

LOCAL
GOVERNMENT
COMMISSION
FOR ENGLAND

FINAL
RECOMMENDATIONS
ON THE FUTURE
ELECTORAL
ARRANGEMENTS FOR
WALTHAM FOREST

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

June 1999

LOCAL GOVERNMENT COMMISSION FOR ENGLAND

This report sets out the Commission's final recommendations on the electoral arrangements for Waltham Forest.

Members of the Commission are:

Professor Malcolm Grant (Chairman)

Professor Michael Clarke (Deputy Chairman)

Peter Brokenshire

Pamela Gordon

Robin Gray


Robert Hughes CBE

Barbara Stephens (Chief Executive)

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CONTENTS

	page
LETTER TO THE SECRETARY OF STATE	<i>v</i>
SUMMARY	<i>vii</i>
1 INTRODUCTION	<i>1</i>
2 CURRENT ELECTORAL ARRANGEMENTS	<i>3</i>
3 DRAFT RECOMMENDATIONS	<i>7</i>
4 RESPONSES TO CONSULTATION	<i>9</i>
5 ANALYSIS AND FINAL RECOMMENDATIONS	<i>11</i>
6 NEXT STEPS	<i>25</i>
 APPENDICES	
A Final Recommendations for Waltham Forest: Detailed Mapping	<i>27</i>
B Draft Recommendations for Waltham Forest (January 1998)	<i>29</i>

A large map illustrating the proposed ward boundaries for Waltham Forest is inserted inside the back cover of the report.



Local Government Commission for England

22 June 1999

Dear Secretary of State

On 23 June 1998 the Commission began a periodic electoral review of Waltham Forest under the Local Government Act 1992. We published our draft recommendations in January 1999 and undertook an eight-week period of consultation.

We have now prepared our final recommendations in the light of the consultation. We have substantially confirmed our draft recommendations, although some modifications have been made (see paragraphs 96-97) in the light of further evidence. This report sets out our final recommendations for changes to electoral arrangements in Waltham Forest.

We recommend that Waltham Forest Borough Council should be served by 60 councillors representing 20 wards, and that changes should be made to ward boundaries in order to improve electoral equality, having regard to the statutory criteria.

We note that you have now set out in the White Paper *Modern Local Government – In Touch with the People* (Cm 4014, HMSO), legislative proposals for a number of changes to local authority electoral arrangements. However, until such time as that new legislation is in place we are obliged to conduct our work in accordance with current legislation, and to continue our current approach to periodic electoral reviews.

I would like to thank members and officers of the Borough Council and other local people who have contributed to the review. Their co-operation and assistance have been very much appreciated by Commissioners and staff.

Yours sincerely

PROFESSOR MALCOLM GRANT
Chairman

SUMMARY

The Commission began a review of Waltham Forest on 23 June 1998. We published our draft recommendations for electoral arrangements on 26 January 1999, after which we undertook an eight-week period of consultation.

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

We found that the existing electoral arrangements provide unequal representation of electors in Waltham Forest because:

- **in four of the 20 wards the number of electors represented by each councillor varies by more than 10 per cent from the average for the borough, while one ward varies by more than 20 per cent from the average;**
- **by 2003 electoral equality is not expected to improve significantly, with the number of electors per councillor forecast to vary by more than 10 per cent from the average in three wards, and by more than 20 per cent in one ward, Larkwood.**

Our main final recommendations for future electoral arrangements (Figures 1 and 2 and paragraphs 96-97) are that:

- **Waltham Forest Borough Council should be served by 60 councillors, compared to 57 at present;**
- **there should be 20 wards, as at present, which would involve changes to the boundaries of all but four of the existing wards.**

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

- **In all 20 wards the number of electors per councillor would vary by no more than 9 per cent from the borough average.**
- **This level of electoral equality is forecast to improve further, with the number of electors per councillor in all wards expected to vary by no more than 6 per cent from the average for the borough in 2003.**

All further correspondence on these recommendations and the matters discussed in this report should be addressed to the Secretary of State for the Environment, Transport and the Regions, who will not make an order implementing the Commission's recommendations before 2 August 1999:

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

*Figure 1:
The Commission's Final Recommendations: Summary*

Ward name	Number of councillors	Constituent areas (existing wards)
1 Cann Hall	3	<i>Unchanged</i>
2 Cathall	3	Cathall ward (part); Leyton ward (part)
3 Chapel End	3	Chapel End ward; Lloyd Park ward (part)
4 Chingford Green	3	Chingford Green ward (part); Hatch Lane ward (part)
5 Endlebury	3	Endlebury ward; Chingford Green ward (part); Larkswood ward (part); Valley ward (part)
6 Forest	3	<i>Unchanged</i>
7 Grove Green	3	Grove Green ward; Cathall ward (part)
8 Hale End & Higham's Park	3	Hale End ward; Larkswood ward (part)
9 Hatch Lane	3	Hatch Lane ward (part)
10 High Street	3	<i>Unchanged</i>
11 Higham Hill	3	Higham Hill ward; Lloyd Park ward (part); Valley ward (part)
12 Hoe Street	3	Hoe Street ward (part); St James' Street (part); Wood Street ward (part)
13 Larkswood	3	Larkswood ward (part)
14 Lea Bridge	3	Lea Bridge ward; St James' Street ward (part)
15 Leyton	3	Leyton ward (part)
16 Leytonstone	3	<i>Unchanged</i>
17 Markhouse	3	St James' Street ward (part)
18 Valley	3	Valley ward (part)
19 William Morris	3	Lloyd Park ward (part); Hoe Street ward (part)
20 Wood Street	3	Wood Street ward (part)

Note: Maps 2, A1 and the large map in the back of the report illustrate the proposed wards outlined above.

Figure 2:
The Commission's Final Recommendations for Waltham Forest

Ward name	Number of councillors	Electorate (1998)	Number of electors per councillor	Variance from average %	Electorate (2003)	Number of electors per councillor	Variance from average %
1 Cann Hall	3	7,603	2,534	-4	7,748	2,583	-2
2 Cathall	3	7,187	2,396	-9	7,412	2,471	-6
3 Chapel End	3	7,881	2,627	0	7,885	2,628	0
4 Chingford Green	3	7,877	2,626	0	7,607	2,536	-4
5 Endlebury	3	8,092	2,697	3	8,046	2,682	2
6 Forest	3	7,831	2,610	-1	7,909	2,636	0
7 Grove Green	3	8,139	2,713	3	8,132	2,711	3
8 Hale End & Higham's Park	3	7,674	2,558	-3	7,664	2,555	-3
9 Hatch Lane	3	7,967	2,656	1	7,717	2,572	-2
10 High Street	3	8,024	2,675	2	8,000	2,667	1
11 Higham Hill	3	7,407	2,469	-6	7,500	2,500	-5
12 Hoe Street	3	8,206	2,735	4	8,125	2,708	3
13 Larkswood	3	8,075	2,692	2	7,983	2,661	1
14 Lea Bridge	3	8,235	2,745	4	8,275	2,758	5
15 Leyton	3	7,913	2,638	0	8,150	2,717	3
16 Leytonstone	3	7,604	2,535	-4	7,639	2,546	-3
17 Markhouse	3	7,797	2,599	-1	8,002	2,667	1
18 Valley	3	8,100	2,700	3	8,257	2,752	5
19 William Morris	3	7,728	2,576	-2	7,692	2,564	-3
20 Wood Street	3	8,282	2,761	5	8,167	2,722	3
Totals	60	157,622	—	—	157,910	—	—
Averages	—	—	2,627	—	—	2,632	—

Source: Electorate figures are based on Waltham Forest Borough submissions.

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 on the electoral arrangements for the London Borough of Waltham Forest.

2 In broad terms, the objective of this periodic electoral review of Waltham Forest is to ensure that the number of electors represented by each councillor on the Borough Council is as nearly as possible the same, taking into account local circumstances. We are required to make recommendations to the Secretary of State on the number of councillors who should serve on the Borough Council, and the number, boundaries and names of wards.

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

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

4 We have also had regard to our *Guidance and Procedural Advice for Local Authorities and Other Interested Parties* (second edition published in March 1998), which sets out our approach to the reviews. We are not required to have regard to parliamentary constituency boundaries in developing our recommendations. Any new ward boundaries will be taken into account by the Parliamentary Boundary Commission in its reviews of parliamentary constituencies.

5 The broad objective of PERs is to achieve, so far as practicable, equality of representation across the borough as a whole. Wherever possible we try to build on schemes which have been prepared locally on the basis of careful and effective consultation. Local interests are normally in a better position to judge what council size and ward configuration are most likely to secure effective and convenient local government in their areas, while allowing proper reflection of the identities and interests of local communities.

6 We are not prescriptive on council size but, as indicated in our *Guidance*, would expect the overall number of members on a London borough council usually to be between 40 and 80. We start from the general assumption that the existing council size already secures effective and convenient local government in that borough but we are willing to look carefully at arguments why this might not be so. However, we have found it necessary to safeguard against an upward drift in the number of councillors, and we believe that any proposal for an increase in council size will need to be fully justified: in particular, we do not accept that an increase in a borough's electorate should automatically result in an increase in the number of councillors, nor that changes should be made to the size of a borough council simply to make it more consistent with the size of other boroughs.

