

LOCAL
GOVERNMENT
COMMISSION
FOR ENGLAND

FINAL
RECOMMENDATIONS
ON THE FUTURE
ELECTORAL
ARRANGEMENTS FOR
EPSOM & EWELL
IN SURREY

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

September 1998

LOCAL GOVERNMENT COMMISSION FOR ENGLAND

This report sets out the Commission's final recommendations on the electoral arrangements for Epsom & Ewell in Surrey.

Members of the Commission are:

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Helena Shovelton (Deputy Chairman)

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Professor Michael Clarke

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Local Government Commission for England

1 September 1998

Dear Secretary of State

On 2 September 1997 the Commission began a periodic electoral review of the borough of Epsom & Ewell under the Local Government Act 1992. We published our draft recommendations for electoral arrangements on 17 March 1998 and undertook an eleven-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 paragraph 87) in the light of further evidence. This report sets out our final recommendations for changes to electoral arrangements in Epsom & Ewell Borough.

We recommend that Epsom & Ewell Borough Council should be served by 38 councillors representing 13 wards, and that some changes should be made to ward boundaries in order to improve electoral equality, having regard to the statutory criteria. We recommend that elections should continue to take place every four years.

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 Epsom & Ewell on 2 September 1997. We published our draft recommendations for electoral arrangements on 17 March 1998, after which we undertook an 11 week period of consultation.

- **This report summarises the representations we have 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 Epsom & Ewell because:

- **in five of the 13 wards, the number of electors represented by each councillor varies by more than 10 per cent from the average for the borough;**
- **by 2002, electoral equality is not expected to improve, with the number of electors per councillor projected to vary by more than 10 per cent from the average in five wards, and by more than 20 per cent from the average in one ward.**

Our main final recommendations for future electoral arrangements (Figure 1 and paragraphs 86 to 87) are that:

- **Epsom & Ewell Borough Council should be served by 38 councillors, one fewer than at present;**
- **there should continue to be 13 wards;**
- **the boundaries of 12 wards should be modified, while one ward should retain its existing boundaries;**
- **elections should continue to take place every four years.**

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 13 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, with the number of electors per councillor in 12 of the 13 wards expected to vary by no more than 10 per cent from the average for the borough by 2002.**

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 13 October 1998:

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

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

Ward name	Number of councillors	Constituent areas
1 Auriol	2	Auriol ward (part)
2 College	3	College ward (part)
3 Court	3	Court ward (part); West Ewell ward (part)
4 Cuddington	3	<i>Unchanged</i>
5 Ewell	3	Ewell ward (part); Town ward (part)
6 Ewell Court	3	Ewell Court ward; Auriol ward (part)
7 Nonsuch	3	Nonsuch ward (part); Ewell ward (part)
8 Ruxley	3	Ruxley ward; Court ward (part)
9 Stamford	3	Stamford ward; Woodcote ward (part)
10 Stoneleigh	3	Stoneleigh ward; Nonsuch ward (part); Ewell ward (part)
11 Town	3	Town ward (part); College ward (part)
12 West Ewell	3	West Ewell ward (part); Court ward (part)
13 Woodcote	3	Woodcote ward (part); Town ward (part); College ward (part)

Notes: 1 Epsom & Ewell Borough is entirely unparished.

2 The proposed ward boundaries are illustrated in the large map at the back of the report.

1. INTRODUCTION

1 This report contains our final recommendations on the electoral arrangements for the borough of Epsom & Ewell in Surrey.

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

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

3 We have also had regard to our *Guidance and Procedural Advice for Local Authorities and Other Interested Parties* (published in March 1996, supplemented in September 1996 and updated in March 1998). This sets out our approach to the reviews.

4 This review was in four stages. Stage One began on 2 September 1997, when we invited proposals for the future electoral arrangements from Epsom & Ewell Borough Council, and copied the letter to Surrey County Council, the Metropolitan Police, the local authority associations, the Surrey Association of Parish Councils, the Member 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 published a notice in the local press, issued a press release and invited the Borough Council to publicise the review more widely. The closing date for receipt of representations was 25 November 1997. At Stage Two, we considered all the representations received during Stage One and prepared our draft recommendations.

5 Stage Three began on 17 March 1998 with the publication of our report, *Draft Recommendations on the Future Electoral Arrangements for Epsom & Ewell in Surrey*, and ended on 1 June 1998. 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

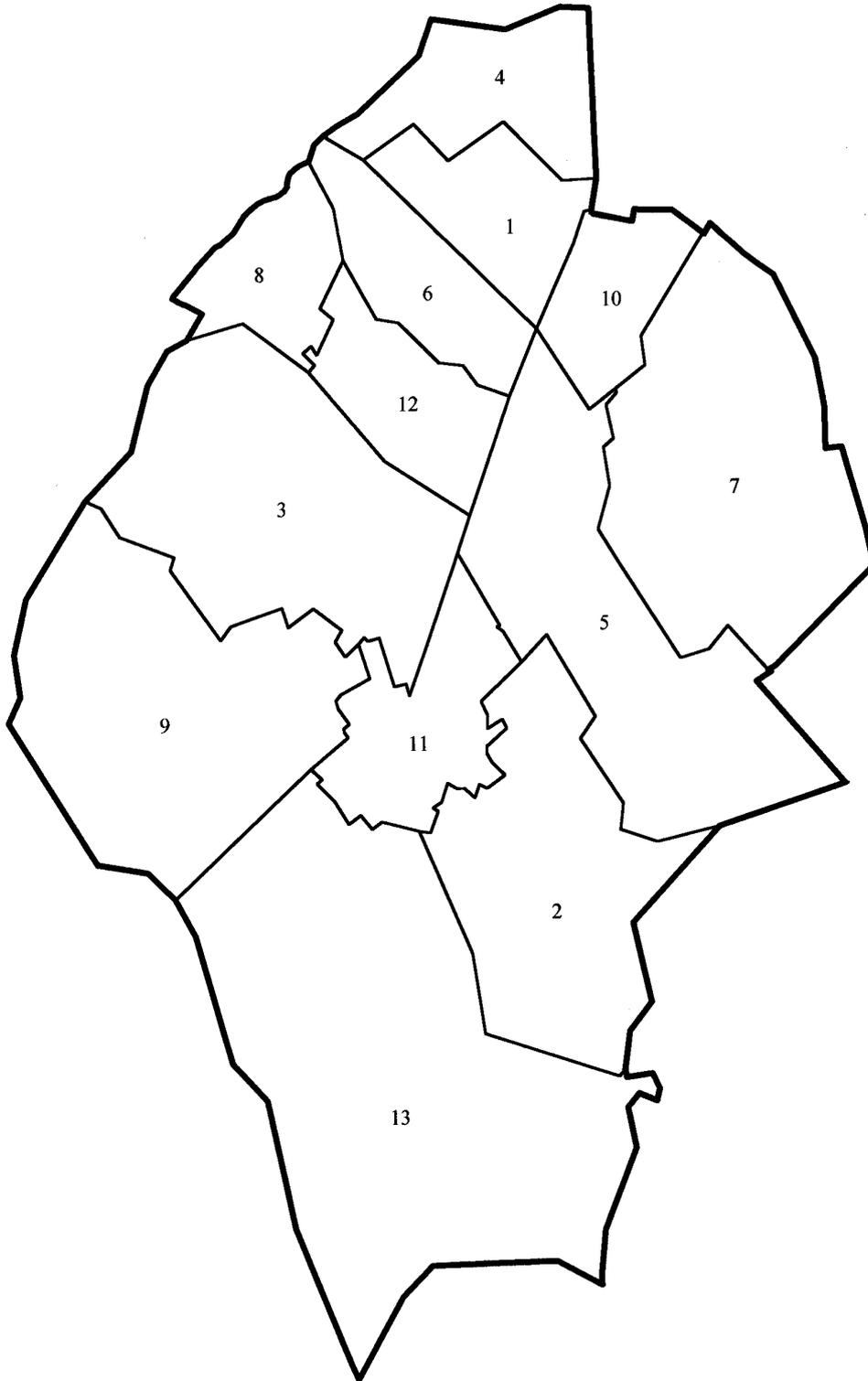
⁶ Epsom & Ewell is a compact borough in north Surrey, covering an area of some 3,400 hectares to the south-west of London. Historically, the two settlements of Epsom and Ewell developed independently, but suburban growth, particularly in the inter-war years, has resulted in their merging into one predominantly residential area in the centre of the borough. The residential area continues in the north of the borough, stretching to the adjacent London boroughs of Kingston-upon-Thames and Sutton. Green Belt, stretching across the North Downs, makes up the southern half of the borough. The borough is served by a number of important communication links, including the A240 trunk road and the Epsom to London Waterloo railway line. The borough has no parishes, but has a network of residents' associations covering much of its area.

