

Final recommendations on the
future electoral arrangements
for Brentwood in Essex

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

November 2000

LOCAL GOVERNMENT COMMISSION FOR ENGLAND

This report sets out the Commission's final recommendations on the electoral arrangements for the borough of Brentwood in Essex.

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Report no: 205

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



Local Government Commission for England

28 November 2000

Dear Secretary of State

On 30 November 1999 the Commission began a periodic electoral review of Brentwood under the Local Government Act 1992. We published our draft recommendations in June 2000 and undertook an 11 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 92–93) in the light of further evidence. This report sets out our final recommendations for changes to electoral arrangements in Brentwood.

We recommend that Brentwood Borough Council should be served by 37 councillors representing 15 wards, and that changes should be made to ward boundaries in order to improve electoral equality, having regard to the statutory criteria. We recommend that the Council should continue to hold elections by thirds.

The Local Government Act 2000, contains provisions relating to changes to local authority electoral arrangements. However, until such time as orders are made implementing those arrangements 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 Brentwood on 30 November 1999. We published our draft recommendations for electoral arrangements on 20 June 2000, after which we undertook an 11 week period of consultation.

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

We found that the existing electoral arrangements provide unequal representation of electors in Brentwood:

- **In 12 of the 17 wards the number of electors represented by each councillor varies by more than 10 per cent from the average for the borough, and six wards vary by more than 20 per cent from the average.**
- **By 2004 electoral equality is not expected to improve, with the number of electors per councillor forecast to vary by more than 10 per cent from the average in 14 wards and by more than 20 per cent in six wards.**

Our main final recommendations for future electoral arrangements (Figures 1 and 2 and paragraphs (92–93) are that:

- **Brentwood Borough Council should have 37 councillors, two fewer than at present;**
- **there should be 15 wards, instead of 17 as at present;**
- **the boundaries of all the wards should be modified;**
- **elections should continue to take place by thirds.**

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 13 of the proposed 15 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 all 15 wards expected to vary by less than 10 per cent from the average for the borough by 2004.**

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 9 January 2001:

**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	Map reference
1 Blackmore & Stondon Massey	2	Blackmore ward (Blackmore ward of Blackmore, Hook End & Wyatts Green parish); Hook End & Wyatts Green ward (Hook End & Wyatts Green ward of Blackmore, Hook End & Wyatts Green parish); Brizes & Doddinghurst ward (part – Stondon Massey parish)	Map 2
2 Brentwood North	3	Brentwood North ward; Shenfield ward (part)	Maps 2, A3 and A7
3 Brentwood South	3	Brentwood South ward (part); Herongate & Ingrave ward (part)	Maps 2, A2, A3 and A7
4 Brentwood West	3	Brentwood West ward; Warley ward (part)	Maps 2 and A3
5 Brizes & Doddinghurst	3	Brizes & Doddinghurst ward (part – Doddinghurst, Kelvedon Hatch and Navestock parishes)	Maps 2 and A4
6 Herongate, Ingrave & West Horndon	2	Herongate & Ingrave ward (part); Hutton South ward (part); West Horndon ward; Warley ward (part)	Large map, Maps 2, A2 and A5
7 Hutton Central	2	Hutton South ward (part); Hutton East ward (part); Hutton North ward (part)	Large map and Map 2
8 Hutton East	2	Hutton East ward (part)	Large map, Maps 2 and A6
9 Hutton North	2	Hutton North ward (part)	Large map, Maps 2 and A6
10 Hutton South	2	Hutton South ward (part)	Large map and Map 2
11 Ingatestone, Fryerning & Mountnessing	3	Ingatestone & Fryerning ward (Ingatestone & Fryerning parish); Mountnessing ward (Mountnessing parish); Hutton East ward (part); Shenfield ward (part)	Maps 2 and A6
12 Pilgrims Hatch	3	Pilgrims Hatch ward (part)	Maps 2 and A4
13 Shenfield	3	Shenfield ward (part)	Maps 2, A6 and A7
14 South Weald	1	South Weald ward; Pilgrims Hatch ward (part)	Maps 2, A3 and A4
15 Warley	3	Brentwood South ward (part); Warley ward (part)	Maps 2, A2, A3 and A5

Notes: 1 The southern part of the borough, including the Brentwood and Hutton areas, is unparished and comprises 12 wards.