The London Boroughs

7 Our programme of periodic electoral reviews of all 386 local authorities in England started in 1996 and is currently expected to be completed by 2004. The 1992 Act requires us to review most local authorities every 10 to 15 years. However, the Act is silent on the timing of the first London borough reviews by the Commission. The Commission has no power to review the electoral arrangements of the City of London.

8 Most London boroughs have not been reviewed since 1977. Following discussions with local authority interests on the appropriate timing of London borough reviews, we decided to start as soon as possible after the May 1998 London local government elections so that all reviews could be completed, and the necessary orders implementing our recommendations made by the Secretary of State, in time for the next London elections scheduled for May 2002. Our reviews of the 32 London boroughs started on a phased basis between June 1998 and February 1999.

9 We have sought to ensure that all concerned were aware of our approach to the reviews. Copies

of our *Guidance* were sent to all London boroughs, along with other major interests. In March 1998 we briefed chief executives at a meeting of the London branch of the Society of Local Authority Chief Executives, and we also met with the Association of London Government. Since then we welcomed the opportunity to meet with chief officers and, on an all-party basis, members in the great majority of individual authorities. This has enabled us to brief authorities about our policies and procedures, our objective of electoral equality having regard to local circumstances, and the approach taken by the Commission in previous reviews.

10 Before we started our work in London, the Government published for consultation a Green Paper, *Modernising Local Government – Local Democracy and Community Leadership* (February 1998) which, inter alia, promoted the possibility of London boroughs having annual elections with three-member wards so that one councillor in each ward would stand for election each year. In view of this, we decided that the order in which the London reviews are undertaken should be determined by the proportion of three-member wards in each borough under the current arrangements. On this basis, Waltham Forest was in the first phase of reviews.

11 The Government's subsequent White Paper, *Modern Local Government – In Touch with the People*, published in July 1998, set out legislative proposals for local authority electoral arrangements. For all unitary councils, including London boroughs, it proposed elections by thirds. It also refers to local accountability being maximised where the whole electorate in a council's area is involved in elections each time they take place, thereby pointing to a pattern of three-member wards in London boroughs to reflect a system of elections by thirds.

12 Following publication of the White Paper, we advised all authorities in our 1998/99 PER programme, including the London boroughs, that until any direction is received from the Secretary of State, the Commission would continue to maintain the approach to PERs as set out in the March 1998 *Guidance*. Nevertheless, we added that local authorities and other interested parties would no doubt wish to have regard to the Secretary of State's intentions and legislative proposals in formulating electoral schemes as part of PERs of

their areas. Our general experience has been that proposals for three-member ward patterns emerged from most areas in London.

13 Finally, it should be noted that there are no parishes in London, and in fact there is no legislative provision for the establishment of parishes in London. This differentiates the reviews of London boroughs from the majority of the other electoral reviews we are carrying out elsewhere in the country, where parishes feature highly and provide the building blocks for district or borough wards.

The Review of Waltham Forest

14 This is our first review of the electoral arrangements for Waltham Forest. The last such review was undertaken by our predecessor, the Local Government Boundary Commission (LGBC), which reported to the Secretary of State in August 1977 (Report No. 235).

15 This review was in four stages. Stage One began on 23 June 1998, when we wrote to Waltham Forest Borough Council inviting proposals for future electoral arrangements. We also notified the local authority associations, the Metropolitan Police, Members of Parliament and the Member of the European Parliament with constituency interests in the borough, and the headquarters of the main political parties. At the start of the review and following publication of our draft recommendations, we placed a notice in the local press, issued a press release and other publicity, and invited the Borough Council to publicise the review further. The closing date for receipt of representations was 28 September 1998. At Stage Two, we considered all the representations received during Stage One and prepared our draft recommendations.

16 Stage Three began on 26 January 1999 with the publication of our report, *Draft Recommendations on the Future Electoral Arrangements for Waltham Forest*, and ended on 22 March 1999. Comments were sought on our preliminary conclusions. Finally, during Stage Four we reconsidered our draft recommendations in the light of the Stage Three consultation and now publish our final recommendations.

2. CURRENT ELECTORAL ARRANGEMENTS

17 The borough of Waltham Forest covers an area of some 4,000 hectares in north-east London. The borough is bounded by the boroughs of Hackney and Newham to the south, Epping Forest to the North, Redbridge to the east, and Haringey and Enfield to the west. The Lee (or Lea) Valley makes the borough's western edge. Waltham Forest comprises the three former Essex boroughs and is connected to central London by the Chingford to Liverpool Street railway line, the London Underground Victoria line and, upon completion, will be served by the M11 motorway extension. While containing some belts of industry, Waltham Forest is essentially a residential area.

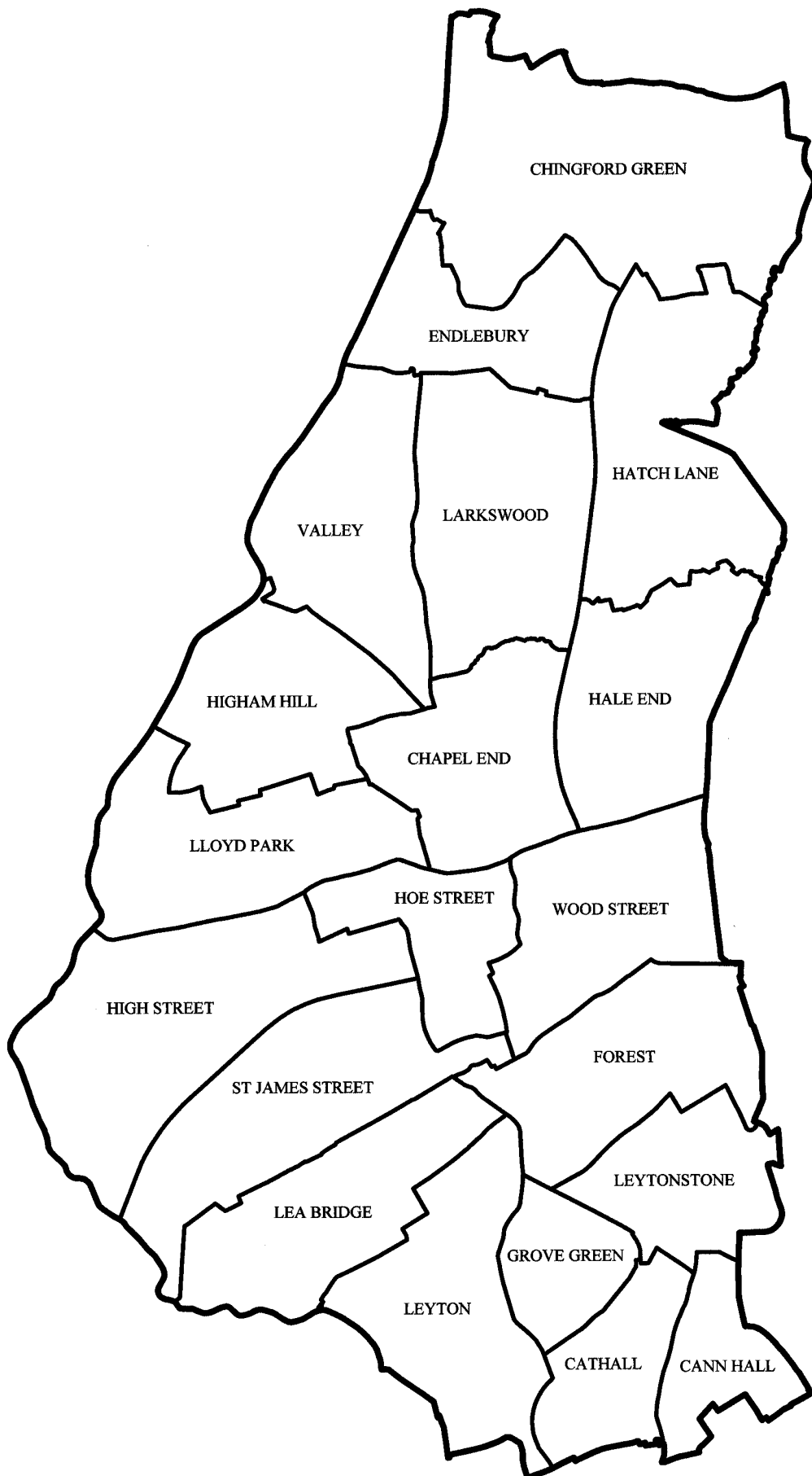
18 To compare levels of electoral inequality between wards, we calculated the extent to which the number of electors per councillor in each ward (the councillor:elector ratio) varies from the borough average in percentage terms. In the text which follows, this calculation may also be described using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

19 The electorate of the borough (February 1998) is 157,622. Since the last electoral review, there has been a small decrease in electorate in the borough. The Council currently has 57 councillors who are elected from 20 wards (Map 1 and Figure 3). Of these, 17 wards are each represented by three councillors while three wards elect two councillors each. As in all London boroughs, the whole council is elected together every four years.

