- **by 2005 electoral equality is expected to worsen, with the number of electors per councillor forecast to vary by more than 10 per cent from the average in seven wards.**

Our main final recommendations for future electoral arrangements (see Tables 1 and 2 and paragraphs 106–107) are that:

- **Brighton & Hove City Council should have 54 councillors, 24 fewer than at present;**
- **there should be 21 wards, instead of 26 as at present;**
- **the boundaries of 22 of the existing wards should be modified, resulting in a net reduction of six, and four wards should retain their existing boundaries;**
- **elections should continue to be for the whole council.**

These recommendations seek to ensure that the number of electors represented by each borough councillor is as nearly as possible the same, bearing in mind local circumstances.

- **In all of the proposed 21 wards the number of electors per councillor would vary by no more than 10 per cent from the borough average.**
- **This improved level of electoral equality is forecast to continue.**

All further correspondence on these final recommendations and the matters discussed in this report should be addressed to the Secretary of State for Transport, Local Government and the Regions, who will not make an Order implementing them before 18 September 2001:

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

Table 1: Final Recommendations: Summary

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

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

2 The large map at the back of the report and map 2 illustrate all of the proposed wards.

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 Brighton & Hove

Ward name	Number of councillors	Electorate (2000)	Number of electors per councillor	Variance from average %	Electorate (2005)	Number of electors per councillor	Variance from average %
1 Brunswick & Adelaide	2	7,343	3,672	2	7,409	3,705	3
2 Central Hove	2	7,185	3,593	0	7,225	3,613	0
3 East Brighton	3	10,399	3,466	-4	10,414	3,471	-4
4 Goldsmid	3	10,792	3,597	0	10,805	3,602	0
5 Hangleton & Knoll	3	10,791	3,597	0	10,695	3,565	-1
6 Hanover & Elm Grove	3	10,725	3,575	-1	10,804	3,601	0
7 Hollingbury & Stanmer	3	11,079	3,693	2	10,979	3,660	1
8 Moulsecoomb & Bevendean	3	10,922	3,641	1	10,952	3,651	1
9 North Portslade	2	7,465	3,733	3	7,466	3,733	3
10 Patcham	3	10,735	3,578	-1	10,698	3,566	-1
11 Preston Park	3	10,233	3,411	-5	10,058	3,353	-7
12 Queen's Park	3	11,076	3,692	2	11,050	3,683	2
13 Regency	2	7,237	3,619	0	7,303	3,652	1
14 Rottingdean Coastal	3	10,520	3,507	-3	10,765	3,588	-1
15 St Peter's & North Laine	3	11,238	3,746	4	11,476	3,825	6
16 South Portslade	2	6,958	3,479	-4	6,953	3,477	-4
17 Stanford	2	7,720	3,860	7	7,716	3,858	7
18 Westbourne	2	7,242	3,621	0	7,240	3,620	0

Ward name	Number of councillors	Electorate (2000)	Number of electors per councillor	Variance from average %	Electorate (2005)	Number of electors per councillor	Variance from average %
19 Wish	2	6,871	3,436	-5	6,865	3,433	-5
20 Withdean	3	10,778	3,593	0	10,789	3,596	0
21 Woodingdean	2	7,463	3,732	3	7,384	3,692	2
Totals	54	194,772	–	–	195,046	–	–
Averages	–	–	3,607	–	–	3,612	–

Source: *Electorate figures are based on information provided by Brighton & Hove City 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 city. 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 on the electoral arrangements for the city of Brighton & Hove. We have now reviewed five districts in East Sussex and Brighton & Hove City Council as part of our programme of periodic electoral reviews (PERs) of all 386 principal local authority areas in England. Our programme started in 1996 and is currently expected to be completed by 2004.

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

3 In carrying out these reviews, we must have regard to:

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

4 Full details of the legislation under which we work are set out in a document entitled *Guidance and Procedural Advice for Local Authorities and Other Interested Parties* (fourth edition published in December 2000). This *Guidance* sets out our approach to the reviews.

5 Our task is to make recommendations to the Secretary of State 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 Rottingdean Parish Council, the only parish council in Brighton & Hove.

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

7 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 per cent in any ward will have to be fully justified. Any imbalances of 20 per cent or more should only arise in the most exceptional circumstances, and will require the strongest justification.

8 We are not prescriptive on council size. We start from the assumption that the size of the existing council already secures effective and convenient local government, but we are willing to look carefully at arguments why this might not be so. However, we have found it necessary to safeguard against upward drift in the number of councillors, and we believe that any proposal for an increase in council

size will need to be fully justified. In particular, we do not accept that an increase in electorate should automatically result in an increase in the number of councillors, nor that changes should be made to the size of a council simply to make it more consistent with the size of other similar councils.

9 In July 1998, the Government published a White Paper called *Modern Local Government – In Touch with the People*, which set out legislative proposals for local authority electoral arrangements. In two-tier areas, it proposed introducing a pattern in which both the district and county councils would hold elections every two years, i.e. in year one, half of the district council would be elected, in year two, half the county council would be elected, and so on. In unitary authorities the White Paper proposed elections by thirds. The Government stated that local accountability would be maximised where every elector has an opportunity to vote every year, thereby pointing to a pattern of two-member wards (and divisions) in two-tier areas and three-member wards in unitary authority areas. However, it stated that there was no intention to move towards very large electoral wards in sparsely populated rural areas, and that single-member wards (and electoral divisions) would continue in many authorities. The proposals were taken forward in the Local Government Act 2000 which, among other matters, provides that the Secretary of State may make Orders to change authorities' electoral cycles. However, until such time as the Secretary of State makes any Orders under the 2000 Act, we will continue to operate on the basis of existing legislation and our current *Guidance*.

10 This review was in four stages. Stage One began on 25 July 2000, when we wrote to Brighton & Hove City Council inviting proposals for future electoral arrangements. We also notified Sussex Police Authority, East Sussex Association of Parish Councils, Rottingdean Parish Council, the Members of Parliament with constituency interests in the city, the Members of the European Parliament for the South East Region, and the headquarters of the main political parties. We placed a notice in the local press, issued a press release and invited the City Council to publicise the review further. The closing date for receipt of representations, the end of Stage One, was 16 October 2000. At Stage Two we considered all the representations received during Stage One and prepared our draft recommendations.

11 Stage Three began on 20 February 2001 with the publication of our report *Draft recommendations on the future electoral arrangements for Brighton & Hove*, and ended on 23 April 2001. During this period we sought comments from the public and other interested parties on our preliminary conclusions. Finally, during Stage Four we reconsidered our draft recommendations in the light of the Stage Three consultation and now publish our final recommendations.