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

Figure 2: The Commission's Final Recommendations for Brentwood

	Ward name	Number of councillors	Electorate (1999)	Number of electors per councillor	Variance from average %	Electorate (2004)	Number of electors per councillor	Variance from average %
1	Blackmore & Stondon Massey	2	3,076	1,538	4	3,093	1,547	3
2	Brentwood North	3	4,654	1,551	5	4,796	1,599	7
3	Brentwood South	3	3,980	1,326	-10	4,096	1,365	-9
4	Brentwood West	3	3,856	1,285	-13	4,286	1,429	-5
5	Brizes & Doddinghurst	3	4,715	1,572	7	4,739	1,580	5
6	Herongate, Ingrave & West Horndon	2	2,875	1,438	-3	2,897	1,449	-3
7	Hutton Central	2	2,927	1,464	-1	2,940	1,470	-2
8	Hutton East	2	2,747	1,374	-7	2,754	1,377	-8
9	Hutton North	2	3,278	1,639	11	3,280	1,640	9
10	Hutton South	2	3,062	1,531	4	3,082	1,541	3
11	Ingatestone, Fryerning & Mountnessing	3	4,691	1,564	6	4,714	1,571	5
12	Pilgrims Hatch	3	4,674	1,558	6	4,689	1,563	4
13	Shenfield	3	4,193	1,398	-5	4,208	1,403	-6
14	South Weald	1	1,475	1,475	0	1,484	1,484	-1
15	Warley	3	4,354	1,451	-2	4,389	1,463	-2
	Totals	37	54,557	-	-	55,447	-	-
	Averages	-	-	1,475	-	-	1,499	-

Source: Electorate figures are based on Brentwood Borough Council's submission.

Note: The 'variance from average' column shows by how far, in percentage terms, the number of electors per councillor varies from the average for the 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 borough of Brentwood in Essex. We have now reviewed the 12 two-tier districts in Essex as part of our programme of periodic electoral reviews (PERs) of all 386 principal local authority areas in England. Our programme started in 1996 and is currently expected to be completed by 2004.

2 This was our first review of the electoral arrangements of Brentwood. The last such review was undertaken by our predecessor, the Local Government Boundary Commission (LGBC), which reported to the Secretary of State in September 1975 (Report No. 44). The electoral arrangements of Essex County Council were last reviewed in November 1980 (Report No. 401). We completed a directed electoral review of Thurrock in 1996 and a periodic electoral review of Southend-on-Sea in 1999. We expect to undertake a periodic electoral review of Thurrock commencing this year and a review of the County Council's electoral arrangements in 2002.

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

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

4 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. We can also make recommendations on the electoral arrangements for parish councils in the borough.

5 We have also had regard to our *Guidance and Procedural Advice for Local Authorities and Other Interested Parties* (third edition published in October 1999), which sets out our approach to the reviews.

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

7 The broad objective of PERs is to achieve, so far as practicable, equality of representation across the district as a whole. Our aim is to achieve as low a level of electoral imbalance as is practicable, having regard to our statutory criteria. We will require particular justification for schemes which would result in, or retain, an electoral imbalance of over 10 per cent in any ward.

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

8 We are not prescriptive on council size. We start from the general assumption that the existing council size already secures effective and convenient local government in that district but we are willing to look carefully at arguments why this might not be so. However, we have found it necessary to safeguard against upward drift in the number of councillors, and we believe that any proposal for an increase in council size will need to be fully justified; in particular, we do not accept that an increase in a district's electorate should automatically result in an increase in the number of councillors, or that changes should be made to the size of a district council simply to make it more consistent with the size of other districts.