⁷ 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'.

⁸ The current electoral arrangements in the borough provide for 39 councillors, serving 13 wards (Map 1 and Figure 2) each represented by three councillors. Epsom & Ewell currently holds whole-council elections every four years, with the next elections due to take place in May 1999. The current electorate of the borough is 51,284 and each councillor represents an average of 1,315 electors. The Borough Council forecasts that the electorate will increase to some 53,845 by the year 2002, providing an average number of electors per councillor of 1,381. Much of this increase is expected in the west of the borough, in Court and Stamford wards, and is largely attributed to the expected residential development of five former hospital sites.

⁹ Since the last electoral review was completed in 1975, changes in population and electorate have not been evenly spread across the borough. As a result, the number of electors per councillor varies by more than 10 per cent from the borough average in five of the 13 wards. The highest electoral variance is in Nonsuch ward, which has some 15 per cent fewer electors per councillor than the borough average. In other words, the councillor for Nonsuch ward represents 1,113 electors, compared to the borough average of 1,315.

Map 1:
Existing Wards in Epsom & Ewell



Key to Wards

1 Auriol	5 Ewell	8 Ruxley	11 Town
2 College	6 Ewell Court	9 Stamford	12 West Ewell
3 Court	7 Nonsuch	10 Stoneleigh	13 Woodcote
4 Cuddington			

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Figure 2:
Existing Electoral Arrangements

Ward name	Number of councillors	Electorate (1997)	Number of electors per councillor	Variance from average %	Electorate (2002)	Number of electors per councillor	Variance from average %
1 Auriol	3	3,602	1,201	-9	3,652	1,217	-12
2 College	3	4,352	1,451	10	4,352	1,451	5
3 Court	3	4,440	1,480	13	5,687	1,896	37
4 Cuddington	3	4,302	1,434	9	4,302	1,434	4
5 Ewell	3	4,385	1,462	11	4,385	1,462	6
6 Ewell Court	3	3,493	1,164	-11	3,493	1,164	-16
7 Nonsuch	3	3,338	1,113	-15	3,623	1,208	-13
8 Ruxley	3	3,662	1,221	-7	3,806	1,269	-8
9 Stamford	3	3,889	1,296	-1	4,454	1,485	8
10 Stoneleigh	3	3,550	1,183	-10	3,550	1,183	-14
11 Town	3	4,437	1,479	12	4,547	1,516	10
12 West Ewell	3	4,052	1,351	3	4,052	1,351	-2
13 Woodcote	3	3,782	1,261	-4	3,942	1,314	-5
Totals	39	51,284	—	—	53,845	—	—
Averages	—	—	1,315	—	—	1,381	—

Source: Electorate figures are based on Epsom & Ewell Borough Council's submission.

Notes: 1 The 'variance from average' column shows by how far, in percentage terms, the number of electors per councillor varies from the average for the borough. The minus symbol (-) denotes a lower than average number of electors. For example, electors in Court ward are relatively under-represented by 13 per cent, while electors in Nonsuch ward are over-represented by 15 per cent. Figures have been rounded to the nearest whole number.

2 Since the publication of the draft recommendations report, following advice from the Borough Council, the projected electorate for Auriol ward has been increased by 50 to reflect the development of the former cinema site.

3. DRAFT RECOMMENDATIONS

¹⁰ During Stage One, we received a representation from Epsom & Ewell Borough Council on electoral arrangements for the whole borough. Representations were also received from Epsom & Ewell Conservative Association, Epsom & Ewell Liberal Democrats, the Standing Committee of Residents' Associations, Ewell Village Residents' Association, the Association of Ewell Downs Residents and a local resident. In the light of these representations and evidence available to us, we reached preliminary conclusions which were set out in the report, *Draft Recommendations on the Future Electoral Arrangements for Epsom & Ewell in Surrey*. We proposed that:

- (a) Epsom & Ewell Borough Council should be served by 38 councillors, representing 13 wards;
- (b) the boundaries of 12 of the existing wards should be modified, while one ward should retain its existing boundaries.

Draft Recommendation

Epsom & Ewell Borough Council should comprise 38 councillors, serving 13 wards. Elections should continue to take place every four years.

¹¹ Our proposals would have resulted in significant improvements in electoral equality, with the number of electors per councillor varying by no more than 10 per cent from the borough average in all 13 wards. This level of electoral equality was expected to be maintained for the year 2002.

¹² Our draft recommendations are summarised in Appendix B.

4. RESPONSES TO CONSULTATION

¹³ During the consultation on our draft recommendations report, 13 representations were received. A list of respondents is available on request from the Commission's offices.

Epsom & Ewell Borough Council

¹⁴ The Borough Council commented on our draft recommendations and stated we had “produced a careful, well researched, and well reasoned report” and expressed support for the majority of our draft recommendations. However, it had reservations regarding the proposed Auriol ward. In particular it expressed concern that Auriol ward would have two councillors, while the remaining 12 wards would each be represented by three councillors. It also opposed the transfer of Stoneleigh Park Road, Station Approach and part of Kingston Road from Auriol ward to Stoneleigh ward, as it preferred to retain the Epsom to London Waterloo railway line as the boundary between the two wards.

Epsom & Ewell Conservative Association

¹⁵ Epsom and Ewell Conservative Association expressed appreciation for the consideration given to its Stage One submission. It recognised that its initial proposals had lacked certain details and developed a modified set of proposals.

¹⁶ Its Stage Three submission continued to centre around a new single-member ward for the hospital sites, but it now proposed the new ward should cover the hospital sites and the Horton Hill area. This change, the Conservative Association argued, would obviate the need to transfer the Hook Road area from Court ward to Town ward. It argued that Beaufort Way and Bluegates should form part of Nonsuch ward rather than Stoneleigh ward. In addition, it argued that the north side of Reigate Road should be transferred to Nonsuch ward from Ewell ward. This the Association argued would obviate a need to transfer the Ewell Downs area to Nonsuch ward and part of Town ward to Ewell ward.

Other Representations

¹⁷ We received a further 11 representations from residents' associations, local councillors and residents. Ewell Village Residents' Association endorsed “the Commission's flexible approach to solving the problems that are likely to arise by the year 2002, particularly in relation to the number of wards and the numbers of councillors per ward”. While it accepted that equality of representation should be the starting point of any review, it argued that the need to reflect the identities and interests of local communities and maintain local ties should be paramount. In the Association's view, the Commission's proposals failed to take sufficient account of these factors. It reiterated its view that Ewell Downs has traditionally had close links with Ewell Village and therefore should remain linked for borough ward purposes. It argued that by retaining Bluegates and Beaufort Way in Nonsuch ward and giving an additional councillor for the hospital sites there would be no need for such a transfer. It emphasised that, in its view, Ewell is different from Epsom, being an ancient settlement with an integrity of its own. It therefore opposed the transfer of the Dirdene Gardens area from Town ward to Ewell ward as it would breach the historic Half Mile bush boundary between the towns of Epsom and Ewell. This, in turn, they argued would obviate the need for other changes. Councillor Arthur supported Ewell Village Residents' Association's proposals.