2 CURRENT ELECTORAL ARRANGEMENTS

12 Brighton & Hove became a unitary authority in 1997, replacing Brighton and Hove borough councils, and was awarded city status in 2000. It is the largest unitary authority along the south coast, covering an area of 8,473 hectares, and comprises a socially and culturally diverse population of 245,000. It is a major regional centre for employment, education, shopping, the arts and leisure, attracting over four million visitors each year. Communication links include the A27 and M23 and a fast train service to London, which help to make Brighton & Hove one of the United Kingdom's premier seaside resorts and conference venues. Brighton & Hove has one parish, Rottingdean, situated to the east of Brighton. The remainder of the borough is unparished.

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

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

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

16 At present, each councillor represents an average of 2,497 electors, which the City Council forecasts will increase to 2,501 by the year 2005 if the present number of councillors is maintained. However, due to demographic and other changes over the past two decades, the number of electors per councillor in seven of the 26 wards varies by more than 10 per cent from the average. The greatest imbalance is in Hangleton ward where each councillor represents 15 per cent fewer electors than the city average. In Marine and Hanover wards each councillor represents 14 per cent more electors than the average.

Map 1: Existing Wards in Brighton & Hove

Table 3: Existing Electoral Arrangements

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

Ward name	Number of councillors	Electorate (2000)	Number of electors per councillor	Variance from average %	Electorate (2005)	Number of electors per councillor	Variance from average %
24 Westdene	3	7,645	2,548	2	7,728	2,576	3
25 Wish	3	6,871	2,290	-8	6,865	2,288	-9
26 Woodingdean	3	7,463	2,488	0	7,384	2,461	-2
Totals	78	194,772	-	-	195,045	-	-
Averages	-	-	2,497	-	-	2,501	-

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

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

3 DRAFT RECOMMENDATIONS

17 During Stage One we received 39 representations, including city-wide schemes from Brighton & Hove City Council, the Conservative Group on the Council, the Brighton & Hove Liberal Democrat Party and the Green Party of Brighton & Hove. Representations were received from Rottingdean Parish Council, local councillors, community groups, political associations and 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 Brighton & Hove*.

18 Our draft recommendations were based on the Conservative Group's proposals, which achieved some improvement in electoral equality, and provided a pattern of two-member and three-member wards. However, we moved away from the Conservative Group's scheme in a number of areas, affecting seven wards, using some of our own proposals. We proposed that:

- Brighton & Hove City Council should be served by 54 councillors, compared with the current 78, representing 20 wards, six fewer than at present;
- the boundaries of 22 of the existing wards should be modified, while four wards should retain their existing boundaries;

Draft Recommendation

Brighton & Hove City Council should comprise 54 councillors, serving 20 wards. The whole council should continue to be elected every four years.

19 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 10 per cent from the city average, both initially and by 2005.

4 RESPONSES TO CONSULTATION

20 During the consultation on our draft recommendations report, we received 69 representations. A list of all respondents is available from us on request. All representations may be inspected at our offices and those of Brighton & Hove City Council.

Brighton & Hove City Council

21 The City Council broadly supported our draft recommendations. It proposed small adjustments to the boundary between Hollingbury & Stanmer and St Peter's & North Laine wards and the boundary between Preston Park and Withdean wards, and pointed out minor discrepancies in electorate figures for the latter two wards. It also proposed changes to the names of three wards: Moulsecoomb & Tenantry (Moulsecoomb & Bevendean), Portslade North (North Portslade) and Portslade South (South Portslade).

Brighton & Hove Conservative Group

22 Brighton & Hove Conservative Group supported the draft recommendations, commenting that “the amendments that have been made to our suggestions are good ones”.

Brighton & Hove Liberal Democrats

23 The Liberal Democrats expressed reservations concerning the proposed Preston Park ward and put forward an alternative proposal for the proposed wards of Brunswick & Regency, Central Hove and St Peter's & North Laine.

Brighton & Hove Labour Party

24 Brighton & Hove Labour Party supported the draft recommendations for eight wards but proposed alternative wards to replace the proposed wards of Hollingbury & Stanmer, Patcham, Preston Park, St Peter's & North Laine and Withdean, and the existing Westbourne and Wish wards. It proposed minor boundary changes to the proposed Brunswick & Regency, Central Hove and Goldsmid wards and changes to the names of two wards: Moulsecoomb & Tenantry (Moulsecoomb & Bevendean) and Rottingdean Coastal (Marine).

The Green Party of Brighton & Hove

25 The Green Party expressed disappointment that its proposal for a council size of 75 had not been adopted and stated that, should a revised committee system be adopted in Brighton & Hove, a 54-member Council would be “unable to deliver effective local governance”. It expressed particular concern over the boundaries of Preston Park and St Peter's & North Laine wards and Hanover & Elm Grove and Queen's Park wards, and requested that the seafront wards of St George's & St James and College, which it proposed at Stage One, should be adopted.

Other Representations

26 Representations were received in response to our draft recommendations from seven councillors, with three further submissions each having three councillors as signatories and one from two councillors. Four submissions were received from political associations, seven from community groups and 42 from local residents.

27 Councillors Stiles, Simson and Wells, members for Woodingdean ward, supported the proposals for Woodingdean ward. Councillors Elgood, Davidson and Watkins, members for Brunswick & Adelaide ward, objected to the proposed division of the ward and enclosed the results of a local consultation exercise which they had undertaken, which showed that three residents were in favour of the proposals, while 67 were against. Councillors Brown and Rowe, members for Stanford ward, objected to the name of the proposed Hove Park ward, preferring the name of the ward to continue to be Stanford. Councillors Hazelgrove and Tonks, members for Moulsecoomb ward, and Councillor Collier, member for Portslade South ward, objected to the proposed reduction in the number of councillors from 78 to 54 on the grounds that it would lead to a reduction in the services provided and the level of representation. A submission with the signatures of five residents expressed support for Councillor Hazelgrove's views.

28 Councillor Smith, member for Rottingdean ward, supported the draft recommendations, stating that the reduction in council size would "mean considerable savings and the new warding will give a more equal elector/councillor ratio". Councillor Pennington, member for Regency ward, proposed amendments to the boundary of Brunswick & Regency ward and expressed his disapproval of the overall reduction in the number of councillors. Councillors Hawkes, Beishon and Framroze, members for Stanmer ward, proposed further amendments to the boundary for Stanmer ward on community identity grounds. Councillors James and Murphy, members for Wish ward, supported the Labour Party's proposals for the area.