20 At present, each councillor represents an average of 2,765 electors, which the Borough Council forecasts will change little overall by the year 2003 if the present number of councillors is maintained, although there are expected to be either increases or decreases in electorate in most wards. Due to demographic and other changes over the past two decades, the number of electors per councillor in four of the 20 wards varies by more than 10 per cent from the borough average,

and in one ward by more than 20 per cent. The worst imbalance is in Larkwood ward where each of the three councillors represents on average 23 per cent more electors than the borough average.

Map 1:
Existing Wards in Waltham Forest



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Figure 3:
Existing Electoral Arrangements

Ward name	Number of councillors	Electorate (1998)	Number of electors per councillor	Variance from average %	Electorate (2003)	Number of electors per councillor	Variance from average %
1 Cann Hall	3	7,603	2,534	-8	7,748	2,583	-7
2 Cathall	3	7,487	2,496	-10	7,712	2,571	-7
3 Chapel End	3	7,894	2,631	-5	7,898	2,633	-5
4 Chingford Green	3	9,014	3,005	9	8,744	2,915	5
5 Endlebury	2	6,329	3,165	14	6,283	3,142	13
6 Forest	3	7,831	2,610	-6	7,909	2,636	-9
7 Grove Green	3	7,839	2,613	-5	7,832	2,611	-6
8 Hale End	2	5,548	2,774	0	5,538	2,769	0
9 Hatch Lane	3	8,345	2,782	1	8,095	2,698	-3
10 High Street	3	8,024	2,675	-3	8,000	2,667	-4
11 Higham Hill	2	4,933	2,467	-11	5,026	2,513	-9
12 Hoe Street	3	9,078	3,026	9	8,997	2,999	8
13 Larkswood	3	10,201	3,400	23	10,109	3,370	22
14 Lea Bridge	3	7,866	2,622	-5	7,906	2,635	-5
15 Leyton	3	7,913	2,638	-5	8,150	2,717	-2
16 Leytonstone	3	7,604	2,535	-8	7,639	2,546	-8
17 Lloyd Park	3	7,621	2,540	-8	7,585	2,528	-9
18 St James' Street	3	9,482	3,161	14	9,687	3,229	17
19 Valley	3	8,348	2,783	1	8,505	2,835	2
20 Wood Street	3	8,662	2,887	4	8,547	2,849	3
Total	57	157,622	—	—	157,910	—	—
Averages	—	—	2,765	—	—	2,770	—

Source: Electorate figures are based on Waltham Forest Borough Council's Stage One submission.

Note: The 'variance from average' column shows by how far, in percentage terms, the number of electors per councillor varies from the average for the borough. The minus symbol (-) denotes a lower than average number of electors. For example, in 1998, electors in Higham Hill ward were relatively over-represented by 11 per cent, while electors in Larkswood ward were relatively under-represented by 23 per cent. Figures have been rounded to the nearest whole number.

3. DRAFT RECOMMENDATIONS

²¹ During Stage One we received four representations, from the Borough Council, the Conservative and Liberal Democrat Groups on the Council, all of whom submitted borough-wide schemes, and also from Harry Cohen, Member of Parliament for Leyton & Wanstead. 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 Waltham Forest*.

²² Our draft recommendations were based on the Borough Council's scheme, which achieved improved electoral equality, provided good boundaries while having regard to the statutory criteria and proposed a pattern of entirely three-member wards. However, we moved away from the Borough Council's scheme in four of the proposed wards and proposed minor amendments in a further nine wards. We proposed that:

- (a) Waltham Forest Borough Council should be served by 60 councillors, an increase of three;
- (b) there should be 20 wards, as at present, involving changes to the boundaries of all but three of the existing wards.

Draft Recommendation

Waltham Forest Borough Council should comprise 60 councillors serving 20 wards.

²³ Our proposals would have resulted in significant improvements in electoral equality, with the number of electors per councillor in all 20 wards varying by no more than 9 per cent from the borough average. This level of electoral equality was forecast to improve further, with all wards expected to vary by no more than 6 per cent from the borough average in 2003.

4. RESPONSES TO CONSULTATION

24 During the consultation on our draft recommendations report, 10 representations were received. A list of respondents is available on request from the Commission. All representations may be inspected at the offices of Waltham Forest Borough Council and the Commission.

Waltham Forest Borough Council

25 The Borough Council welcomed the Commission's recommendations as they affected nine of the proposed 20 wards, and also accepted the proposed increase in council size from 57 to 60 members. Where the Commission departed from the Council's original proposal, in the 11 wards of Chapel End, Endlebury, Grove Green, Hale End, Hatch End, Higham Hill, High Street, Larkwood, Leytonstone, Lloyd Park and Valley, they enclosed further comments and urged the Commission to adopt their original proposals.

Waltham Forest Conservative Group and Associations

26 The Conservative Group on Waltham Forest Borough Council ('the Conservatives') accepted the Commission's draft recommendations, with the exception of the boundary between the proposed Hale End & Higham's Park and Hatch Lane wards. To keep community links in the area intact, the Conservatives proposed retaining the current boundaries between the two wards, rather than the transfer of electors between the wards which was proposed by the Commission as part of our draft recommendations. Their views were endorsed by Chingford & Woodford Green, Walthamstow and Leyton & Wanstead Conservative Associations.

27 The Conservative Group stated that it disagreed with "nearly all of the negative comments" made by the Borough Council at Stage Three. Whilst they rejected the council's proposals in the areas of Leyton, Walthamstow and Chingford, they stated that they were "in agreement with the Council's comments regarding the proposed boundary

between Hale End & Higham's Park and Hatch Lane".

Waltham Forest Borough Council Liberal Democrat Group

28 The Liberal Democrat Group on Waltham Forest Borough Council ('the Liberal Democrats') supported the Commission's draft recommendations report, with the exception of the proposed Higham Hill and Chapel End wards.

29 Whilst the Liberal Democrats recognised that "given the lack of agreement in the responses for Higham Hill ward, we understand that the Commission had a difficult task in reconciling the submissions". However, they remained concerned about the proposed boundary between Higham Hill and Chapel End wards.

Hatch Lane Ward Committee of the Chingford & Woodford Green Conservative Association

30 The Hatch Lane Ward Committee of the Chingford & Woodford Green Conservative Association opposed the recommended changes between Hatch Lane and Hale End wards. While their overall preference was for the proposal submitted by the Chingford & Woodford Green Conservative Association at Stage One, in the context of the draft recommendations, they expressed particular concern over the proposed changes between Hale End and Hatch Lane wards.

Chingford & Woodford Green Liberal Democrats

31 Chingford & Woodford Green Liberal Democrats supported the Commission's draft recommendations, and were particularly supportive of the proposals for Hale End & Higham's Park ward.

Harry Cohen MP

³² Harry Cohen, Member of Parliament for Leyton & Wanstead, reiterated his original assertion that Lea Bridge Road acts a significant boundary which should be reflected in any new electoral arrangements. In support of this proposal, he presented a number of options for the area which included several different configurations of councillors for the adjacent wards.

Other Representations

³³ We received a further submission from a group of Chingford residents, who objected to proposed changes to their part of Larkwood ward. The residents argued that issues of community identity and interest mean that their part of the current Larkwood ward should not be incorporated into the proposed Hale End & Higham's Park ward.

5. ANALYSIS AND FINAL RECOMMENDATIONS

34 As described earlier, our prime objective in considering the most appropriate electoral arrangements for Waltham Forest is to achieve electoral equality. In doing so we have regard to the statutory criteria set out in the Local Government Act 1992 – the need to secure effective and convenient local government, and reflect the interests and identities of local communities – and Schedule 11 to the Local Government Act 1972, which refers to the number of electors being “as nearly as may be, the same in every ward of the district or borough”.

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

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

37 Our *Guidance* states that, while we accept that the achievement of absolute electoral equality for the authority as a whole is likely to be unattainable, we consider that, if electoral imbalances are to be kept to the minimum, the objective 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 start from the standpoint of electoral equality, and then make adjustments to reflect relevant factors, such as community identity. Regard must also be had to five-year forecasts of changes in electorates. We will

require particular justification for schemes which result in, or retain, an electoral imbalance over 10 per cent in any ward. In reviews of predominantly urban areas such as the London boroughs, our experience suggests that we would expect to achieve a high degree of electoral equality in all wards.

Electorate Forecasts

38 At Stage One the Borough Council submitted electorate forecasts for the year 2003, projecting a marginal increase in the electorate of around 300 electors from 157,622 to 157,910 over the five-year period from 1998 to 2003, with no areas expecting significant change. The Council estimated rates and locations of housing development with regard to the unitary development plan for the borough, and 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 was obtained.

39 In our draft recommendations report we accepted that forecasting electorate is an inexact science and, having given consideration to the forecast electorates, we were satisfied that they represented the best estimates that could reasonably be made at the time.