¹⁸ The Association of Ewell Downs Residents and a local resident also opposed the transfer of Ewell Downs to Nonsuch ward. The Association argued that the proposal would divide the Ewell Downs area and combine the majority with an area with a differing history and problems. The Howell Hill Residents' Association supported the Commission's draft recommendations for Nonsuch ward. Woodcote (Epsom) Residents' Society broadly welcomed the recommendations for their immediate area, but suggested that the remainder of Ashley Road together with Rosebery Park should be transferred into Woodcote ward. It argued that this would improve electoral equality and bring a local amenity used by residents into the ward.

19 We also received a borough-wide submission from a local resident, Mr Meacock. He argued that under the Commission's proposals major changes are being proposed for nine wards, whereas if a new ward were to be created for the hospital sites major changes would be required for only two wards. He suggested that all the hospital sites should initially form part of a revised Court ward represented by four councillors, with the number of councillors for the ward increasing to five in 2002. Once developed he argued the hospital sites could be separated to form their own ward. He agreed that Auriol ward should be represented by two councillors but argued that instead of transferring part of the ward to Stoneleigh ward, a larger area should be transferred to Ewell Court ward.

20 A local resident objected to our proposals, in particular to those for Auriol ward. He argued that by transferring the Stoneleigh Park Road area from Auriol ward to Stoneleigh ward we would breach the natural boundary of the railway line, and that a reduction to two councillors would increase the workload of councillors. He argued that incorporating the hospital sites in existing wards would combine what is "initially a green belt site" with established areas, and would lead to problems. He argued that a new ward should be established for the sites which would eventually be given three councillors.

21 Stoneleigh Residents' Association and a local resident opposed the transfer of the Stoneleigh Park Road area to Stoneleigh ward and reiterated the Borough Council's original proposals for the ward. They argued that the Stoneleigh Park Road area "is not a logical addition to Stoneleigh ward".

22 Councillor Hughes opposed the transfer of Stoneleigh Park Road to Stoneleigh ward as "unrealistic and ridiculous", and also opposed the transfer of part of Auriol ward to Ewell Court ward. County Councillor Shearly opposed the transfer of the Dirdene Gardens area from Town ward to Ewell ward.

5. ANALYSIS AND FINAL RECOMMENDATIONS

²³ As indicated previously, the Commission's prime objective in considering the most appropriate electoral arrangements for Epsom & Ewell is to achieve electoral equality, having regard to the statutory criteria set out in the Local Government Act 1992 and Schedule 11 to the Local Government Act 1972, which refers to the ratio of electors to councillors being "as nearly as may be, the same in every ward of the district or borough".

²⁴ However, our function is not merely arithmetical for three reasons. First, 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. Second, we must have regard to the desirability of fixing identifiable boundaries, and to maintaining local ties which might otherwise be broken. Third, we must consider the need to secure effective and convenient local government, and reflect the interests and identities of local communities.

²⁵ 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.

²⁶ 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 a minimum, such an objective should be the starting point in any review. We therefore strongly recommend that, in formulating electoral schemes, local authorities and other interested parties should start from the standpoint of absolute electoral equality and only then make adjustments to reflect relevant factors, such as community identity. Regard must also be had to five-year forecasts of change in electorates. We will require particular justification for schemes which result in, or retain, an imbalance of over 10 per cent in any ward. Any

imbalances of 20 per cent and over should arise only in the most exceptional of circumstances, and will require the strongest justification.

Electorate Projections

²⁷ During Stage One, the Borough Council submitted electorate forecasts for the period 1997 to 2002, projecting an increase in the electorate of over 2,500 (around 5 per cent) over the five-year period from 51,284 to 53,795. The Council estimated rates and locations of housing development with regard to structure and local plans, and the expected rate of building over the five-year period. Advice from the Borough Council on the likely effect on electorates of ward boundary changes has been obtained.

²⁸ This review has come at a time of considerable change for Epsom & Ewell Borough. Over the last two decades the electorate of the borough has fluctuated between around 49,500 and 52,000. Currently it stands at 51,284, only 2 per cent higher than 1975. The development of the Horton, Long Grove, Manor, St Ebba's and West Park hospital sites, however, is projected to provide an additional 1,800 electors by 2002. By the time development is completed on all five sites in around 2004, the Council estimates that there could be additional 2,500 electors. The Borough Council has been cautious about the pace of development on the basis that there have already been delays to the start of these developments; it has therefore modified the County Council's projections to prepare its own forecasts which it stated "have historically proved to be more accurate".

²⁹ At Stage Three, the Borough Council advised that the first hospital site (Manor) has been sold and work is in hand on the infrastructure. Detailed planning permission has been agreed for the site and there is only a very slight slippage from the timetable originally envisaged for the new development. As far as the other hospital sites are concerned, the Borough Council argued that there is no reason to suppose that the development schedule will be any

different from that originally envisaged. The Conservative Association and a local resident stated that, since the start of the review, planning permission had been granted for the Stoneleigh cinema site which would provide a further 80 electors by 2002. However, the Borough Council argued that the development is likely to increase the electorate of the relevant ward (Auriol) by 50. Its projected electorate figures have been modified accordingly.

30 We accept that forecasting electorates is an inexact science, and share the caution expressed by the Borough Council about the pace of any development of the hospital sites. We remain satisfied that the Council's projections with the minor modification outlined above, provide the best estimates presently available.

The Commission's Approach

31 In our draft recommendations report, we set out the considerations which had emerged during Stage One of the review which had informed our draft recommendations. During our Stage Three consultations, we received a number of further representations about how the present arrangements may be improved, including from the Borough Council, the Epsom & Ewell Conservative Association and residents' groups. We found these representations most helpful in formulating our final recommendations. In the light of this consultation, we have formulated our final recommendations. There are a number of issues.

32 First, the key issue in this review is the approach that should be taken to the five hospital sites in the west of the borough. As indicated earlier, while the electorate in the borough has increased by only 2 per cent since 1975, the development of the hospital sites is expected to increase the electorate by a further 5 per cent by 2002. As a result, under the current arrangements, the number of electors per councillor in Court ward would increase from 13 per cent above the borough average to 37 per cent.

33 There are two broad approaches of dealing with this development: either to designate the development area as a ward in its own right (proposed, among others, by the Conservative Association and the Ewell Village Residents' Association) or to divide the area between established wards and retain the predominantly three-member ward pattern in the borough (as preferred, among others, by the Borough Council and Liberal Democrat Group). A new ward would, in the Conservatives' view, obviate the need for some of the consequential changes elsewhere in the

borough. It would also reflect the distinct identity of the new development. There would, however, be some significant disadvantages:

- (a) There would inevitably be substantial electoral imbalance in the hospital sites' ward. The Conservatives proposal would result in an initial 42 per cent over-representation and 80 per cent under-representation by 2002. An alternative would be to allocate two members for such a ward. This would result initially in 70 per cent over-representation and 7 per cent under-representation by 2002. In either case, however, the ward would inevitably initially be substantially over-represented initially and, in the medium to long term, substantially under-represented. Retaining the sites in established wards enables the effect of the new development to be more evenly spread out across the borough.
- (b) The pace of the new development is inevitably uncertain. While the Borough Council substantially retains its view on electoral projections provided at the start of the review, the fact remains that only one of the five sites has so far been sold to developers and work has only just commenced. Establishing a new ward dependent upon such changes would therefore have an element of risk.
- (c) There would remain a degree of electoral inequality under the Conservatives' proposal. The number of electors per councillor would vary by 10 per cent or more from the borough average in three of the 14 wards.
- (d) A single-member ward for the hospital sites would not fit in with the established pattern of three-member wards in the borough.