29 Brighton Pavilion, Brighton Kemp Town and Hove & Portslade Conservative Associations expressed support for the draft recommendations, though the latter requested that the name Stanford be retained for Hove Park ward, claiming it had great historical significance. Three residents also expressed this view. The Hove & Portslade Liberal Party was opposed to the proposed reduction in the number of councillors in the Portslade wards, a view also expressed by a Portslade resident. Roedean Residents Association supported the proposal to transfer Roedean and Brighton Marina to Rottingdean Coastal ward. Woodingdean Community Association supported the draft recommendations. Goldsmid Ward Residents' Group supported the proposal to retain the Goldsmid ward name.

30 Opposition to the proposals for the Brunswick Town area came from the Friends of Brunswick Square & Terrace, which proposed an alternative warding pattern in the area. The locally-organised "Brunswick Petition" supported this alternative proposal with a 1,401-signature petition. Fourteen respondents were also opposed to the proposals to divide Brunswick and Adelaide ward, on the grounds of community identity. The Poets Corner Residents Society expressed concern that the area covered by the society is currently divided between two city wards, Westbourne and Wish, and requested that this be addressed. A resident of Westbourne ward supported the proposed retention of the ward.

31 Three Woodingdean respondents supported the proposals for the ward, while one Saltdean resident was opposed to the proposed boundaries of Rottingdean Coastal ward. Three residents objected to the name of the new Moulsecoomb & Tenantry ward, preferring Moulsecoomb & Bevendean as a better reflection of local geography and communities. A member of the Prestonville Community Association

was opposed to the proposal for the Seven Dials area as it cut in half the area covered by the West Hill Community Association and the West Hill Conservation Area. Another resident expressed satisfaction that the “heart of Hanover” was being kept together in one ward. Four residents expressed support for the draft recommendations. One resident wanted the current 26 wards retained and amended and another favoured elections every two or three years. This resident also proposed minor modifications to the proposed wards of Brunswick & Regency, Central Hove, Goldsmid, Patcham, Preston Park and St Peter’s & North Laine. Four respondents supported the general reduction in the number of councillors, while four expressed opposition to it.

5 ANALYSIS AND FINAL RECOMMENDATIONS

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

33 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 ensuing five years. We also must have regard to the desirability of fixing identifiable boundaries and to maintaining local ties.

34 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.

35 Our *Guidance* states that we accept that the achievement of absolute electoral equality for the authority as a whole is likely to be unattainable. However, we consider that, if electoral imbalances are to be 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 electorates must also be considered and we would aim to recommend a scheme which provides improved electoral equality over this five-year period.

Electorate Forecasts

36 At Stage One the Council submitted electorate forecasts for the year 2005, projecting an increase in the electorate of approximately 0.14 per cent from 194,772 to 195,045 over the five-year period from 2000 to 2005. It expected the growth to be relatively evenly distributed across the borough. In order to prepare these forecasts, the Council estimated rates and locations of housing development with regard to structure and local plans, the expected rate of building over the five-year period and assumed occupancy rates. We 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.

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

Council Size

38 As already explained, we start by assuming that the current council size facilitates effective and convenient local government, although we are willing to carefully look at arguments why this might not be the case.

39 Brighton & Hove Council currently has 78 members, the sum of the number of councillors in the former two boroughs of Brighton and Hove. In its Stage One submission the Council proposed a reduction in size, to 64 members. Both the Conservatives and the Liberal Democrats also proposed a significant reduction in council size, to 54 members. The Green Party proposed a council size of 75 members. We noted that there was a general consensus that there should be a reduction in the number of councillors in Brighton & Hove, albeit to varying degrees. However, before reaching conclusions on what might be the most appropriate council size, we felt that we required further information and evidence from each of the participants in support of their proposals. We therefore invited the Council and the three political parties to provide further justification.

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

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

42 With the introduction of the Government's proposals for executive styles of political management in local authorities, with an enhanced scrutiny role for councillors, now contained in the Local Government Act 2000, it was regarded as appropriate for participants in a PER to consider the overall role and number of councillors against the backdrop of those proposals and the implications for the Council. This was the approach which was taken in Brighton & Hove, and there was a clear consensus among the Council and the political parties that the existing council size of 78 members did not, and would not, provide for effective and convenient local government in the area. We accepted that to be the case. The question was whether the Council and residents would be better served by a council size of 75, 64 or 54 members, or some other number.

43 When considering the important issue of community identity, we were of the opinion that all of the schemes, while trying to balance electoral equality and community identity, had obvious defects, which were commented upon by those proposing alternative schemes. For example, the Council's proposals necessitated splitting the community of Woodingdean and changing the boundary between Portslade North and Portslade South wards. The Conservatives' proposals included joining the Poets Corner area

of Westbourne ward with an area north of the railway line with which it has no common links. The Liberal Democrats, while wishing to retain the former Brighton/Hove boundary, proposed abolishing part of the former Portslade/Hove boundary. The Green Party, while retaining more current wards and proposing a smaller reduction in council size, proposed a number of cross-community links, including adding part of Neville ward to Portslade South ward.

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

45 Thus, having considered the size and distribution of the electorate, the geography and other characteristics of the area, together with the representations received, we concluded that the achievement of electoral equality and the reflection of community identity would best be met by a council of 54 members.

46 During Stage Three the Green Party expressed disappointment that its suggestion of a council size of 75 members was not adopted and stated that it remained of the opinion that "any greater reduction in size will threaten local democracy, insofar as constituent access to elected members will be made more difficult, both placing an undue strain on the efficient functioning of the Council, and on members personally". In their submissions the City Council and the other political parties accepted the proposed council size. Four councillors and four residents expressed opposition to the reduction while one councillor and four residents expressed their support.

47 In the light of this broad support, and given the reasons for recommending a council size of 54 as set out in the draft recommendations report, we are confirming our draft recommendation for a council of 54 members as final.

Electoral Arrangements

48 We carefully considered all the representations received at Stage One, including city-wide schemes from the City Council, the Conservative Group, the Liberal Democrats and the Green Party. We noted the consensus for a significant decrease in council size and, as detailed above, proposed basing the draft recommendations on a council size of 54. Of the two 54-member schemes received, we were of the view that the Conservatives' proposals generally met the statutory criteria more closely than those of the Liberal Democrats, and therefore used them as the basis for our draft recommendations. However, we also proposed some substantial amendments to reflect a number of local objections.