40 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

41 We indicated in our *Guidance* that we would normally expect the number of councillors serving a London borough to be in the range of 40 to 80. As already explained, the Commission's starting point is to assume that the current council size facilitates convenient and effective local government.

42 Waltham Forest Borough Council currently has 57 members. At Stage One the Borough Council and Conservative and Liberal Democrat groups all proposed a council of 60 members, an increase of three. In our draft recommendations report we considered the size and distribution of the electorate, the geography and other characteristics of the area, together with the representations received. We concluded that the statutory criteria and the achievement of electoral equality would best be met by a council of 60 members.

43 At Stage Three, no alternative to our proposed council size of 60 was received. In view of the general support for a council of 60 members, which would provide a good electoral scheme, we are confirming our draft recommendation for a council size of 60 as final.

Electoral Arrangements

44 As set out in our draft recommendations report, we carefully considered the representations received at Stage One from the Borough Council, the Conservative and Liberal Democrat Groups on the Council and the other respondents. We expressed gratitude for the positive approach taken by respondents who had each submitted detailed borough-wide proposals for change to the present electoral arrangements. From these representations some considerations emerged which helped to inform us when preparing our draft recommendations.

45 In our draft recommendations we sought to build on all proposals in order to put forward electoral arrangements which would achieve further improvements in electoral equality, having regard to the statutory criteria. Where it existed, we tried to reflect the consensus between the three borough-wide schemes for warding arrangements in particular parts of the borough. This was most notable in the south-east of the borough. However, we made further modifications in order to put forward electoral arrangements which would achieve yet further improvements in electoral equality, while also seeking to reflect the statutory criteria.

46 In view of the degree of consensus behind the three borough-wide schemes, we concluded that we should base our draft recommendations on a combination of these schemes. Our scheme provided a higher level of electoral equality than the current arrangements and it provided clearer,

more easily identifiable boundaries, having regard to the statutory criteria. However, to improve electoral equality further, we departed from the Council's scheme in four wards, and made minor boundary amendments in nine wards.

47 In response to our draft recommendations report, the Borough Council reiterated its original proposal in most of the areas where we moved away from its Stage One submission, while the Liberal Democrat and Conservative Groups proposed more limited change. We have reviewed our draft recommendations in the light of further evidence and the representations received during Stage Three, and judge that modifications should be made to a number of our proposed boundaries. The following areas, based on existing wards, are considered in turn:

- (a) Cann Hall and Cathall wards;
- (b) Lea Bridge, Leyton and Grove Green wards;
- (c) Leytonstone and Forest wards;
- (d) St James' Street, Hoe Street and Wood Street wards;
- (e) Higham Hill, Lloyd Park, High Street and Chapel End wards;
- (f) Hale End, Hatch Lane and Larkswood wards;
- (g) Chingford Green, Endlebury and Valley wards.

48 Details of our final recommendations are set out in Figures 1 and 2, and illustrated on the large map inside the back cover of the report.

Cann Hall and Cathall wards

49 Cann Hall and Cathall wards are situated in the far south of the borough, neighbouring the boroughs of Redbridge, Hackney and Newham. At present, both wards are represented by three councillors and have some 8 per cent and 10 per cent fewer electors per councillor than the borough average respectively, both improving to 7 per cent below average by 2003.

50 At Stage One, the Borough Council, Conservatives and Liberal Democrats proposed relatively few changes to these two wards. They proposed that a small section of Cathall ward, containing 300 electors, west of the London Underground Central line and M11 extension, should be transferred to Grove Green ward, and that a small area containing no electors should be transferred from Leyton ward. The effect of these boundary changes would

be to make the ward's western boundary coterminous with the M11 extension. They also proposed that Cann Hall ward remain unchanged. We considered that the proposals put forward by all three groups represented the best balance between electoral equality and the statutory criteria available, and adopted them as part of our draft recommendations.

51 At Stage Three, our draft recommendations drew the support of the Borough Council, the Conservatives and the Liberal Democrats. Given this level of support, we are content to confirm our draft recommendations as final. Under these proposals Cann Hall and Cathall wards would currently contain 4 per cent and 9 per cent fewer electors per councillor than the borough average respectively (2 per cent and 6 per cent fewer by 2003). This proposal is illustrated on the large map at the back of the report.

Lea Bridge, Leyton and Grove Green wards

52 At present, Lea Bridge, Leyton and Grove Green wards are each represented by three councillors and all contain 5 per cent fewer electors per councillor than the borough average respectively. The three wards centre around High Road, Leyton and the Lea Bridge Road, and are bounded in the east by the Gospel Oak to Barking railway line and in the west by the River Lea.

53 At Stage One, we received four representations in relation to this area. The Borough Council, Conservatives and Liberal Democrats agreed as to the most appropriate arrangements for Leyton and Grove Green wards. They proposed that the wards should remain unchanged with the exception of one alteration, with the southern boundary being aligned with the M11 extension. This would entail transferring some 300 electors from Cathall ward to Grove Green ward. The resultant Leyton and Grove Green wards would have equal to the average and 3 per cent more than the average number of electors per councillor respectively (with both expected to have 3 per cent more than the average by 2003). In relation to Lea Bridge ward, the Borough Council and Liberal Democrats presented alternative proposals to the Conservatives. The Borough Council and Liberal Democrats proposed that the northern boundary of the ward be altered to transfer 406 electors from St James' Street ward, including Markmanor Avenue, Bridge Road, Samantha Close and Theydon Street, which are predominantly accessed

from Lea Bridge ward due to traffic management schemes in the area. The effect of the proposals would be that Lea Bridge ward would have 5 per cent more electors per councillor than the borough average currently, and in 2003. The Conservatives, however, proposed that Lea Bridge ward remain unchanged.

54 We also received a representation from Mr Harry Cohen, Member of Parliament for Leyton and Wanstead, at Stage One, regarding Lea Bridge ward. He argued that Lea Bridge Road is a significant boundary which should be used as a ward boundary. He proposed that the southern boundary of Lea Bridge be altered to make Lea Bridge Road the boundary between Leyton and Lea Bridge wards.

55 Noting the degree of consensus in relation to Grove Green and Leyton wards, we decided to adopt the proposals put to us, with one modification. Currently, the boundary between Grove Green ward and Leytonstone ward follows the Gospel Oak to Barking railway line for most of its length, before running to the rear of properties on Grove Green Road. We decided that following the railway line in its entirety would provide a better boundary for the two wards. In relation to Lea Bridge ward, after careful consideration of the three alternatives presented to us, we decided to alter the boundaries of the ward. We noted that Markmanor Avenue and Bridge Road cannot be accessed from St James' ward due to traffic calming measures and that the Borough Council and Liberal Democrats' proposals would unite Hibbert Road in one ward, and that Theydon Street shares a similarity with these areas to its south. We decided, however, not to transfer Samantha Close, which is a self-contained area accessed from Markhouse Road. In relation to the views expressed by Harry Cohen MP, we noted that while Lea Bridge Road is a major route, if it were to be used as a ward boundary we would need to redraw a number of wards in both Leyton and Walthamstow. We were not persuaded that such a change would better reflect community identities in the borough as a whole, and therefore decided not to make such a change.

56 At Stage Three, our recommendations gained the support of the Conservatives and Liberal Democrats. The Liberal Democrats commented that the change proposed in our draft recommendations concerning the boundary between Grove Green and Leytonstone wards, which would align the wards with the Gospel Oak to Barking

railway line, were “sensible”. The Borough Council accepted the draft recommendations in respect of Lea Bridge ward, but urged that the Commission reconsider the change proposed between Leytonstone and Grove Green wards. They argued that the railway line at the south-eastern corner of the ward is carried over Dyers Hall Road by a viaduct and does not form a natural boundary between the two wards. Furthermore, they contended that the communities living in the roads which would be transferred to Grove Green ward under the draft recommendations, have significantly closer links with the area around Connaught School. They further noted that Connaught School itself would have its Dyer Hall Road Annexe in a different ward to its main building.

57 Mr Harry Cohen MP urged the Commission to reconsider its draft recommendations in respect of Lea Bridge ward, arguing that Lea Bridge Road is considered locally to be the boundary between Leyton and Walthamstow. He noted that the approach taken by the Commission could affect the decisions taken regarding parliamentary boundaries in the area. He did not accept the argument advanced in the draft recommendations that the use of Lea Bridge Road would necessitate the redrawing of boundaries in Leyton and Walthamstow, and argued that only Leyton, Lea Bridge and Markhouse wards need be affected. He suggested four possible options which would allow Lea Bridge Road to be used as a ward boundary: a revised Leyton ward represented by five councillors, a revised Markhouse ward with four councillors and Lea Bridge ward abolished; a revised Leyton ward represented by five councillors, Markhouse with three and Lea Bridge as a single-councillor ward; or Leyton ward (on the basis of the our proposed boundary) with three councillors, a revised ward for the Leyton side of Lea Bridge Road represented by two councillors, Lea Bridge ward with one councillor and Markhouse with three councillors; or Leyton with three councillors, Markhouse with four and with Lea Bridge ward abolished.