34 In our draft recommendations we therefore largely adopted the Borough Council's proposed approach to retain the integrity of the present warding structure by assimilating the hospital sites into established wards and making consequential fine-tuning adjustments to ward boundaries elsewhere in the borough.

35 Second, we have found considerable consensus about council size. No representation has sought a radically different council size to the present 39 members. We agree with this assessment. In our draft recommendations we largely adopted the Borough Council's proposals. However, in relation to the northern area of the borough we recognised that the area covered by Auriol, Cuddington, Ewell Court and Stoneleigh wards was entitled to 11 councillors rather than 12. We therefore concluded that the statutory criteria and the achievement of

electoral equality would best be met by a reduction in the existing council size to 38 councillors. As discussed below, we have carefully considered the representations we have received in relation to our proposed boundary changes in this area (arising from the need to reduce the overall level of representation to 11 councillors), and have decided to make some modifications at final recommendations stage.

36 In relation to the council size, we also received representations which argue that an increase in the total number of councillors should automatically occur as development takes place. However, such “ratcheting” is precluded by the legislation governing this review.

37 Third, respondents asked that we take into account established communities. One way in which these are reflected at present is through residents’ associations. We recognise the important role that the associations play in Epsom & Ewell. However, in putting forward new ward boundaries, we cannot be constrained by the areas which they currently cover. We found the representation from the Standing Committee of Residents’ Associations at Stage One very helpful in this regard. While it requested that there be a conservative approach where residents’ associations are coterminous with wards, it noted that there is inevitably no complete coterminosity between communities and all residents’ associations at present. For example, residents in Auriol ward come under the auspices of the Stoneleigh and Ewell Court residents’ associations. We also understand that some associations change their boundaries so that they coincide with borough wards and they may well wish to consider this again in the light of the outcome of the present review.

38 Fourth, we have been gratified by the improvements to electoral equality which would arise under the main representations put to us. At present, five of the 13 wards have an electoral variance of 10 per cent or more from the average (and 10 would have 5 per cent or more). Under the Conservatives’ proposal, as indicated above, there would be three wards with an electoral variance of more than 10 per cent from the average (and 10 would have 5 per cent or more). Under the local resident Mr Meacock’s proposal there would be four wards with an electoral variance of more than 10 per cent from the average (and 10 would have 5 per cent or more). Under our final recommendations there would be no wards over 10 per cent and seven over 5 per cent.

39 We have given particular attention to the evidence provided by those respondents who proposed that

we should move away from our draft recommendations in particular locations, and have regard to the need for good boundaries and to reflect established communities. However, it is not always possible, across the borough as a whole, to establish a warding pattern which both meets the objectives of electoral equality and fully reflects local communities: communities do not come in uniform sizes.

Electoral Arrangements

40 Having considered all representations received during Stages One and Three of the review, we have further considered our draft recommendations. The following areas, based on existing wards, are considered in turn:

- (a) Cuddington, Auriol, Ewell Court and Stoneleigh wards;
- (b) Court, West Ewell and Ruxley wards;
- (c) Nonsuch and Ewell wards;
- (d) College and Woodcote wards;
- (e) Town ward;
- (f) Stamford ward.

Cuddington, Auriol, Ewell Court and Stoneleigh wards

41 The four wards of Cuddington, Auriol, Stoneleigh and Ewell Court cover the large area to the north of the borough between Kingston Upon Thames and Sutton boroughs. Three of the four wards are relatively over-represented – Auriol ward by 9 per cent (12 per cent by 2002), Stoneleigh ward by 10 per cent (14 per cent by 2002) and Ewell Court ward by 11 per cent (16 per cent by 2002) – while Cuddington ward is under-represented by 9 per cent (4 per cent by 2002).

42 At Stage One, the Borough Council argued that the four wards should be considered together, noting that they are all similar in character, and in order to improve electoral equality, proposed that the existing four wards should be modified. In relation to Stoneleigh ward, the Borough Council proposed that to improve electoral equality a small area should be transferred from Ewell and Nonsuch wards (1-38 Beaufort Way; Ivy Cottage, London Road and Bluegates) to Stoneleigh ward. On the basis of a council size of 39, the proposed Stoneleigh ward would have 7 per cent fewer electors per councillor than the borough average (11 per cent fewer than average by 2002). It proposed that an area around Worcester Park Road and Grafton Road (containing 269 electors) should

be transferred from Cuddington ward to Ewell Court ward and an area around Alsom Avenue (containing 228 electors) from Cuddington ward to Auriol ward. This proposal would have had the effect of reducing the current level of electoral imbalance in both Ewell Court and Auriol wards, but by 2002 increasing the level of electoral imbalance in Cuddington ward. Under a council size of 39, the proposed Cuddington, Ewell Court and Auriol wards would have 4 per cent, 5 per cent and 3 per cent fewer electors per councillor than the borough average respectively. However, by 2002, they would have 8 per cent, 9 per cent and 6 per cent fewer than the average respectively.

43 The Liberal Democrats supported the Borough Council's proposals in their entirety. Epsom & Ewell Conservative Association supported the Borough Council's proposed boundary amendment for Stoneleigh ward but opposed the proposal to transfer part of Cuddington ward to Ewell Court ward arguing that the A240 Kingston Road acts as a divide between the two areas. Councillor Shearly commented that the Council should consider reducing the number of wards for the area by one.

44 In our draft recommendations report we considered that the Borough Council's approach of considering the four wards of Auriol, Cuddington, Ewell Court and Stoneleigh together to be valid as they are similar in character. However, we were concerned that, as a whole, the area would remain over-represented. Currently, the four wards have a total electorate of 14,947, represented by 12 councillors. Therefore, the average number of electors per councillor in this area is currently 1,246 compared with the borough average of 1,315 (and 1,381 by 2002). The area is therefore over-represented as a whole and would be entitled to only 11 councillors by 2002, and we considered that its representation should be reduced accordingly. We noted that the Stoneleigh area straddles the Epsom to London Waterloo railway line and proposed that properties on Stoneleigh Park Road, Station Approach and part of Kingston Road containing a total of 268 electors be transferred from Auriol ward to Stoneleigh ward. We further proposed that the part of Auriol ward to the west of Timbercroft, containing 534 electors, be transferred to Ewell Court ward. The revised Auriol ward would be represented by two councillors and would have 4 per cent more electors per councillor than the borough average (1 per cent fewer than average by 2002). We also endorsed the Borough Council's proposal to transfer areas from Ewell and Nonsuch wards to

Stoneleigh ward. Under these proposals, Ewell Court and Stoneleigh wards would have equal to the average and 3 per cent fewer electors per councillor than the borough average respectively (5 per cent and 7 per cent fewer than average by 2002). Cuddington ward would remain unchanged, and would have 6 per cent more electors per councillor than the average currently (and 1 per cent more than the average by 2002).

45 At Stage Three, the Borough Council supported our draft recommendations with the exception of the proposed changes to Auriol ward. It opposed the reduction in councillors for the ward to two and the proposed transfer of part of Stoneleigh Park Road, Station Approach and part of Kingston Road from Auriol ward to Stoneleigh ward arguing that the railway line should continue to form the boundary between the two wards. Councillor Hughes also opposed our draft recommendation for Auriol ward. He argued that combining part of Auriol ward with Ewell Court ward would not reflect communities as it would combine areas divided by a dual carriageway. He also argued that transferring Stoneleigh Park Road area to Stoneleigh is "ridiculous".