49 At Stage Three the City Council broadly supported our draft recommendations, but proposed small adjustments to four ward boundaries and pointed out minor anomalies in electorate figures for two wards. It also proposed changes to the names of three wards. The Conservatives also supported our draft recommendations. The Liberal Democrats expressed reservations concerning the boundaries of one of the proposed wards and put forward alternative proposals for three other wards. The Labour Party supported the draft recommendations for eight wards. It proposed alternative wards to replace seven of the proposed wards, proposed minor boundary changes to three wards and changes to the names of two wards. The Green Party expressed particular concern over the boundaries of four wards, and requested that two of the wards it had proposed at Stage One be adopted. It also suggested that, because of the uncertainties concerning the future style of local government in Brighton & Hove, publication of the final recommendations should be delayed until the result of a referendum is known.

50 We have reviewed our draft recommendations and, in the light of further evidence and the representations received during Stage Three, we propose modifying our proposals in three areas. For city warding purposes, the following areas, based on existing wards, are considered in turn:

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

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

Portslade North, Portslade South, Rottingdean and Woodingdean wards

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

53 We based our draft recommendations for these wards on the Conservatives' proposals. However, we made one amendment as we saw no need to change the boundary between Portslade North ward and Portslade South ward in the interest of electoral equality, as they had proposed. We put forward, as part of our draft recommendations, the retention of the existing Portslade North and Portslade South wards, albeit with two councillors each rather than three, apart from a small part of Portslade South ward being transferred to Hangleton & Knoll ward to enable the Hangleton link road to become the new boundary. With regard to the proposal for Woodingdean ward, we noted the views of residents and councillors and, officers from the Commission having visited the area, we agreed that the existing ward should be retained, albeit with two members rather than three. We noted that the proposed new Rottingdean Coastal ward would achieve significant improvements in electoral equality while also reflecting the statutory criteria. We therefore adopted the Conservatives' proposals for Woodingdean and Rottingdean Coastal wards as part of our draft recommendations.

54 Under our draft recommendations the number of electors per councillor would be 3 per cent above the city average in Portslade North ward (unchanged in 2005), 4 per cent below in Portslade South ward (unchanged in 2005), 3 per cent below in Rottingdean Coastal ward (1 per cent below in 2005) and 3 per cent above in Woodingdean ward (2 per cent above in 2005).

55 At Stage Three the City Council, the Conservatives and the Labour Party supported our draft recommendation for these wards, though the Council and the Labour Party proposed minor amendments. The Council proposed that Portslade North and Portslade South wards be renamed North Portslade and South Portslade, on the grounds that this would reflect local usage and also be consistent with the naming of other proposed wards such as East Brighton and Central Hove. The Labour Party proposed that the southern boundary of Portslade South ward run along the centre of the canal in Shoreham Harbour so that an area of potential future development could be in one ward rather than two. This was linked with its proposal for a Kingsway ward, which is discussed in the following section. The Labour Party also proposed that Rottingdean Coastal ward should be named Marine ward. Its reasons

were that the electorate of Rottingdean would comprise only 25 per cent of the total ward electorate, that confusion would be caused in local administration with a parish council having the same name as a city ward while covering a different, smaller area, and the name Marine is already used as a ward name and “is a fundamentally neutral name”. The Hove & Portslade Liberal Party was opposed to the proposed reduction in the number of councillors in the Portslade wards, a view also expressed by a Portslade resident. Roedean Residents Association supported the proposal to transfer Roedean and Brighton Marina to Rottingdean Coastal ward. Woodingdean Community Association and three Woodingdean respondents supported the proposals for the ward, while one Saltdean resident was opposed to the proposed boundaries of Rottingdean Coastal ward, suggesting the western boundary should be Marina Way.

56 Having carefully considered the representations received, we have decided to generally endorse our draft recommendations for these wards as final, as they would achieve reasonable electoral equality and have received some local support. We are not convinced that changing the name of Rottingdean Coastal ward would be a better reflection of the local area or would receive significant local support. Also, we are not persuaded to amend the southern boundary of Portslade South ward as we do not consider it a better boundary, particularly as we do not intend adopting the Labour Party’s proposal for Kingsway ward (see below). Furthermore, any potential development at Shoreham Harbour does not fall within the five-year period with which this review is concerned.

57 However, we have decided to move away from our draft recommendation and change the names of the proposed wards of Portslade North and Portslade South to North Portslade and South Portslade, as proposed by the Council.

58 Under our final recommendations, the number of electors per councillor would be 3 per cent above the city average in North Portslade ward (unchanged in 2005), 3 per cent below in Rottingdean Coastal ward (1 per cent below in 2005), 4 per cent below in South Portslade ward (unchanged in 2005) and 3 per cent above in Woodingdean ward (2 per cent above in 2005). Our final recommendations for these wards are illustrated on the large map at the back of the report.

Hangleton, Nevill, Stanford, Westbourne and Wish wards

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

60 We adopted the Conservatives’ proposal for a three-member Hangleton & Knoll ward as part of our draft recommendations. However, we moved away from the rest of their proposals for these wards. Their proposed three-member Hove Park ward would have included the Poets Corner area, currently in Westbourne ward. In our opinion, this would have split a natural community. As a result, we proposed a smaller two-member Hove Park ward and proposed retaining Wish and Westbourne wards on their existing boundaries, albeit with two councillors each as opposed to three, rather than adopt the Conservatives’ proposal for a new Kingsway ward.

61 Under our draft recommendations the number of electors per councillor would be equal to the city average in Hangleton & Knoll ward (1 per cent below in 2005), 7 per cent above in Hove Park ward

(unchanged in 2005), equal to the average in Westbourne ward (unchanged in 2005) and 5 per cent below in Wish ward (unchanged in 2005)

62 In response to our draft recommendations the City Council and the Conservatives supported our proposals for this area. The Labour Party supported our proposals for Hangleton & Knoll and Hove Park wards, but proposed an alternative warding pattern for the area covered by Westbourne and Wish wards. The basis for this proposal was an assertion that “the current arrangement of these two wards is not satisfactory in community terms” as the wider Poets Corner area straddles the boundary between Westbourne and Wish wards. The boundary of the Labour Party’s proposed Kingsway ward would run eastwards from Boundary Road along the centre of New Church Road, northwards west of properties in Rutland Gardens and eastwards south of properties in Portland Road to Sackville Road. It would then run southwards down Sackville Road to the coast. Portland ward would utilise the northern boundary of Kingsway ward as its southern boundary. Its other boundaries would be Sackville Road, the railway line and Boundary Road. Support for the Labour Party’s proposals came from the Poets Corner Residents Society, the chair of which stated that the society sometimes experiences difficulties with its location and area falling between two wards, thus having to deal with two sets of councillors.