58 We again considered the argument from Mr Harry Cohen MP that Lea Bridge Road should be used as a ward boundary. While we believe this argument has some merit, as Lea Bridge Road is a major route, we consider that Boundary Road provides a clear, identifiable boundary for Lea Bridge ward. We are not persuaded, bearing in mind

the consensus locally for a structure of three-member wards and our preference outlined in our *Guidance* for wards being represented by no more than three councillors, that the alternative options presented would form the basis of a more appropriate scheme for the area. The alternative, to re-ward the area, would lead to significant changes throughout Leyton and Walthamstow, and we remain of the view that such an approach would not better reflect community ties.

59 We note that there is agreement amongst the borough-wide submissions concerning our draft recommendation for Lea Bridge ward, and confirm the proposal as final. In relation to the boundary between Grove Green and Leytonstone wards we consider that there is some merit in the Borough Council’s comments on our draft recommendations. We recognise that, in this area, the railway line is not a significant barrier and that our proposed boundary would lead to Connaught School being separated from its Dyer Hall Road Annexe. After further consideration, we consider that the current boundary between Grove Green and Leytonstone wards should be retained. Subject to this amendment, we are content to confirm our draft recommendations as final. Under these recommendations, Leyton, Lea Bridge and Grove Green wards would currently contain equal to, 4 per cent and 3 per cent more electors per councillor than the borough average respectively (3 per cent, 5 per cent and 3 per cent more than average by 2003). These proposals are illustrated on the large map at the back of the report.

Leytonstone and Forest wards

60 Leytonstone and Forest wards are both three-member wards sited in the south-eastern part of Waltham Forest borough, neighbouring the borough of Redbridge. All three borough-wide schemes proposed that Leytonstone and Forest wards remain unchanged. In our draft recommendations, we were content to retain the existing two wards, with the exception of the minor boundary alteration between Leytonstone and Grove Green wards as detailed above.

61 At Stage Three, the Conservatives and Liberal Democrats accepted our draft recommendations for Leytonstone and Forest wards. The Borough Council accepted our draft recommendation for Forest ward but, as outlined above, urged that the

Commission reconsider the amendment put forward for the boundary between Leytonstone and Grove Green wards.

62 Given this level of support for our draft recommendation for Forest ward, we are content to confirm it as final. In relation to Leytonstone, as outlined above, we are content to confirm our draft recommendation, subject to the boundary between Leytonstone and Grove Green wards reverting to its current position. Under these proposals, Forest and Leytonstone wards would currently contain 1 per cent and 4 per cent fewer electors per councillor than the borough average respectively (equal to and 3 per cent fewer than average by 2003). These proposals are illustrated on the large map at the back of the report.

St James' Street, Hoe Street and Wood Street wards

63 The three wards of St James' Street, Hoe Street and Wood Street encompass the residential areas of Walthamstow to the east and south of the central shopping area. Currently, all of these wards return three councillors and have a degree of under-representation; St James' Street has 14 per cent more electors per councillor than the average, while Hoe Street has 9 per cent and Wood Street has 4 per cent more than the average.

64 At Stage One, the Borough Council proposed that St James' Street and Hoe Street wards undergo significant change. As detailed above, they proposed transferring an area around Markmanor Avenue from St James' Street ward to Lea Bridge ward. In addition, they proposed that an area east of the Gospel Oak to Barking railway line, and south of Queens Road containing 1300 electors (polling district UD), be transferred to Hoe Street ward. This would result in the new ward having 1 per cent fewer electors per councillor than the borough average and, according to the Council, would transfer a part of the ward which "has closer ties with the Hoe Street area than St James' Street". The Borough Council also proposed that the ward be renamed Markhouse ward to recognise the fact that Markhouse Street is prominent in the ward, whereas only a small part of St James' Street is actually in the ward.

65 The addition of 1,300 electors from St James' Street ward increases the level of electoral imbalance in Hoe Street ward. To compensate, the Borough Council proposed transferring the north-western corner of Hoe Street ward, the area to the west of Hoe Street and north of Hatherley Road (polling district V), to Lloyd Park ward. In order to improve electoral equality in Wood Street ward, the Council proposed transferring an area to the south of Grove Road, together with the east side of Beulah Road and Summit Road to Hoe Street ward. These changes would improve the level of electoral equality for Hoe Street ward to within 3 per cent of the borough average and, according to the Council, would "have the effect of creating a more clearly identifiable ward". Wood Street ward would have 5 per cent more electors per councillor than average and 4 per cent more by 2003. The Liberal Democrats supported the Borough Council's proposals in their entirety.

66 The Conservatives, like the Borough Council, proposed renaming St James' Street ward Markhouse ward, but suggested different warding arrangements. In order to improve the level of electoral equality in the ward, the Conservatives proposed transferring an area to the south and west of St James' Street railway station, containing 560 electors, from St James' Street ward to High Street ward. In addition, it proposed that an area to the east of Hoe Street and south of Grove Road be transferred to Hoe Street ward. To improve the level of electoral equality, the Conservatives proposed transferring an area north of Maynard Road and west of Shernall Street, containing some 635 electors, to Hoe Street ward from Wood Street ward. In turn, as with the Borough Council's proposals, it proposed transferring an area to the west of Hoe Street itself from Hoe Street ward to Lloyd Park ward. Under the Conservative scheme, all three wards would have 2 per cent more electors per councillor than the borough average currently (and no more than 4 per cent more than average by 2003).

67 All three borough-wide submissions recognised the need to improve electoral equality in St James' Street ward. The Conservatives' scheme was the only one to propose changes to the northern boundary of St James' Street ward, by proposing the transfer of an area around the railway station to High Street ward. Upon inspection, we considered

that the area concerned has a greater similarity with the area to its south, and were not persuaded that we should make such a change. All three also proposed transferring an area to Hoe Street ward. However, while the Borough Council and Liberal Democrats proposed a new boundary of the Gospel Oak to Barking railway line, the Conservatives proposed using Hoe Street. We considered that either boundary could be used in this area. However, as we decided not to amend the northern boundary of St James' Street ward, we noted that the Borough Council's proposal to use the Gospel Oak to Barking railway line would provide the better level of electoral equality for St James' Street ward. We decided, on balance, that we should put this forward as part of our draft recommendations. All submissions proposed that St James' Street ward be renamed Markhouse ward as Markhouse Street is a major feature. We had no objection to this change and therefore put it forward as part of our draft recommendations.

68 All of the submissions agreed that the area of Hoe Street ward to the west of Hoe Street and north of Hatherley Road should be transferred to Lloyd Park ward. We considered that such a change would improve electoral equality and provide more recognisable boundaries for Hoe Street ward itself, and put it forward as part of our draft recommendations. There was no agreement, however, as to the most appropriate boundary between Hoe Street and Wood Street wards. In order to improve the electoral equality of both wards, all three submissions proposed transferring a small area from Wood Street ward to Hoe Street ward. However, while the Conservatives proposed transferring an area to the north of Maynard Road and west of Shernhall Street, the Borough Council and Liberal Democrats proposed transferring the west side of Beulah Road, the area to the south of Grove Road and Summit Road. We considered that both proposals have merit, but in the absence of any convincing supporting argument, we decided to base our draft recommendations on the Borough Council's scheme as it unites the properties on either side of Beulah Road and provides for better electoral equality for Hoe Street ward. We proposed two minor amendments, however. We proposed that all properties on Shernhall Street to the south of the Liverpool Street to Chingford railway line should remain part of Wood Street ward, and that St Stephen Avenue

should form part of Hoe Street, as access to it is from Beulah Road.

69 At Stage Three, our draft recommendations drew the support of the Borough Council, the Conservatives and the Liberal Democrats. Given this level of support, we are content to confirm them as final. Under these recommendations, Markhouse, Hoe Street and Wood Street wards would currently contain 1 per cent fewer, 4 per cent and 5 per cent more electors per councillor than the borough average respectively (1 per cent, 3 per cent and 3 per cent more than average by 2003). This proposal is illustrated on the large map at the back of the report.

Higham Hill, Lloyd Park, High Street and Chapel End wards

70 Higham Hill, Lloyd Park, High Street and Chapel End wards are situated in the centre and west of Walthamstow, and currently all contain fewer electors per councillor than the borough average. While Lloyd Park, High Street and Chapel End wards all return three councillors, Higham Hill is currently represented by two councillors.

71 At Stage One, all three schemes proposed enlarging Higham Hill ward by including part of Lloyd Park ward and increasing its representation from two to three councillors. The Borough Council proposed transferring the area of Lloyd Park ward to the west of Higham Hill Road, containing some 2085 electors. In order to improve electoral equality, it also moved the boundary between Higham Hill and Lloyd Park wards northwards to Carlton Road, transferring 430 electors from Higham Hill ward to Lloyd Park ward. The Borough Council further proposed transferring the whole of Omnibus Way to Chapel End ward. Under the current arrangements, the road straddles the Lloyd Park/Chapel End ward boundary.