46 Stoneleigh Residents' Association, also argued that the proposal to transfer the Stoneleigh Park Road area into Stoneleigh ward was unacceptable as the area is on the other side of the railway line and isolated from the rest of the ward. The Association reiterated its preference for the Borough Council's Stage One proposals. A local resident also opposed the change. He argued that while Stoneleigh Residents' Association covers Stoneleigh ward and part of Auriol ward the registration of members, collection of subscriptions and delivery of magazines is divided between separate officers for each ward. The resident supported our draft recommendation to include the Bluegates area in Stoneleigh ward.

47 At Stage Three, Epsom & Ewell Conservative Association did not oppose our draft recommendations for Ewell Downs, Auriol and Cuddington wards. In relation to the proposed Stoneleigh ward it argued that with planning permission granted for redeveloping the cinema site there would be an additional 80 electors in the ward by 2002. The Association argued that the Beaufort Way and Bluegates area should form part of Nonsuch ward rather than being transferred to Stoneleigh ward to obviate the need for further boundary changes in Nonsuch ward.

48 Local resident, Mr Meacock, agreed with our draft recommendation for a two-member Auriol ward but argued that a larger area should be transferred to Ewell Court ward instead of transferring the Stoneleigh Park Road area to Stoneleigh ward. In order to increase Nonsuch ward's electorate, he proposed that the Bluegates and Beaufort Way areas should not be transferred to Stoneleigh ward.

49 We have given further consideration to our proposals in the light of submissions made at Stage Three. We recognise that there is some opposition to the creation of a two-member ward. However, we continue to be of the view that, taking all four wards together, the area is over-represented and that this should be addressed as part of this review. We have decided to confirm our draft recommendation to transfer Beaufort Way and Bluegates from Ewell and Nonsuch wards to Stoneleigh ward. We consider these streets to be isolated from both Nonsuch ward and Ewell wards, and note that such a change enjoys a degree of local support. We recognise that since the commencement of this review, construction of new dwellings has commenced on the Stoneleigh Cinema site in Auriol ward. We have discussed this issue with the Borough Council and have amended our forecast electorate for that ward by an additional 50 electors by 2002.

50 In relation to the Stoneleigh Park Road area, we have carefully considered the responses received during Stage Three and note the opposition to our draft recommendation to transfer the Stoneleigh Park Road area to Stoneleigh ward. We are persuaded that people in this area have a greater sense of attachment to Auriol ward than Stoneleigh ward and that therefore such a change may not reflect community identities in the area. We are persuaded that to the people who live in this area, the Epsom to London Waterloo line is seen as a boundary between communities, and we note that there are limited crossing points between the two areas. We remain concerned, however, that if we were not to make this change both Auriol and Stoneleigh wards would have higher electoral variances. We have therefore given consideration to what alternative warding arrangements may be appropriate in this area. In this regard, we have found Mr Meacock's proposals of some merit. He argued that instead of transferring part of Auriol ward to Stoneleigh ward, a larger area should be transferred to Ewell Court ward. While we consider that the issue is finely balanced, we propose to modify our recommendations for this area. We consider that Chestnut Avenue is a self contained area that forms part of Ewell Court Residents' Association and that it (in addition to the area to the

west of Timbercroft) should be added to Ewell Court ward. This change would transfer an additional 131 electors to Ewell Court ward. We have decided not to propose any further boundary changes to Stoneleigh ward. This ward is bounded by the borough boundary to its north, Nonsuch Park to its east and Ewell Village to its south, and therefore in order to respect community ties, we have reluctantly accepted a degree of electoral inequality in this case.

51 Accordingly, having given further consideration to the warding arrangements for this area, we have decided to make some modifications to the draft recommendations for Auriol and Stoneleigh wards as outlined above. The resultant Auriol, Ewell Court and Cuddington wards would have 9 per cent, 3 per cent and 6 per cent more electors per councillor than the borough average respectively (4 per cent fewer, 2 per cent fewer and 1 per cent more than average by 2002), and Stoneleigh ward would have 9 per cent fewer electors per councillor than the borough average (14 per cent fewer by 2002). This proposal is detailed in Figures 1 and 4 and illustrated in the large map at the back of the report.

Court, West Ewell and Ruxley wards

52 The three wards of Court, West Ewell and Ruxley cover the large area in the west of the borough adjoining Kingston-upon-Thames borough. Currently, Court and West Ewell wards have 13 per cent and 3 per cent more electors per councillor than the borough average respectively, while Ruxley ward has 7 per cent fewer than average. While the level of inequality is expected to remain relatively stable in West Ewell and Ruxley wards, the development of the hospital sites in Court ward is forecast to increase the number of electors per councillor to 37 per cent more than average by 2002.

53 At Stage One, in order to secure a better level of electoral equality, the Borough Council proposed changes to all three wards. It proposed that Ruxley ward be expanded to include the site of Long Grove Hospital and Horton Country Park, which would extend the ward's southern boundary to the edge of the current Stamford ward. The Council stated that planning permission has been awarded for the Long Grove Hospital site, and forecast that some 700 electors will occupy the area by 2002. The Council also proposed the transfer of 142 electors (374-442 Chessington Road, Chessington Close and Poplar Farm Close) from Ruxley ward to the adjacent West Ewell ward, 277 electors (Gibraltar Crescent, Dee Way and Marsh Avenue) from Court ward to Ewell ward, and 491 electors

in Hook Road south of Pond Lane from Court ward to Town ward. The Council further suggested realigning the ward boundary between Court and West Ewell wards to make it more readily identifiable. The Liberal Democrat Group supported the Borough Council's proposals.

54 The Conservative Association supported the Borough Council's proposal to transfer the area around Gibraltar Crescent from Court ward to Ewell ward, but opposed the division of the hospital sites. It argued that a new single-member ward should be created to cover the hospital sites. It noted that initially the ward would be over-represented but argued that by 2002 it would have sufficient electorate to warrant a single-member ward. Ewell Village Residents' Association and Councillor Shearly also supported retaining the hospital sites in one ward.

55 In our draft recommendations, we recognised the merit of both approaches in this area. While the Conservatives' proposed ward for the hospital sites would provide the area with a common focus, it failed to achieve good electoral equality. We considered that since the pace of development is difficult to predict with certainty, we could not adopt this approach. We therefore adopted the Borough Council's approach of dividing the new developments between established wards.

56 In our draft recommendations we endorsed the Borough Council's proposal to include the Long Grove Hospital site in Ruxley ward. However, we considered that the transfer of 142 electors in Chessington Road, Chessington Close and Poplar Farm Close from Ruxley ward to the adjacent West Ewell ward would provide a less clear boundary for the ward, and therefore decided not to propose such a change. We endorsed the Borough Council's proposal for a revised Court ward, but proposed that the area around Gibraltar Crescent area should be transferred to West Ewell ward rather than Ewell ward as the adjacent area to its north already forms part of the ward.

57 At Stage Three, our draft recommendations drew the support of the Borough Council. The Conservative Association submitted a revised version of its Stage One proposal for a new Manor ward encompassing the hospital sites. The proposed ward would encompass three hospital sites (Long Grove, Horton and Manor) together with an established part of Court ward – the Brettgrave and Horton Hill areas. The Association argued that, as the hospital sites developed, this

arrangement could be reconsidered. This new ward would have 764 electors on the basis of the 1997 register, rising to 2,497 by 2002. The Association argued that creating such a ward would obviate the need for many other boundary amendments throughout the remainder of the borough.

58 Ewell Village Residents' Association argued that a new ward should be created for the hospital sites together with an unspecified part of Court ward. It argued that such a proposal would obviate the need to transfer the Hook Road area to Town ward, retaining the oldest established part of the ward intact. Councillors Shearly and Arthur and a local resident argued there is a case for creating a new ward for the hospital sites, the resident arguing that over time this could increase to three members. Mr Meacock argued that all the hospital sites should be placed in Court ward, and additional members given to that ward, before later forming a separate ward.