63 Councillors James and Murphy, members for Wish ward, also supported the Labour Party’s proposals, stating that “natural communities would be better served by a boundary running east/west and the formation of a seafront ward - Kingsway - and a Portland ward, with a boundary along the middle of New Church Road”. The Labour Party also commented that the boundary between Hove Park ward and Withdean ward along Dyke Road and Dyke Road Avenue should follow the centre of the road for consistency. Under the Labour Party’s proposals the number of electors per councillor would be equal to the city average in Hangleton & Knoll ward (1 per cent below in 2005), 7 per cent above in Hove Park ward (unchanged in 2005), 4 per cent below in Kingsway ward (unchanged in 2005) and equal to the average in Portland ward (unchanged in 2005).

64 Councillors Brown and Rowe, members for Stanford ward, objected to the name of the proposed Hove Park ward, preferring the retention of the existing ward name. Hove & Portslade Conservative Association and three residents also opposed the proposed Hove Park ward name, arguing that the Stanford ward name had “great historical significance”.

65 We have given careful consideration to the evidence and representations received at Stage Three, and have decided to generally confirm our draft recommendations for these wards, as they would achieve reasonable electoral equality and have received some local support. We have noted the Labour Party’s argument for two new wards of Kingsway and Portland. However, while it can be argued that these proposals would bring together the Poets Corner area into one ward, another community would be divided between two wards if the boundary followed New Church Road. We have noted the Poets Corner Residents Society’s comments; however, we do not believe there is sufficient evidence to show that its work is hindered by the existing arrangements to such an extent that a change which adversely affects another area should be adopted. Neither the Council, nor any of the other political parties, expressed opposition to this part of our draft recommendations, while one resident of Westbourne ward expressed support for them as they related to the ward. In the light of this, we do not intend adopting the Labour Party’s proposed Kingsway and Portland wards as part of our final recommendations. We have noted the concerns expressed that the boundary between Hove Park ward and Withdean ward should follow the centre of the road; however, this was the intention on our draft proposals.

66 In the light of the local support for the retention of the ward name Stanford, we are persuaded that the name Stanford should be retained for the proposed Hove Park ward. Subject to this amendment we have decided to confirm our draft recommendations for these wards as final.

67 Under our final recommendations the number of electors per councillor would be equal to the city average in Hangleton & Knoll ward (1 per cent below in 2005), 7 per cent above in Stanford ward (unchanged in 2005), equal to the average in Westbourne ward (unchanged in 2005) and 5 per cent below in Wish ward (unchanged in 2005). Our final recommendations for these wards are illustrated on the large map at the back of the report.

Brunswick & Adelaide, Goldsmid, Regency and Vallance wards

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

69 We adopted the Conservatives' proposals for these wards for our draft recommendations. These entailed proposing a new three-member Brunswick & Regency ward which would cross the former Brighton/Hove boundary, a new three-member Central Hove ward, and an enlarged three-member Goldsmid ward. Although there was local opposition to the proposed Brunswick & Regency ward, it was our judgement, after visiting the area, that community identity was not as clearly defined as some respondents had suggested, and that where the line was drawn between communities was far from clear. Under our draft recommendations the number of electors per councillor would be 1 per cent above the average in Brunswick & Regency ward (2 per cent above in 2005), equal to the average in Central Hove ward (unchanged in 2005) and equal to the average in Goldsmid ward (unchanged in 2005).

70 At Stage Three the City Council and the Conservatives supported our draft recommendations. There was opposition to our proposals for the Brunswick area from the Liberal Democrats and the Friends of Brunswick Square & Terrace, both of which submitted alternative proposals. The Labour Party generally supported our draft recommendations, although it proposed two small boundary adjustments. Councillors Elgood, Davidson and Watkins, members for Brunswick & Adelaide ward, objected to the proposed division of the ward and enclosed the results of a local consultation exercise which they had undertaken, which showed that three residents were in favour of the proposals, while 67 were against. Councillor Pennington, member for Regency ward, proposed amendments to the boundary of Brunswick & Regency ward. The Brunswick Petition supported the proposal from the Friends of Brunswick Square & Terrace with a 1,401-signature petition. Fourteen respondents were also opposed to the proposals to divide the existing Brunswick and Adelaide ward, on community identity grounds. The Goldsmid Ward Residents' Group expressed its appreciation for the retention of the Goldsmid ward name.

71 A Hove resident proposed amendments to the proposed boundaries of Brunswick & Regency, Central Hove and Goldsmid wards. Firstly, he proposed that the streets bounded by the railway line, Sackville Road, Goldstone Road and Denmark Villas should be transferred from Goldsmid ward to Central Hove ward. Secondly, he proposed that a new Brunswick ward should be formed comprising the area east of Wilbury Road/Second Avenue and west of Montpelier Road. His third proposal for this area was for a section of Preston Park ward bounded by Chatham Place, Hamilton Road, Stanford Road, Highcroft Villas and Dyke Road to be transferred to Goldsmid ward. No electorate figures were

submitted with these proposals. Another Hove resident proposed that the western boundary of Brunswick & Regency ward should be formed by First Avenue/St John's Road, which would enable the whole of Brunswick Terrace and Lansdowne Place to be united in the same ward.

72 The Liberal Democrats and the Friends of Brunswick Square & Terrace both submitted schemes which proposed three two-member wards to replace our proposed two three-member wards of Brunswick & Regency and Central Hove, thus allowing the Brunswick Town area to remain intact.

73 The Liberal Democrats proposed a new two-member Vallance ward, comprising the proposed Central Hove ward from its western boundary to Second Avenue/Wilbury Road in the east, which would also form the western boundary of their proposed two-member Brunswick & Adelaide ward. The eastern boundary of this ward, and the western boundary of their proposed two-member Regency ward, would follow the existing ward boundary to Western Road, then go along Little Western Street and southwards down Norfolk Place and Western Street. In addition, the Liberal Democrats proposed extending St Peter's & North Laine ward southwards to the sea to form a new three-member St Peter's & the Lanes ward, which would have a common boundary with Regency ward along West Street. Under these proposals the number of electors per councillor would be 3 per cent below the city average in Brunswick & Adelaide ward (2 per cent below in 2005), equal to the average in Regency ward (1 per cent above in 2005), 1 per cent above in St Peter's & the Lanes ward (3 per cent above in 2005) and 1 per cent below in Vallance ward (unchanged in 2005).