72 The Conservatives reached similar conclusions to the Borough Council in relation to these wards, but with some important modifications. Under the Conservative proposal, the area west of Elphinstone Road, but north of Hookers Road, Blenheim Road, Queen Elizabeth Road and Winns Avenue would be transferred from Lloyd Park ward to Higham Hill ward. They argued that this proposal

would transfer Higham Hill itself to Higham Hill ward and would also transfer the Priory Court area to Higham Hill ward. The Conservatives also proposed transferring an area from Hoe Street ward to Lloyd Park ward, but also included Wellington Road, Canning Road, Melbourne Road and Walpole Roads from High Street ward. As under the Borough Council's proposals, it proposed transferring Omnibus Way from Lloyd Park ward to Chapel End ward.

⁷³ The Liberal Democrats also submitted alternative proposals for the Higham Hill area. In order to allow for an all three-member ward pattern, they proposed transferring the area to the north of Winns Avenue, west of Lloyd Park itself and east of Higham Hill Road from Lloyd Park ward to Higham Hill ward. This move, they argued, would unite most of the Higham Hill community in Higham Hill ward. In order to compensate for this loss, Lloyd Park ward would gain the north-west area of Hoe Street ward as detailed above. Unlike the other submissions received, the Liberal Democrats proposed no change to High Street ward and proposed uniting the whole of Omnibus Way in Lloyd Park Ward, involving the transfer of 13 electors from Chapel End ward. They also proposed that Lloyd Park ward be renamed William Morris ward.

⁷⁴ We decided, with some amendments, to base our draft recommendations on a combination of the proposals made to us for this area. All three proposed increasing the number of councillors for Higham Hill ward from two to three. We considered that there was merit in the Conservatives' proposals, both to unite areas either side of Higham Hill Road in Higham Hill ward and to use Hookers Road, Blenheim Road and Queen Elizabeth Road as the northern boundary for a revised Lloyd Park ward. We considered that the industrial estate acts as a significant boundary separating the properties to the north from those in the south. While the Conservatives and the Liberal Democrats included the Priory Court Estate in the revised Higham Hill ward, the Borough Council proposed its retention in Lloyd Park ward. In this area, we proposed putting forward the Borough Council's proposal as we considered that the estate is more closely linked with the area to its south. In order to improve electoral equality and to achieve clear and identifiable boundaries, we proposed two

further changes to the Higham Hill ward as part of our draft recommendations. The first was to unite the whole of North Countess Road, Rushbrook Crescent, Billet Road and Ardleigh Road in Higham Hill ward, and the second was to modify the ward boundary between Higham Hill and Valley wards in order to ensure that it would follow the North Circular Road to its boundary with Chingford Road. Further to the boundary alterations between Lloyd Park and Higham Hill wards, we proposed two other changes to Lloyd Park ward. As detailed above, we proposed transferring the part of Hoe Street ward to the west of Hoe Street itself to Lloyd Park ward. We considered that Omnibus Way, which was the subject of disagreement between the different submissions, should be united in Lloyd Park ward. We sought further comments in relation to ward names for this area at Stage Three. We also decided to recommend that High Street ward remain unchanged. We considered that the current ward boundaries provide a reasonable level of electoral equality and recognisable boundaries, and were not persuaded of the case for change.

⁷⁵ At Stage Three, the Borough Council disagreed with several aspects of the draft recommendations in relation to this area. In the Higham Hill and Lloyd Park areas, they argued that the changes proposed in the draft recommendations would "leave a significant number of electors who have close ties with the Higham Hill area in the Commission's new Lloyd Park ward". They further noted that the proposals "would leave some 25 per cent of Higham Hill Road still in Lloyd Park ward". They argued that residents of the area to the west of Higham Hill Road in the proposed Lloyd Park ward identify more closely with Higham Hill. They opposed the transfer of the whole of Omnibus Way, together with the playing fields around Aveling Park School, to Lloyd Park ward from which, they argued, the ward cannot be accessed. They contended that the transfer of Ardleigh Road and Billet Road to Higham Hill ward was unnecessary and was unlikely to be acceptable to the residents involved. In relation to High Street ward, they suggested that if the Commission amends its proposals for Lloyd Park ward as requested, it would be necessary, in order to achieve a reasonable level of electoral equality, to adopt the Borough Council's proposal for this ward as submitted at Stage One.

76 The Conservatives supported our draft recommendations for this area. They did not consider that the Borough Council's arguments against them were strong enough to warrant change, with the possible exception of the transfer of the playing fields around Aveling Park School from Lloyd Park to Chapel End wards. The Liberal Democrats recognised that the Commission had a difficult task in reconciling the contrasting submissions for this area, and broadly supported the proposals. They did, however, remain concerned about the changes proposed in relation to the boundary between Higham Hill and Chapel End wards, arguing that the properties around Ardleigh Road and Billet Road, which would be transferred to Higham Hill ward under our draft recommendations, strongly identify with Chapel End ward and the remainder of the Warner Estate, and that such a move would not be supported by local residents. The Liberal Democrats, however, strongly supported the proposal to transfer Omnibus Way from Chapel End ward to Lloyd Park ward. They argued that "the only access to it is in Lloyd Park ward and it is physically separated from Chapel End ward". In relation to ward names, they disagreed that the name of Lloyd Park should be retained, arguing that it is only significant to those residents living in the north-east of the ward and that their original proposal of William Morris ward would be readily identifiable. They noted that the museum and gallery are contained within the ward, and would commemorate "one of the borough's more distinguished residents".

77 Both the Borough Council and the Liberal Democrats argued that the transfer of the area around Ardleigh Road and Billet Road from Chapel End ward to Higham Hill ward as part of our draft recommendations, was unnecessary and would divide communities in this area. We have concluded that this argument has some merit and are content, as part of our final recommendations, to revert to the current boundary between the two wards. In addition, we are content to retain the playing fields neighbouring Aveling Park School in Chapel End ward, as proposed by the Borough Council and Conservatives. We have considered the Council's request that we adopt their Stage One proposal for this area in full, but remain unconvinced that their proposals better reflect the statutory criteria than our draft recommendations. We note that our proposals have the support of the Liberal Democrat and Conservative Groups and remain of the view that the industrial area on either

side of Blackhorse Lane acts as a significant boundary between communities. With the exception of the minor alterations outlined above, we are therefore content to confirm our draft recommendations as final in respect to this area.

78 We have also decided to adopt the Liberal Democrat proposal to rename Lloyd Park ward, William Morris ward. We are convinced by the argument that Lloyd Park itself is more significant to those residents in the north-east of the ward than to those in the west. William Morris is a distinguished former resident of the area, and the ward contains the designer's gallery. We received no other specific comments on the naming of this ward and are content to put this modification forward as part of our final recommendations.

Hale End, Hatch Lane and Larkswood wards

79 The grouping of Hale End, Hatch Lane and Larkswood wards encompasses the eastern half of Chingford together with the Higham's Park area. While Hatch Lane and Hale End wards achieve a reasonable level of electoral equality with variances of no more than 1 per cent from the average, Larkswood currently has 23 per cent more electors per councillor than the borough average. Currently, Larkswood and Hatch Lane wards are represented by three councillors, while Hale End is represented by two.

80 At Stage One the Borough Council proposed only minor amendments to the existing Hatch Lane ward. It proposed that the northern boundary of the ward be altered to coincide with Whitehall Road for its entire length. In order to address the imbalance in Larkswood ward and its preference for a pattern of three-member wards, the Borough Council proposed transferring the Higham's Park area to the west of the Liverpool Street to Chingford railway line from Larkswood ward to Hale End ward. It proposed that the area stretching from Haldan Road in the south to Inks Green in the north, up to and including the Aldriche Way housing estate in the west, should be transferred to Hale End ward. The Liberal Democrats' proposal was similar to the Borough Council's in many ways. The Liberal Democrats agreed with the Borough Council's proposal to transfer the area to the north of Whitehall Road from Hatch Lane ward to Chingford Green ward, and also to transfer an area from Larkswood ward to Hale End ward. However, they proposed that a smaller area west of

the railway line be brought into Hale End ward, retaining Ropers Avenue, Inks Green and the Caribonum Sports Ground in Larkswood ward, but transferring the whole of Coolgardie Avenue and surrounding roads instead. In addition, they proposed transferring the south-western part of the current Hatch Lane ward, adjacent to Higham's Park railway station, to Hale End ward, transferring some 188 electors.

81 The Conservatives argued strongly against the Council's proposals for this area. They considered that there is no common link between the Aldriche Way Estate and its surrounding roads and Hale End Ward, the two areas being divided by the Liverpool Street to Chingford railway line. They contended that the Borough Council's proposals would run contrary to the goals of reflecting local communities and achieving identifiable electoral boundaries, and had been motivated purely by party political advantage. Instead, they proposed transferring the area to the south of The Avenue, Sunnysdene Avenue and Clivedon Road and an area to the east of the River Ching from Hatch Lane ward to Hale End ward. To compensate for this loss of electors, they proposed extending the northern boundary of Hatch Lane ward to the Chingford to Liverpool Street railway line and Rangers Road, transferring some 1,725 electors from Chingford Green ward. In order to reduce the electorate of Larkswood ward, the Conservatives proposed transferring the area to the north of New Road to Endlebury ward, with the exception of Brook Crescent and Brook Gardens.