59 We gave further consideration to the most appropriate warding arrangements for this area at Stage Three. It is clear that many submissions favoured creating a new ward for the hospital sites as opposed to dividing sites between established wards. The advantage of this approach is that it would obviate the need for some of the consequential changes in the remainder of the borough. We note, however, that it would have some significant disadvantages. There would inevitably be a substantial electoral imbalance, in the Conservatives' proposed ward, an initial 42 per cent over-representation is projected to lead to 80 per cent under-representation by 2002. An alternative would be to allocate two members for such a new ward. In either case, however, the ward would inevitably initially be substantially over-represented and, in the medium to long term, substantially under-represented. The pace of the new development is uncertain and while the Borough Council substantially retains its view on electoral projections provided at the start of the review, the fact remains that only one of the five sites has so far been sold to developers and work has yet to start anywhere else. A number of submissions suggest interim solutions that could be further revised at a later date. However, we are unable to put forward such an approach. The lack of certainty over development suggests to us that this issue would be better resolved at a future periodic electoral review. We therefore reiterate the arguments that we put forward in our draft recommendations in respect to this area and note that retaining the sites in established wards enables the effect of the new development to be more spread out.

60 Accordingly, having given careful consideration to the warding arrangements for the area, we remain satisfied that our draft recommendations strike the best balance between securing electoral equality and the statutory criteria; and have decided to confirm them as final. Under these proposals, Court, Ruxley and West Ewell ward would initially have 6 per cent fewer, 7 per cent fewer and 2 per cent more electors per councillor than the borough average respectively (3 per cent more, 9 per cent more and 3 per cent fewer by 2002). This proposal is detailed in Figures 1 and 4 and illustrated in the large map at the back of the report.

Nonsuch and Ewell wards

61 Nonsuch ward is located in the east of the borough adjoining the London Borough of Sutton and the Borough of Reigate & Banstead. Nonsuch Park and the Priest Hill playing fields lie in the north and south of the ward, with most electors located on roads off Cheam Road. Ewell ward in the centre of the borough is densely populated in the north, while south of the Epsom to London Victoria railway line the area has more open space. Both wards have a relatively high level of electoral inequality, with Nonsuch ward having 15 per cent fewer electors per councillor than the borough average while Ewell ward has 11 per cent more electors per councillor than the borough average (12 per cent fewer and 6 per cent more by 2002).

62 At Stage One, the Borough Council proposed transferring the Ewell Downs area (to the south of the Epsom to London railway line) from Ewell ward to Nonsuch ward. It argued that this part of Ewell ward, like Nonsuch ward, is characterised by a generous area of open space. It further argued that the ties between Ewell Downs and Ewell Village “are weakened by the railway line and, to a lesser extent, by the Ewell by-pass”. As discussed above, the Borough Council also proposed transferring 26 electors from the northern part of Nonsuch ward to the adjacent Stoneleigh ward, and eight electors from College ward to Nonsuch ward in order to create a more readily identifiable ward boundary. The Liberal Democrat Group supported these proposals.

63 At Stage One, the Conservative Association, Ewell Village Residents’ Association, the Association of Ewell Downs Residents and a local resident opposed the Borough Council’s proposal. The Conservative Association argued that any increase in electorate for Nonsuch ward would create difficulties as “the area is awkward geographically and many of the residents have

affinities with Cheam”. It considered that the Ewell Downs area has traditionally had close links with Ewell Village and does not share an affinity with Nonsuch ward. In addition, it argued that the two areas are separated by a major road (A240), playing fields and land occupied by the North East Surrey College of Technology.

64 The Borough Council also proposed transferring 600 electors in the Farriers Road and Kiln Lane area from Town ward to Ewell ward, that the area around Gibraltar Crescent be transferred from Court ward to Ewell ward, and that the Bluegates area be transferred from Ewell ward to Stoneleigh ward as discussed above. The Liberal Democrats supported these proposals.

65 The Conservative Association, Ewell Village Residents’ Association and the Standing Committee of Residents’ Associations opposed the Borough Council’s proposals. The Ewell Village Residents’ Association argued that Town and Ewell wards share no affinity, and that the Borough Council’s proposal would breach the historic boundary between Ewell and Epsom at Windmill Lane. Town Ward Residents’ Association in its submission to the Borough Council argued that the Dirdene Gardens area could be transferred to Ewell ward.

66 At draft recommendation stage, we recognised the concerns expressed over the proposed transfer of the Ewell Downs area to Nonsuch ward. However, we noted that Nonsuch ward currently has 15 per cent fewer electors per councillor than the borough average and considered that this level of inequality should be addressed. Its physical separation from Stoneleigh ward and difference in character from Ewell Village suggested that the most appropriate way to expand the ward is to its west. We considered that Ewell Downs is a discrete community separate from Ewell Village, and its transfer to Nonsuch ward would significantly improve electoral equality. To improve the ward boundary we also proposed to transfer an area to the east of the Reigate Road and north of the Epsom to London Victoria railway line to Nonsuch ward. We therefore decided to endorse the Borough Council’s proposals in this area.

67 In our draft recommendations report we noted that by transferring some 850 electors from Ewell ward to Nonsuch ward, Ewell ward would have some 13 per cent fewer electors per councillor than the borough average. We therefore concurred with the Borough Council that in order to reduce this inequality, part of Town ward should be added to Ewell ward. However, upon inspection, we considered that the transfer of the area to the north

of East Street did not best reflect community ties. We considered, a more appropriate transfer would be to transfer the area south of East Street and east of Church Lane to Ewell ward as suggested by Town Residents' Association in its submission to the Borough Council.

68 As discussed above, we did not endorse the Borough Council's proposal to transfer the Gibraltar Crescent area to Ewell ward, instead transferring the area to West Ewell ward. We did however, endorse the Borough Council's proposal to transfer the Bluegates area to Stoneleigh ward as we considered that the proposal would provide a clearer, more identifiable boundary for both wards.

69 At Stage Three, the Borough Council and Howell Hill Residents' Association (one of two residents' associations for the existing Nonsuch ward) supported our draft recommendations. The Conservative Association, Ewell Village Residents' Association, The Association of Ewell Downs Residents and a local resident opposed the transfer of the Ewell Downs area from Ewell ward to Nonsuch ward. The Conservative Association proposed retaining the current ward boundaries for both Ewell and Nonsuch wards with the exception of transferring 54 electors from Reigate Road to Nonsuch ward (currently in Ewell ward).

70 As outlined above, we have not proposed a single-member ward for the hospital sites, and as a result the Conservatives' proposals fail to adequately address the need for electoral equality. We remain of the view that despite local objections the level of inequality in Nonsuch ward should be addressed, and that the transfer of the Ewell Downs area is the most appropriate method of achieving this. Similarly, we are concerned that the consequential boundary change between Town and Ewell wards should also be undertaken. While we recognise that this proposal disrupts the traditional boundary between Epsom and Ewell we consider that it is the best option available at this time.

71 Accordingly, having given further consideration to the warding arrangements for the area, we remain satisfied that our draft recommendations appear to strike the best balance between securing electoral equality and the statutory criteria. The revised Nonsuch and Ewell wards would have 3 per cent more and 2 per cent fewer electors per councillor than the borough average (5 per cent more and 7 per cent fewer than average by 2002). We have therefore decided to confirm our draft recommendations as final. These proposals are detailed in Figures 1 and 4, and illustrated on the large map at the back of the report.

College and Woodcote wards

72 College ward is in the south-east of the borough, bordering Reigate & Banstead borough. Woodcote ward is the most southerly of the borough's wards, and borders Mole Valley district. It is geographically large, but only a quarter of the land is developed as the ward is home to Epsom Racecourse, a golf course, fields, common land and racing stables. The current wards of College and Woodcote have 10 per cent more and 4 per cent fewer electors per councillor than the borough average respectively (5 per cent more and 5 per cent fewer than average respectively by 2002).