74 The Friends of Brunswick Square & Terrace proposed moving the eastern boundary of the proposed two-member Central Hove ward westwards to follow the middle of Second Avenue/Wilbury Road and then go across the back of Kings Court to run down the middle of First Avenue. This would also form the western boundary of their proposed two-member Brunswick & Adelaide ward, the eastern boundary of which, and the western boundary of their proposed two-member Regency ward, would not follow the existing Brighton/Hove boundary as part of it can no longer be tied to ground detail. Rather, it would follow the middle of Norfolk Road and Western Street southwards to the coast. The other boundaries of their proposed Regency ward would be those of the existing Regency ward. Under these proposals the number of electors per councillor would be 2 per cent above the city average in Brunswick & Adelaide ward (3 per cent above in 2005), equal to the average in Central Hove ward (unchanged in 2005) and equal to the average in Regency ward (1 per cent above in 2005).

75 The Labour Party proposed modifying the southern boundary of Goldsmid ward, so that it would continue westwards from Eaton Road along Blatchington Road to Sackville Road. It claimed that this would "bring all the roads to the north together, and use a well-used shopping street as the boundary". It also proposed modifying the boundary between the proposed Brunswick & Regency and Central Hove wards to follow westwards along Alice Street and southwards along Holland Road, in order to unite the whole of the Brunswick Estate area in one ward. This proposal was reiterated by Councillor Pennington, member for Regency ward. The Labour Party also proposed making a small modification to the boundary between Central Hove ward and Westbourne ward to continue south of the A259 along Hove Street South. It also proposed that all properties on the south side of Davigdor Road should be in Goldsmid ward. Under these proposals the number of electors per councillor would be 3 per cent above the city average in Brunswick & Regency ward (4 per cent in 2005), 6 per cent below in Central Hove ward (5 per cent below in 2005) and 4 per cent above in Goldsmid ward (unchanged in 2005).

76 We have carefully considered the representations received at Stage Three. We are persuaded by the strong argumentation provided that the Brunswick area should be kept together, and that it is feasible to do so without adversely affecting adjacent ward boundaries. After examining the schemes from the

Friends of Brunswick Square & Terrace and the Liberal Democrats, we noted that there was broad consensus between them and both gave good electoral equality. However, there is a major point of divergence in the schemes, namely the extent of the boundaries of the proposed Regency ward. The Liberal Democrat proposal would modify the boundaries of the proposed St Peter's & North Laine ward, which is the subject of our own amendment, as will be seen later in this report, whereas the proposal from the Friends of Brunswick Square & Terrace would have no consequential effect on those boundaries. For this reason we have decided to adopt the proposal from the Friends of Brunswick Square & Terrace as our final recommendations for this area.

77 Based on these conclusions, we are unable to consider the proposed amendment submitted by the Labour Party and Councillor Pennington to the boundary of Brunswick & Regency and Central Hove wards, or either of the proposals from the Hove residents. However, we note that the aims of these proposals concur in part with the aims of the other schemes in uniting the Brunswick community in one ward. We have not been persuaded by the Labour Party's proposed adjustment to the southern boundary of Goldsmid ward as electoral equality would deteriorate and we are not convinced that it would provide a better reflection of community identity than our draft or final recommendations. However, we are proposing to adopt the amendment proposed by the Labour Party to continue the boundary between Central Hove and Westbourne wards south of the A259 along Hove Street South. We have noted the Labour Party's comments concerning properties on the south side of Davigdor Road. However, these were placed in Goldsmid ward in our draft recommendations.

78 Under our final recommendations the number of electors per councillor would be 2 per cent above the city average in Brunswick & Adelaide ward (3 per cent above in 2005), equal to the average in Central Hove ward (unchanged in 2005), equal to the average in Goldsmid ward (unchanged in 2005) and equal to the average in Regency ward (1 per cent above in 2005). Our final recommendations for these wards are illustrated on the large map at the back of this report.

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

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

80 We adopted the Conservatives' proposals for these wards for our draft recommendations. These entailed the creation of three new three-member wards of Preston Park, St Peter's & North Laine and Withdean. Although the Liberal Democrats proposed a similar warding pattern for the area, with similar electoral equality, we considered that under the Conservatives' proposals the boundaries would be stronger and natural communities would be better preserved.

81 Under our draft recommendations the number of electors per councillor would be 2 per cent above the city average in Preston Park ward (1 per cent below in 2005), 3 per cent below in St Peter's & North Laine ward (1 per cent below in 2005) and 1 per cent below in Withdean ward (equal to the average in 2005).

82 At Stage Three the City Council and the Conservatives supported our draft recommendations, though the Council highlighted minor discrepancies in electorate figures for the proposed Withdean and Preston Park wards. The Council proposed an amendment to the southern boundary of Withdean ward

to follow the railway line and include the whole of South Road and Millers Road, including 49–66 Highcroft Villas, in the ward. The Labour Party also proposed that the boundary should follow the railway line, but that none of Highcroft Villas should be in Withdean ward. Opposition was expressed in relation to our proposed Preston Park ward by the Labour Party, the Liberal Democrats, the Green Party, a member of the Prestonville Community Association and two residents. A common criticism from all of them related to the boundary between the proposed Preston Park and St Peter's & North Laine wards, where the area covered by the West Hill Community Association and the West Hill Conservation Area, at present in Seven Dials ward, would be divided.

83 The Labour Party and the Liberal Democrats both considered that the proposed Preston Park ward consists of two “unrelated areas”, with suburban housing to the north-east of Preston Park having little in common with the central Seven Dials area around the station. One resident regarded the boundaries of the proposed Preston Park ward as “completely ignoring the natural boundaries and dividing communities”, preferring to retain the existing Preston ward while extending its southern boundary to the railway line. Another resident objected to the West Hill Community Association area being included in the ward. He also proposed transferring the western part of the proposed Preston Park ward north of the West Hill area to Goldsmid ward (see previous section for details), so that the ward could then “be expanded slightly to the north and south to a convenient size”.

84 In addition, the Labour Party proposed an alternative warding arrangement for the area. It proposed a three-member Station ward which would include the existing Seven Dials ward, part of the existing Westdene ward as far north as Hampstead Road and part of the existing St Peter's ward as far as Preston Circus and Viaduct Road. This would encompass the Prestonville community north of Seven Dials and the West Hill community. It also proposed a three-member Preston ward which would include all of the existing Preston ward except the part north-west of Surrenden Road, and would extend to the south to include part of the existing St Peter's ward bounded by Beaconsfield Road, Viaduct Road and Ditchling Road, and to the north to include part of the existing Stanmer ward bounded by Beechwood Avenue and Woodbourne Avenue. It further proposed a two-member Withdean ward, which would differ from our proposed Withdean ward in that the eastern boundary would be formed by Surrenden Road and the southern boundary would run westwards along Preston Drove, northwards along London Road, westwards north of Clermont Road and south-westwards between Tivoli Crescent and Hamstead Road. The Labour Party regarded its proposals as a better reflection of the statutory criteria than our draft recommendations.