82 We decided to base our draft recommendations on the Borough Council and Liberal Democrats' proposals. To the west of the Liverpool Street to Chingford railway line we noted that shopping facilities straddle the railway line, and that the Aldriche Way estate is relatively isolated from the remainder of Larkswood ward by traffic calming measures. We decided to adopt the Liberal Democrats' proposals to the west of the railway line as we considered that they provided stronger boundaries by retaining the whole of Coolgardie Avenue in one ward and using Larkshall Road as a boundary. We also considered that there was some merit in the Liberal Democrats' proposal to transfer part of The Avenue, Church Avenue and Gordon Avenue from Hatch Lane ward to Hale End ward. We further noted that the Charter Road area (polling district KB) of Hale End ward is isolated from the rest of the ward and proposed that this area be transferred from Hale End ward to

Hatch Lane ward. We agreed with the Borough Council and Liberal Democrats that the name of the ward should be modified to reflect its revised composition, and proposed adopting the Liberal Democrat contention that it should be named Hale End & Higham's Park ward.

83 At Stage Three, we received six representations in relation to this area. The Liberal Democrat Group and the Chingford & Woodford Green Liberal Democrats supported the proposals outlined in our draft recommendations. The Chingford & Woodford Green Liberal Democrats accepted our modifications which transferred a north-east area of Hale End ward into Hatch Lane ward on the grounds that the properties concerned "are particularly isolated from the rest of the ward". They further agreed that the name of the ward should be Hale End & Higham's Park to reflect the new composition of the ward.

84 The Borough Council requested that the Commission reconsider its draft recommendations in respect to this area, which, they felt, involved an unnecessary movement of electors between Hale End and Hatch Lane wards. They argued that the proposal submitted by the Council at Stage One had merit as it involved less disruption to the existing arrangements and created "a single self-contained polling district taken from one ward, rather than the breaking up of three separate areas as proposed by the Commission". Furthermore, they contended that Hatch Lane ward is already spread over a considerable distance, and that the transfer of polling district KB would further exacerbate this. They noted that our draft recommendations had stated that the Borough Council wished to rename the ward Hale End & Higham's Park ward, when in fact their Stage One representation had proposed renaming the ward Higham's Park. Consequently they requested that the ward be named in accordance with their original suggestion.

85 The Conservative Group accepted our draft recommendations for this area with two exceptions. They contended that by transferring an area from Hatch Lane ward to the new Hale End & Higham's Park ward, an artificial boundary would be created which would divide rather than unite a community with similar interests and concerns. They noted that the draft recommendations would cut across roads such as The Avenue, Castle Avenue and Handsworth Avenue. In addition, the Conservatives argued that polling district KB

should remain part of a new Hale End & Higham's Park ward. They disagreed that access to this area is only through roads in Hatch Lane ward, noting that it can also be reached from Woodford New Road. They argued that by transferring these properties to Hale End ward, the Commission would "increase the problem of Hatch Lane being a very elongated ward with no community ties between those in the north and those in the south". Under their new proposal, Hale End & Higham's Park ward would retain its existing boundary with Hatch Lane ward. The Hatch Lane Ward Committee of the Chingford & Woodford Green Conservative Association stated that while they preferred the boundaries proposed by the Conservatives at Stage One, their main concern was with the proposed changes to the southern boundary of Hatch Lane ward. They argued that our proposal to transfer an area from Hatch Lane would "be breaking communities asunder". They also added that Handsworth Primary School, which acts as a polling station for the southern part of Hatch Lane ward, would be transferred to the new Hale End & Higham's Park ward.

⁸⁶ We also received a representation signed by 30 residents of the current Larkswood ward, whose properties would be transferred to Hale End & Higham's Park ward under our draft recommendations. They argued that Larkshall Road, Village Close, most of Avril Way and parts of Coolgardie Avenue and Larkshall Court were formerly part of the Borough of Chingford, have no connection with Hale End and are not part of Higham's Park. The transfer of these properties, they contended, is unnecessary for electoral equality reasons, and would break "historic and vigorously continuing ties for the first time", and they urged the Commission to alter its recommendations accordingly.

⁸⁷ We note that this area has attracted the most comment at Stage Three. While the Liberal Democrats and the Chingford & Woodford Green Liberal Democrats supported our draft recommendations, we received four submissions proposing modifications in this area. We gave serious consideration to the proposal received from 30 residents of Larkswood ward which argued that they should remain part of that ward. We noted that under their proposal the boundary would be less clear and identifiable, and that Coolgardie Avenue would be divided between wards, which we are not persuaded would better reflect community interests. We investigated the

possibility of retaining the whole of the area to the north and east of Larkshall Road in Larkswood ward but concluded that without further significant boundary alterations elsewhere, this would provide an unacceptable level of electoral inequality. We remain of the view that Larkshall Road provides the most appropriate boundary in this area and confirm our draft recommendations for this area as final.

⁸⁸ The Borough Council, the Conservative Group on the Council and the Hatch Lane Ward Committee of the Chingford & Woodford Green Conservative Association all objected to our draft recommendation to modify the southern boundary of Hatch Lane ward. In the west they argued that the proposed boundary would divide a community rather than unite one, as was the intention. We concede that the boundary proposed in our draft recommendations in this area can be viewed as rather arbitrary, and having considered local views on this matter are persuaded that community interests would best be reflected by modifying our proposals to include the existing boundary. In the east, we are still persuaded that there is some merit in uniting the properties to the east of the River Ching, but in the light of the decision taken in the west, we are content to adopt the proposal submitted by the Borough Council, Conservative Group and the Hatch Lane Ward Committee of the Chingford & Woodford Green Conservative Association, to keep the existing boundary, in order to maintain a reasonable level of electoral equality.

⁸⁹ In respect to Hale End ward, we remain persuaded that the names of both the Hale End and Higham's Park communities should be included in the new ward name. Our final recommendations would lead to Hale End & Higham's Park, Hatch Lane and Larkswood wards currently containing 3 per cent fewer, 1 per cent and 2 per cent more electors per councillor than the borough average respectively (3 per cent and 2 per cent fewer and 1 per cent more than average by 2003). Our proposals are illustrated on the large map at the back of this report.

Chingford Green, Endlebury and Valley wards

⁹⁰ Chingford Green, Endlebury and Valley wards cover the north and west of Chingford, and are all currently under-represented in electoral terms. Valley ward currently has 1 per cent more electors per councillor than the borough average, while

Chingford Green and Endlebury have 9 per cent and 14 per cent more than the borough average respectively. Endlebury is currently represented by two councillors, while Chingford Green and Valley wards are each represented by three councillors.

91 At Stage One, as outlined above, the Borough Council proposed altering the southern boundary of Chingford Green ward to follow Whitehall Road. It also proposed transferring an area bounded by Mansfield Hill, The Ridgeway, Kings Head Hill and College Gardens from Chingford Green ward to Endlebury ward in order to improve the level of electoral equality and to enable Endlebury ward to be represented by three councillors. They proposed that Endlebury ward expand southwards to Priory Avenue, currently in Valley ward. The Liberal Democrats supported the Borough Council's proposals, but with one exception: they proposed retaining Priory Avenue and Priory Close in Valley Ward.

92 The Conservatives' Stage One submission differed from those received from the Borough Council and the Liberal Democrats. As outlined above, electoral equality would be improved by transferring the area to the east of the Liverpool Street to Chingford railway line to Hatch Lane ward. As a result they proposed fewer changes to Chingford Green ward in the west. They also proposed significant changes to Endlebury ward's southern boundary. Like the Liberal Democrats and the Borough Council, they proposed amending the boundary between Valley and Endlebury wards. However, they agreed with the Liberal Democrats that Priory Avenue and Priory Court should remain part of Valley ward rather than be transferred to Endlebury ward.

93 We decided to base our draft recommendations on the Borough Council and Liberal Democrats' proposals for Chingford Green, Endlebury and Valley wards. We considered that the proposals to transfer areas to the south of the A110 to Endlebury ward, and to the north of the A110 from Hatch Lane, would provide Chingford Green ward with a clear and identifiable boundary, while addressing the current electoral inequalities in the ward. They would also enable Endlebury ward to be represented by three councillors. We did, however, decide to put forward the Conservatives' and Liberal Democrats' proposal for Valley ward, which would transfer the Brindwood Road area to Endlebury ward, but in order to maintain community ties would retain the properties on Priory Avenue and Priory Court in Valley ward.