73 At Stage One, the Borough Council proposed relatively few changes to either ward. It did propose some changes, however, in order to produce clearer boundaries for the wards. In particular, from College ward, it proposed to transfer Wyeth Mews to Town ward, part of Ashley Road to Woodcote ward and part of Longdown Road North to Nonsuch ward. In relation to Woodcote ward, in addition to the change outlined above, it proposed to redraw the boundaries with Town ward in order to unite the whole of the convent site in Woodcote ward and to transfer a small area of land to Stamford ward in order to unite Wells Road within one ward. The Liberal Democrats supported the Borough Council's proposals. No other representations were received.

74 As part of our draft recommendations, we noted that the Borough Council's proposals achieve a better level of electoral equality than existing arrangements and provide clearer boundaries for the two wards. We therefore decided to put them forward as our draft recommendations.

75 At Stage Three, the Borough Council supported our draft recommendations. While the Woodcote (Epsom) Residents' Society welcomed the recommendations, it proposed that Rosebery Park, a further part of Ashley Road and Ladbrooke Road be transferred from Town ward to Woodcote ward arguing that this "as well as slightly improving electoral equality, would make a lot of sense on the ground and avoid future anomaly".

76 We consider that the proposed transfer would involve only 21 electors, provide a stronger ward boundary between the two wards, and provide better electoral equality. Having given careful consideration to representations received at Stage Three, we have decided to confirm our draft recommendations as final, subject this minor modification. Under these proposals, Woodcote and College wards would have 1 per cent fewer and

6 per cent more electors per councillor than the borough average respectively (2 per cent fewer and 1 per cent more by 2002). We consider that these proposals would strike the best balance between electoral equality and the statutory criteria in this area. Our final recommendations are detailed in Figures 1 and 4 and illustrated on the large map at the back of the report.

Town ward

77 Town ward is a compact area focused on Epsom Town Centre and is bisected by the A24 and the Epsom to London Waterloo and Epsom to London Victoria railway lines. The electorate of Town ward has recently increased with the construction of housing in the Farriers Road and Kiln Lane area, and it is continuing to grow as this development matures. The ward currently has 13 per cent more electors per councillor than the borough average (10 per cent by 2002).

78 As outlined above, as part of our draft recommendations we endorsed the Borough Council's proposals for modifications between Town ward and Woodcote, Court and College wards. However, we considered that the Dirdene Gardens estate should be transferred to Ewell ward rather than the Farriers Road and Kiln Lane area.

79 At Stage Three, the Borough Council did not oppose our draft recommendations. The Conservative Association argued that there should be no change between Town ward and Court ward or Town ward and Ewell ward. Ewell Village Residents' Association continued to argue that the Epsom and Ewell communities are distinct, and should be separately represented. County Councillor Shearly also opposed the transfer of the Dirdene Gardens area from Town ward to Ewell ward, endorsing the Conservative Association's proposal for a single-member hospital ward.

80 We consider that we should endorse our draft recommendations in this area. While the Conservatives have attempted to largely retain current arrangements, this is again reliant on providing separate representation for the hospital sites, which we consider is not viable in electoral equality terms. Otherwise, we have decided to make one minor amendment to the ward's boundary with Woodcote ward as outlined above. Our final recommendation would provide an improved level of electoral equality, with Town ward having 3 per cent more electors per councillor than the borough average (1 per cent by 2002).

Stamford ward

81 The current Stamford ward is the westernmost of all the borough's wards, bordering Kingston upon Thames and Mole Valley district. The ward shares boundaries with Woodcote, Court and Town wards and contains the extensive Epsom Common, the Manor and West Park Hospital sites, and a densely populated area nearer the centre of Epsom. It currently has 1 per cent fewer electors per councillor than the borough average. However, with the development of the Manor Hospital site imminent, by 2002 it is projected to contain 8 per cent more electors per councillor than the borough average.

82 At Stage One, the Borough Council proposed that a small area to the north of Dorking Road should be transferred from Woodcote ward to Stamford ward in order to unite Wells Road within one ward. It argued that the development of the Manor Hospital site could be absorbed into the current ward. The Liberal Democrat Group supported the Borough Council's proposal. The Conservatives argued that the ward should remain unchanged except that a new single-member ward should be created to cover the hospital sites. Ewell Village Residents' Association also supported retaining the hospital sites in one ward, while Councillor Shearly suggested in his submission to the Borough Council, that additional representation could be afforded to the hospital sites.

83 In our draft recommendations we endorsed the Borough Council's proposals as we considered that in Stamford ward there would be minimal change and, with the reduction in council size to 38, a reasonable level of electoral equality is achieved both in 1997 and 2002. Stamford ward would have 4 per cent fewer electors per councillor currently, but 5 per cent more than average by 2002. We therefore put the Borough Council's proposals forward as our draft recommendation for this area.

84 At Stage Three, the Borough Council supported our draft recommendations. As discussed earlier, the Conservative Association proposed creating a single-member ward covering the hospital sites. Having given further consideration to the warding arrangements for the area, we remain satisfied that our draft recommendations would strike the best balance between securing electoral equality and the statutory criteria. This proposal is detailed in Figures 1 and 4 and illustrated on the large map at the back of the report.

Electoral Cycle

85 In our draft recommendations report, we proposed that the present system of whole council elections in Epsom & Ewell be retained. No contrary representations were received on this issue, and we have therefore decided to confirm our draft recommendation as final.

Conclusions

86 Having considered carefully all the evidence and representations received in response to our consultation report, we have concluded that:

- (a) there should be a decrease in council size from 39 to 38;
- (b) there should continue to be 13 wards;
- (c) the boundaries of 12 of the existing wards should be modified;
- (d) elections should continue to take place every four years.

87 We have decided substantially to endorse our draft recommendations, subject to the amendments indicated in the following areas:

- (a) the boundary between Town and Woodcote wards should be realigned so that Rosebery Park and properties on Ashley Road and Ladbroke Road should form part of Woodcote ward;

- (b) the boundary between Ewell Court and Auriol wards should be realigned so that Chestnut Avenue forms part of a revised Ewell Court ward;
- (c) the boundary between Auriol and Stoneleigh wards should remain the Epsom to London Waterloo railway line.

88 Figure 3 shows the impact of our final recommendations on electoral equality, comparing them with the current arrangements, based on 1997 and 2002 electorate figures.

89 As Figure 3 shows, our recommendations would reduce the number of wards with electoral variances of more than 10 per cent from the borough average from five to none, with only one ward varying by more than 10 per cent by 2002. Under these proposals, the average number of electors per councillor would increase from 1,315 to 1,350. We conclude that our recommendations would best meet the need for electoral equality, having regard to the statutory criteria.

Final Recommendation

Epsom & Ewell Borough Council should comprise 38 councillors serving 13 wards, as detailed and named in Figures 1 and 4, and illustrated in Map 2 and Appendix A to this report. The Council should continue to hold elections every four years.