85 The Liberal Democrats proposed extending the proposed St Peter's & North Laine ward to include the Lanes area, which is currently in Regency ward, and calling it St Peter's & the Lanes ward. This would then reduce the electorate of their proposed Regency ward, enabling it to be a two-member ward and so fit in with their proposed warding pattern for the Brunswick area. They stated that these proposals would mean that “the whole of the unique central area of Brighton would be in one ward”.

86 We have carefully considered the representations received during Stage Three. We have not been persuaded that the Labour Party's proposed amendments in this area would provide a better reflection of community identity than our draft recommendations, with the St Peter's community being split, and the northern part of the proposed Station ward having little in common with North Laine. We also note that adoption of its proposals would entail consequential changes to the boundaries of other wards which have achieved a level of support at Stage Three. We are also not minded to adopt the Liberal Democrats' proposal to extend the boundary of St Peter's & North Laine ward southwards to the sea as it would not fit in with the warding pattern for the wards to the west, as previously described.

87 We are, however, persuaded by the arguments put forward by the Labour Party, the Liberal Democrats, the Green Party, a member of the Prestonville Community Association and a local resident that the West Hill area should be united in one ward, with the consequence that the proposed boundaries of Preston Park and St Peter's & North Laine wards should be modified. We propose that the western boundary between the wards should be Howard Place/Russell Terrace, while the eastern boundary should run eastwards along New England Road to Preston Circus, northwards along Beaconsfield Road, eastwards along Ditchling Rise and northwards along Ditchling Road to the railway line. This would provide a better reflection of community identity, though the level of electoral equality would deteriorate slightly from that under our draft recommendations. We also propose adopting the City Council's and Labour Party's amendment to the boundary between the proposed Withdean and Preston Park wards to include Millers Road in Withdean ward, utilising the Council's proposed boundary, which would include 49–66 Highcroft Villas in Withdean ward. We further propose adopting the City Council's proposal to include the whole of South Road in Withdean ward.

88 Subject to the amendments described in the paragraph above, we have decided to confirm our draft recommendations for these wards as final. Under our final recommendations the number of electors per councillor would be 5 per cent below the city average in Preston Park ward (7 per cent below in 2005), 4 per cent above in St Peter's & North Laine ward (6 per cent above in 2005) and equal to the average in Withdean ward (unchanged in 2005). Our final recommendations for these wards are illustrated on the large map at the back of the report.

Hollingbury, Moulsecoomb, Patcham, Stanmer and Tenantry wards

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

90 We adopted the Conservatives' proposals for these wards for our draft recommendations. These entailed the creation of three new three-member wards of Hollingbury & Stanmer, Moulsecoomb & Tenantry and Patcham. Although the Liberal Democrats proposed a similar warding pattern for the area, with similar electoral equality, we considered that under the Conservatives' proposals the boundaries would be stronger and natural communities would be better preserved.

91 Under our draft recommendations the number of electors per councillor would be 2 per cent above the city average in Hollingbury & Stanmer ward (1 per cent above in 2005), 1 per cent above in Moulsecoomb & Tenantry ward (unchanged in 2005) and 1 per cent below in Patcham ward (unchanged in 2005).

92 At Stage Three the City Council and the Conservatives supported our draft recommendations, although the Council proposed that the name of Moulsecoomb & Tenantry ward be changed to Moulsecoomb & Bevendean ward, as a large part of the area known locally as Tenantry has been transferred to the proposed Hanover & Elm Grove ward and "the Bevendean area represents approximately 33 per cent of the new ward". This proposal was also put forward by the Labour Party and three residents, one of whom was of the opinion that the ward should be renamed "both to reflect the actual geography and in response to local feeling". The City Council and the Labour Party both proposed an amendment to the proposed boundary between Hollingbury & Stanmer ward and St Peter's

& North Laine ward along Hollingbury Road to the rear of all the properties on the south side of the road, thus including all the properties in Hollingbury & Stanmer ward. The Council also stated that “as the boundary continues to Lewes Road on the east flank, an adjustment is needed in the statistics to allow for nine electors in Lewes Road previously included in district IE” who are “now part of St Peter’s and North Laine ward”. A Patcham resident also supported our draft recommendations.

93 The Labour Party considered that the proposed Hollingbury & Stanmer ward did not “make sense in community terms”, citing a lack of community links and direct transport links between Hollingdean and Coldean. It stated that “the community of Coldean is surrounded by open downland, and its nearest neighbours are Stanmer Village plus Falmer to the east and Hollingbury to the west. All these neighbouring areas form the present Stanmer ward”. It therefore proposed linking the existing Hollingbury ward with the adjoining part of the existing St Peter’s ward east of Ditchling Road, thus uniting “the Round Hill and Upper Lewes Road area in a single ward, and the new ward would contain the whole built-up area between Ditchling Road and Lewes Road”. It also proposed retaining the existing Stanmer ward as a two-member ward, though utilising Woodbourne Avenue, rather than Surrenden Road for its south-western boundary “to provide an acceptable variance”. It further proposed retaining the existing Patcham ward as a two-member ward, claiming that “it is in the interests of effective and convenient local government, as well as best reflecting local communities, for the existing Stanmer and Patcham wards to continue to exist with (as near as possible) their present boundaries”. Under the Labour Party’s proposals the number of electors per councillor would be 5 per cent below the city average in Hollingdean & Round Hill ward (6 per cent below in 2005), 1 per cent above in Moulsecoomb & Bevendean ward (unchanged in 2005), 2 per cent below in Patcham ward (unchanged in 2005) and 4 per cent above in Stanmer ward (3 per cent above in 2005).

94 Councillors Hawkes, Beishon and Framroze, members for Stanmer ward, proposed further amendments to the boundary of Stanmer ward, which would entail transferring roads at the eastern edge of Patcham ward to Stanmer ward and transferring roads at the south-east of Stanmer ward to Patcham ward. They stated that “with these changes we sincerely believe the ward would reflect the real communities of interest and similarity”. They also stated that “Coldean and Hollingbury should be kept together as they are areas with similar character”.

95 We have carefully considered the representations received during Stage Three. The arguments concerning our proposed Hollingbury & Stanmer ward are mainly to do with which areas Coldean relates to more naturally. The Labour Party and Councillors Hawkes, Beishon and Framroze are of the opinion that it links best with Stanmer and the part of Hollingbury west of Ditchling Road; the draft recommendations linked it with Stanmer but also with Hollingbury/Hollingdean to the south. Having visited the area, and made enquiries locally, it is our opinion that Coldean is a separate community and as such links as well with Hollingbury in the south as with the existing Stanmer ward. We are also persuaded that, in community terms, the area west of Ditchling Road fits better in Patcham ward and that the Round Hill area is better as part of St Peter’s & North Laine ward. We also note that the Council and the Conservatives supported our draft recommendations and that there has been no opposition expressed to us by any local residents. Therefore, we are still of the opinion that community identity and convenient and effective local government are best served by the warding arrangements proposed in our draft recommendations.