94 At Stage Three, the Liberal Democrats, Conservatives and Chingford & Woodford Green Liberal Democrats supported our proposals in this area, while the Hatch Lane Ward Committee of the Chingford & Woodford Green Conservative Association accepted, in the light of our draft recommendations as a whole, the proposal to realign the boundary between Hatch Lane and Chingford Green. The Borough Council accepted our draft recommendations in relation to Chingford Green ward, but disagreed with the proposed changes to the boundary between Endlebury and Valley ward. They contended that residents in Priory Avenue and Priory Close have a closer affinity with the properties to their north than with Valley ward, to the south, and any argument which highlights community links to its south is not valid "as it is equally applicable to the entire area to the north – at least as far as Mansfield Park". They further argued that electoral equality would be improved if the boundary between the two wards was drawn along the centre of Priory Avenue. However, the Conservative and Liberal Democrat Groups contended that Priory Avenue and Priory Close should remain part of Valley ward. The Conservative Group argued that the Council's view that these areas share an affinity with the Brindwood Road area "does not hold up to scrutiny", as the two areas are not directly linked by road.

95 We note that, with the exception of the Borough Council, there is agreement over our proposals for this area. We have considered the Borough Council's proposition that Priory Avenue and Priory Close have a closer affinity with the properties to their north, but have not been persuaded of the case for change. We therefore propose that this area should remain part of Valley ward and we are content to confirm our draft recommendations as final. Under these recommendations, Chingford Green, Endlebury and Valley wards would currently contain equal to, 3 per cent and 3 per cent more electors per councillor than the borough average respectively (4 per cent fewer, 2 per cent and 5 per cent more than average by 2003). Our proposal is illustrated on Map A1 at Appendix A and on the large map at the back of the report.

Conclusions

96 Having considered carefully all the representations and evidence received in response to our consultation report, we have decided substantially to endorse our

draft recommendations, subject to the following amendments:

- (a) the boundary between Leytonstone and Grove Green wards should revert to its existing position;
- (b) the boundary between Chapel End and Higham Hill wards should revert to its existing position;
- (c) the current southern boundary of Hatch Lane ward should be maintained;
- (d) Lloyd Park ward should be renamed William Morris ward, and its boundary with Chapel End ward modified to ensure that the playing fields of Aveling Park School form part of Chapel End ward.

97 We conclude that, in Waltham Forest:

- a) there should be an increase in council size from 57 to 60 members;
- (b) there should be 20 wards, as at present.

98 Figure 4 shows the impact of our final recommendations on electoral equality, comparing them with the current arrangements, based on 1998 and 2003 electorate figures.

99 As shown in Figure 4, our final recommendations for Waltham Forest Borough Council would result in a reduction in the number of wards where the number of electors per councillor varies by more than 10 per cent from the borough average from four to none. This improved balance of representation is expected to be maintained in 2003. Our final recommendations are set out in more detail in Figures 1 and 2, and illustrated on Map 2 and the large map at the back of this report.

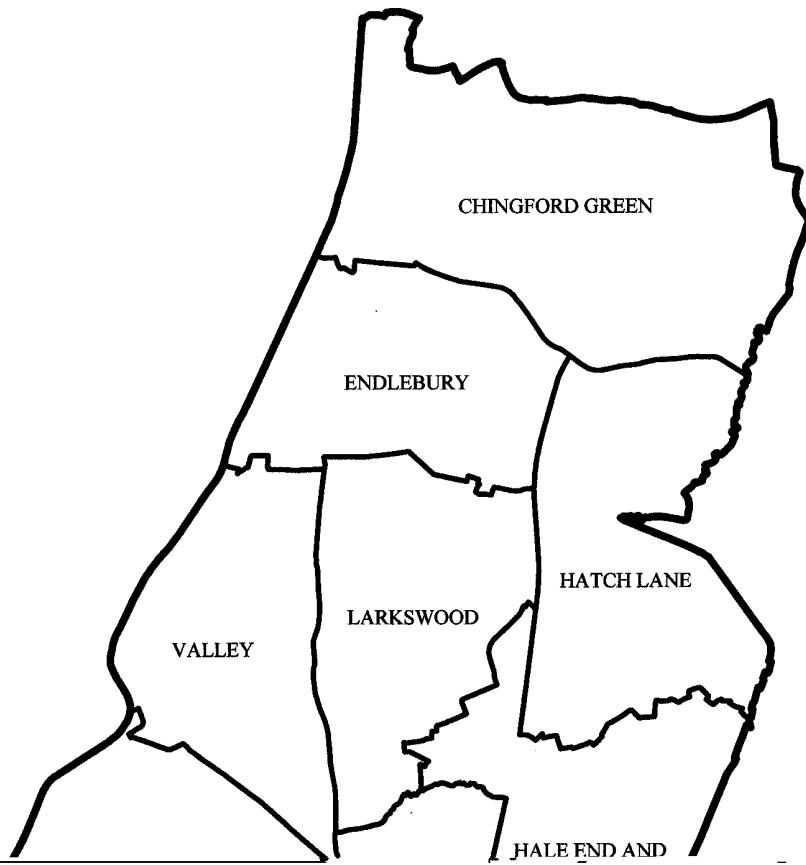
Final Recommendation

Waltham Forest Borough Council should comprise 60 councillors serving 20 wards, as detailed and named in Figures 1 and 2, and illustrated on the large map in the back of the report.

*Figure 4 :
Comparison of Current and Recommended Electoral Arrangements*

	1998 electorate		2003 forecast electorate	
	Current arrangements	Final recommendations	Current arrangements	Final recommendations
Number of councillors	57	60	57	60
Number of wards	20	20	20	20
Average number of electors per councillor	2,765	2,627	2,770	2,632
Number of wards with a variance more than 10 per cent from the average	4	0	3	0
Number of wards with a variance more than 20 per cent from the average	1	0	1	0

Map 2:
The Commission's Final Recommendations for Waltham Forest



6. NEXT STEPS

¹⁰⁰ Having completed our review of electoral arrangements in Waltham Forest and submitted our final recommendations to the Secretary of State, we have fulfilled our statutory obligation under the Local Government Act 1992.

¹⁰¹ It now falls to the Secretary of State to decide whether to give effect to our recommendations, with or without modification, and to implement them by means of an order. Such an order will not be made earlier than six weeks from the date that our recommendations are submitted to the Secretary of State.

¹⁰² All further correspondence concerning our recommendations and the matters discussed in this report should be addressed to:

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

APPENDIX A

Final Recommendations for Waltham Forest: Detailed Mapping

The following maps illustrate the Commission's proposed ward boundaries for the Waltham Forest area.

Map A1 illustrates the proposed ward boundary between Endlebury and Valley wards.

The **large map** inserted in the back of the report illustrates the Commission's proposed warding arrangements for Waltham Forest.

Map A1:
Proposed Boundary Between Endlebury and Valley Wards



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APPENDIX B

Draft Recommendations for Waltham Forest

Our final recommendations, detailed in Figures 1 and 2, differ from those we put forward as draft recommendations in respect of six wards where our draft proposals are set out below. The only other change from draft to final recommendations, which is not included in Figure B1, is that we propose to rename Lloyd Park ward as William Morris ward.

Figure B1:

The Commission's Draft Recommendations: Number of Councillors and Electors by Ward

Ward name	Number of councillors	Electorate (1998)	Number of electors per councillor	Variance from average %	Electorate (2003)	Number of electors per councillor	Variance from average %
1 Cann Hall	3	7,603	2,534	-4	7,748	2,583	-2
2 Cathall	3	7,187	2,396	-9	7,412	2,471	-6
3 Chapel End	3	7,718	2,573	-2	7,722	2,574	-2
4 Chingford Green	3	7,877	2,626	0	7,607	2,536	-4
5 Endlebury	3	8,092	2,697	3	8,046	2,682	2
6 Forest	3	7,831	2,610	-1	7,909	2,636	0
7 Grove Green	3	8,192	2,731	4	8,185	2,728	4
8 Hale End & Higham's Park	3	7,583	2,528	-4	7,573	2,524	-4
9 Hatch Lane	3	8,058	2,686	2	7,808	2,603	-1
10 High Street	3	8,024	2,675	2	8,000	2,667	1
11 Higham Hill	3	7,570	2,523	-4	7,663	2,554	-3
12 Hoe Street	3	8,206	2,735	4	8,125	2,708	3
13 Larkswood	3	8,075	2,692	2	7,983	2,661	1
14 Lea Bridge	3	8,235	2,745	4	8,275	2,758	5

continued overleaf

Figure B1 (continued):

The Commission's Draft Recommendations: Number of Councillors and Electors by Ward

Ward name	Number of councillors	Electorate (1998)	Number of electors per councillor	Variance from average %	Electorate (2003)	Number of electors per councillor	Variance from average %
15 Leyton	3	7,913	2,638	0	8,150	2,717	3
16 Leytonstone	3	7,551	2,517	-4	7,586	2,529	-4
17 Lloyd Park	3	7,728	2,576	-2	7,692	2,564	-3
18 Markhouse	3	7,797	2,599	-1	8,002	2,667	1
19 Valley	3	8,100	2,700	3	8,257	2,752	5
20 Wood Street	3	8,282	2,761	5	8,167	2,722	3
Total	60	157,622	—	—	157,910	—	—
Averages	—	—	2,627	—	—	2,632	—

Source: Electorate figures are based on Waltham Forest Borough Council's Stage One submission.

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