*Figure 3:
Comparison of Current and Recommended Electoral Arrangements*

	1997 electorate		2002 projected electorate	
	Current arrangements	Final recommendations	Current arrangements	Final recommendations
Number of councillors	39	38	39	38
Number of wards	13	13	13	13
Average number of electors per councillor	1,315	1,350	1,381	1,417
Number of wards with a variance more than 10 per cent from the average	5	0	5	1
Number of wards with a variance more than 20 per cent from the average	0	0	1	0

Map 2:
The Commission's Final Recommendations for Epsom & Ewell

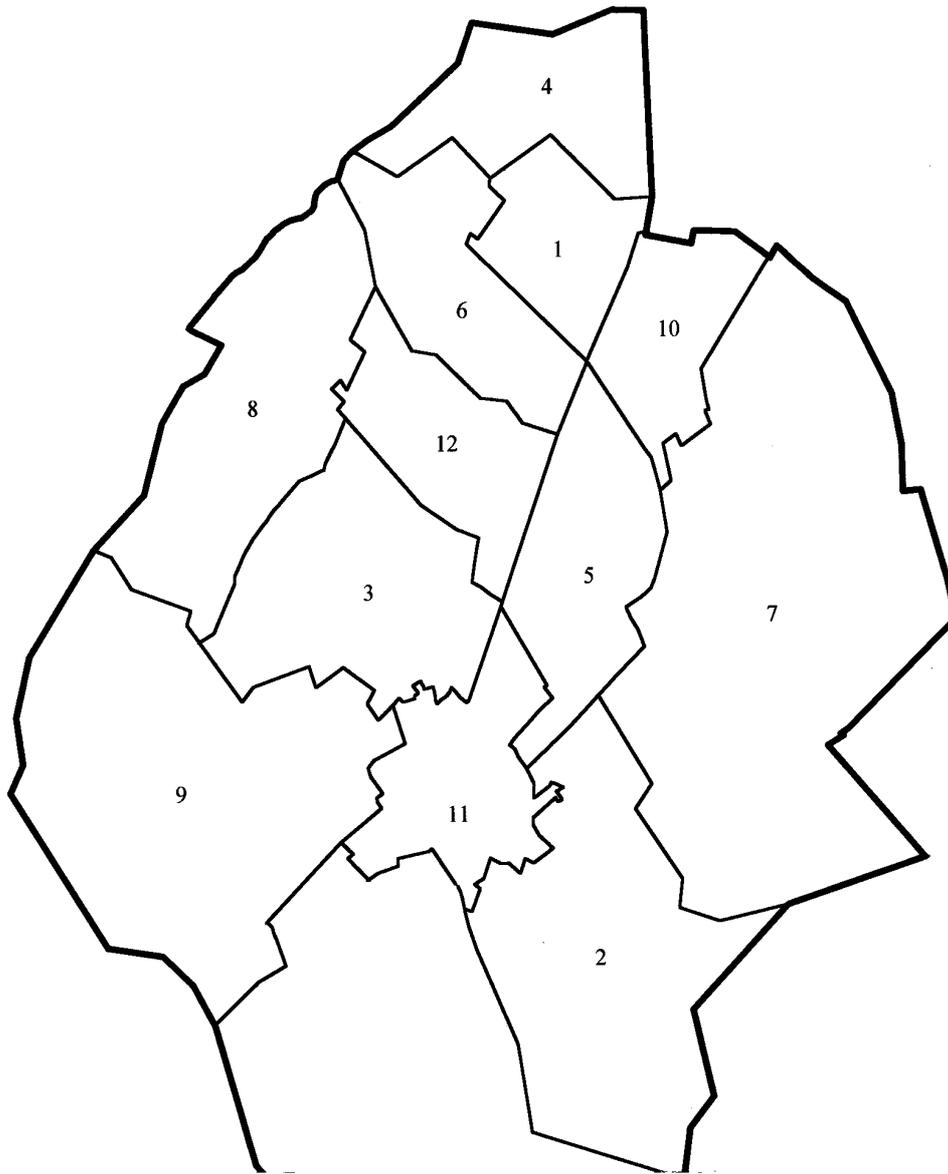


Figure 4:
The Commission's Final Recommendations for Epsom & Ewell

Ward name	Number of councillors	Electorate (1997)	Number of electors per councillor	Variance from average %	Electorate (2002)	Number of electors per councillor	Variance from average %
1 Auriol	2	2,937	1,469	9	2,987	1,494	5
2 College	3	4,311	1,437	6	4,311	1,437	1
3 Court	3	3,700	1,233	-9	4,247	1,416	0
4 Cuddington	3	4,302	1,434	6	4,302	1,434	1
5 Ewell	3	3,953	1,318	-2	3,953	1,318	-7
6 Ewell Court	3	4,167	1,389	3	4,167	1,389	-2
7 Nonsuch	3	4,173	1,391	3	4,458	1,486	5
8 Ruxley	3	3,662	1,221	-10	4,506	1,502	6
9 Stamford	3	3,889	1,296	-4	4,454	1,485	5
10 Stoneleigh	3	3,676	1,225	-9	3,676	1,225	-14
11 Town	3	4,189	1,396	3	4,299	1,433	1
12 West Ewell	3	4,301	1,434	6	4,301	1,434	1
13 Woodcote	3	4,024	1,341	-1	4,184	1,395	-2
Totals	38	51,284	—	—	53,845	—	—
Averages	—	—	1,350	—	—	1,417	—

Source: Electorate figures are based on Epsom & Ewell Borough Council's submission.

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

2 Since the publication of the draft recommendations report, following advice from the Borough Council, the projected electorate for Auriol ward has been increased by 50 to reflect the development of the former Cinema site.

6. NEXT STEPS

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

91 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.

92 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 Review
Eland House
Bressenden Place
London SW1E 5DU

APPENDIX A

Final Recommendations for Epsom & Ewell: Detailed Mapping

The **large map** inserted in the back of the report illustrates the Commission's proposed warding arrangements for Epsom & Ewell Borough.

APPENDIX B

Draft Recommendations for Epsom & Ewell

*Figure B1:
The Commission's Draft Recommendations: Constituent Areas*

Ward name	Constituent areas
1 Auriol	Auriol ward (part)
2 College	College ward (part)
3 Court	Court ward (part); West Ewell ward (part)
4 Cuddington	<i>Unchanged</i>
5 Ewell	Ewell ward (part); Town ward (part)
6 Ewell Court	Ewell Court ward; Auriol ward (part)
7 Nonsuch	Nonsuch ward (part); Ewell ward (part)
8 Ruxley	Ruxley ward; Court ward (part)
9 Stamford	Stamford ward; Woodcote ward (part)
10 Stoneleigh	Stoneleigh ward; Nonsuch ward (part); Ewell ward (part); Auriol ward (part)
11 Town	Town ward (part); College ward (part)
12 West Ewell	West Ewell ward (part); Court ward (part)
13 Woodcote	Woodcote ward (part); Town ward (part); College ward (part)

Figure B2:
The Commission's Draft Recommendations for Epsom & Ewell

Ward name	Number of councillors	Electorate (1997)	Number of electors per councillor	Variance from average %	Electorate (2002)	Number of electors per councillor	Variance from average %
1 Auriol	2	2,800	1,400	4	2,800	1,400	-1
2 College	3	4,311	1,437	6	4,311	1,437	2
3 Court	3	3,700	1,233	-9	4,247	1,416	0
4 Cuddington	3	4,302	1,434	6	4,302	1,434	1
5 Ewell	3	3,953	1,318	-2	3,953	1,318	-7
6 Ewell Court	3	4,036	1,345	0	4,036	1,345	-5
7 Nonsuch	3	4,173	1,391	3	4,458	1,486	5
8 Ruxley	3	3,662	1,221	-10	4,506	1,502	6
9 Stamford	3	3,889	1,296	-4	4,454	1,485	5
10 Stoneleigh	3	3,944	1,315	-3	3,944	1,315	-7
11 Town	3	4,210	1,403	4	4,320	1,440	2
12 West Ewell	3	4,301	1,434	6	4,301	1,434	1
13 Woodcote	3	4,003	1,334	-1	4,163	1,388	-2
Totals	38	51,284	—	—	53,795	—	—
Averages	—	—	1,350	—	—	1,416	—

Source: Electorate figures are based on Epsom & Ewell Borough Council's submission.

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

2 Since the publication of the draft recommendations report, following advice from the Borough Council, the projected electorate for Auriol ward has been increased by 50 to reflect the development of the former Cinema site. The electorate figures in this table continue to reflect those published in the draft recommendations report.