96 In the light of support from the City Council, the Labour Party and local residents, we have decided to amend the name of Moulsecoomb & Tenantry ward to Moulsecoomb & Bevendean ward. We are also persuaded that the amendments to the boundary between Hollingbury & Stanmer and St Peter’s & North Laine wards proposed by the City Council and the Labour Party would be a better reflection

of community identity. Subject to these two amendments, we propose confirming our draft recommendation for these wards as final.

97 Under our final recommendations the number of electors per councillor would be 2 per cent above the city average in Hollingbury & Stanmer ward (1 per cent above in 2005), 1 per cent above in Moulsecomb & Bevendean ward (unchanged in 2005) and 1 per cent below in Patcham ward (unchanged in 2005). Our final recommendations for these wards are illustrated on the large map at the back of the report.

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

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

99 We adopted the Conservatives' proposals for three three-member wards of East Brighton, Hanover & Elm Grove and Queen's Park for the purposes of our draft recommendations, as we considered that they provided a better reflection of community identity than the Liberal Democrats' proposals. However, we proposed one amendment. In the interest of community identity we proposed amending the boundary between the proposed Queen's Park and East Brighton wards to include Canning Street, Hendon Street, Bute Street, Rochester Street and Livingstone Street and the north side of College Terrace in the proposed Queen's Park ward. We proposed including all the houses on the east side of Walpole Road in the proposed East Brighton ward.

100 Under our draft recommendations the number of electors per councillor would be 4 per cent below the city average in East Brighton ward (unchanged in 2005), 1 per cent below in Hanover & Elm Grove ward (equal to the average in 2005) and 2 per cent above in Queen's Park ward (unchanged in 2005).

101 At Stage Three the City Council, the Conservatives and the Labour Party supported our draft recommendations for these wards. The Green Party reiterated its Stage One proposal for the creation of new St George & St James and College wards. It was also of the opinion that Sussex Street, rather than Albion Hill, should be the natural boundary for Hanover & Elm Grove ward.

102 We have given careful consideration to the evidence and representations during Stage Three. We consider that adopting the boundary and proposed wards put forward by the Green Party would have a consequential effect on other ward boundaries in the area, while also having an adverse effect on electoral equality. In the light of this, and the general support we received for our draft recommendations, we are confirming our draft recommendations for the wards of East Brighton, Hanover & Elm Grove and Queen's Park as final. The electoral variances would be identical to those in our draft recommendations. Our proposals for these wards are illustrated on the large map at the back of this report

Electoral Cycle

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

104 At Stage Three one resident supported our draft recommendation, while another expressed opposition to it. One resident was “uncertain regarding four-yearly elections”, while another suggested annual elections, and another was in favour of elections every two years.

105 We have given careful consideration to the evidence and representations received at Stage Three. We note that alternative electoral cycles have been proposed. However, until such time as the Secretary of State makes any Order under the Local Government Act 2000, we continue to operate on the basis of existing legislation, which provides for elections by thirds or whole-council elections. Statutorily, we have no power to recommend a change to biennial elections. In the light of this, and in the absence of any evidence of substantial support for change to the existing pattern of elections, we confirm our draft recommendation as final.

Conclusions

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

- we propose amending the boundary between Preston Park ward and St Peter’s & North Laine ward to unite the whole of the West Hill area in one ward;
- we propose creating three new two-member wards of Brunswick & Adelaide, Central Hove and Regency to replace the two three-member wards of Brunswick & Regency and Central Hove;
- we propose amending the boundaries between Hollingbury & Stanmer and St Peter’s & North Laine wards, Preston Park and Withdean wards, and Central Hove and Westbourne wards in order to provide for more clearly identifiable boundaries;
- we propose renaming Moulsecoomb & Tenantry, Hove Park, Portslade North and Portslade South wards as Moulsecoomb & Bevendean, Stanford, North Portslade and South Portslade respectively.

107 We conclude that, in Brighton & Hove:

- there should be a reduction in council size from 78 to 54;
- there should be 21 wards, five fewer than at present;
- the boundaries of 22 of the existing wards should be modified;
- the Council should continue to hold whole-council elections every four years.

108 Table 4 shows the impact of our final recommendations on electoral equality, comparing them with the current arrangements, based on 2000 and 2005 electorate figures.

Table 4: Comparison of Current and Recommended Electoral Arrangements

	2000 electorate		2005 forecast electorate	
	Current arrangements	Final recommendations	Current arrangements	Final recommendations
Number of councillors	78	54	78	54
Number of wards	26	21	26	21
Average number of electors per councillor	2,497	3,607	2,501	3,612
Number of wards with a variance more than 10 per cent from the average	7	0	7	0
Number of wards with a variance more than 20 per cent from the average	0	0	0	0

109 As Table 4 shows, our recommendations would result in a reduction in the number of wards with an electoral variance of more than 10 per cent from seven to none, with no wards varying by more than 20 per cent from the city average, both initially and by 2005. We conclude that our recommendations would best meet the need for electoral equality, having regard to the statutory criteria.

Final Recommendation

Brighton & Hove City Council should comprise 54 councillors serving 21 wards, as detailed and named in Tables 1 and 2, and illustrated on Map 2 and the large map inside the back cover. The Council should continue to hold whole-council elections every four years.

Parish Council Electoral Arrangements

110 In undertaking reviews of electoral arrangements, we are required to comply as far as is reasonably practicable with the provisions set out in Schedule 11 to the 1972 Act. The Schedule provides that if a parish is to be divided between different city wards, it must also be divided into parish wards, so that each parish ward lies wholly within a single ward of the city. However, in our draft recommendations we proposed making no changes to the electoral arrangements of Rottingdean Parish Council, the only parish council in Brighton & Hove, as they were unaffected by our proposed city electoral arrangements. In addition, Rottingdean Parish Council requested that their existing electoral arrangements be retained.

111 In response to our consultation report, no further comments were received from the City Council or the Parish Council, and so we confirm our draft recommendation for Rottingdean parish as final.

Final Recommendation

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

Map 2: Final Recommendations for Brighton & Hove

6 WHAT HAPPENS NEXT?

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

113 It now falls to the Secretary of State 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 18 September 2001.

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

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