9 In July 1998 the Government published a White Paper, *Modern Local Government – In Touch with the People*, which set out legislative proposals for local authority electoral arrangements. In two-tier areas, it proposed introducing a pattern in which both the district and county councils would hold elections every two years, i.e. in year one half of the district council would be elected, in year two half the county council would be elected, and so on. The Government stated that local accountability would be maximised where every elector has an opportunity to vote every year, thereby pointing to a pattern of two-member wards (and divisions) in two-tier areas. However, it stated that there was no intention to move towards very large electoral areas in sparsely populated rural areas, and that single-member wards (and electoral divisions) would continue in many authorities.

10 Following publication of the White Paper, we advised all authorities in our 1999/00 PER programme, including the Essex districts, that the Commission would continue to maintain its current approach to PERs as set out in the October 1999 *Guidance*. Nevertheless, we considered that local authorities and other interested parties might wish to have regard to the Secretary of State's intentions and legislative proposals in formulating electoral schemes as part of PERs of their areas. The proposals have been taken forward in the Local Government Act 2000 which, among other matters, provides that the Secretary of State may make orders to change authorities' electoral cycles. However, until such time as the Secretary of State makes any orders under the 2000 Act we will continue to operate on the basis of existing legislation, which provides for elections by thirds or whole-council elections in the two-tier district areas, and our current *Guidance*.

11 This review was in four stages. Stage One began on 30 November 1999, when we wrote to Brentwood Borough Council inviting proposals for future electoral arrangements. We also notified Essex County Council, Essex Police Authority, the local authority associations, Essex Local Councils' Association, parish councils in the borough, the Members of Parliament with constituency interests in the borough, the Members of the European Parliament for the Eastern Region, and the headquarters of the main political parties. We placed a notice in the local press, issued a press release and invited the Borough Council to publicise the review further. The closing date for receipt of representations, the end of Stage One, was 28 February 2000. At Stage Two we considered all the representations received during Stage One and prepared our draft recommendations.

12 Stage Three began on 20 June 2000 with the publication of our report, *Draft Recommendations on the Future Electoral Arrangements for Brentwood in Essex*, and ended on 4 September 2000. 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

13 The borough of Brentwood is situated in the south-west of Essex and covers an area of some 15,000 hectares. The borough lies within the Metropolitan Green Belt and contains extensive woodland and open spaces. The borough contains good road and rail links, being strategically positioned at the crossroads of the M25 (junction 28) and A12 trunk road to Colchester and Ipswich. Its southern border is also crossed by the A127 - London to Southend Arterial Road.

14 The borough contains seven parishes, while a large part of the borough is unparished. The unparished area comprises approximately 80 per cent of the borough's total electorate.

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

16 The electorate of the borough is 54,557 (February 1999). The Council presently has 39 members who are elected from 17 wards, seven of which are relatively urban in the Brentwood and Hutton areas with the remainder being predominantly rural. Eleven of the wards are each represented by three councillors and the remaining six are single-member wards. The Council is elected by thirds.

17 Since the last electoral review there has been an increase in the electorate in Brentwood borough, with around 3 per cent more electors than two decades ago as a result of new housing developments.

18 At present, each councillor represents an average of 1,399 electors, which the Borough Council forecasts will increase to 1,422 by the year 2004 if the current number of councillors is maintained. However, due to demographic and other changes over the past two decades, the number of electors per councillor in 12 of the 17 wards varies by more than 10 per cent from the borough average, in six wards by more than 20 per cent and in two wards by more than 30 per cent. The worst imbalance is in Blackmore ward where the councillor represents 36 per cent fewer electors per councillor than the borough average.

Map 1: Existing Wards in Brentwood

Figure 3: Existing Electoral Arrangements

	Ward name	Number of councillors	Electorate (1999)	Number of electors per councillor	Variance from average %	Electorate (2004)	Number of electors per councillor	Variance from average %
1	Blackmore	1	898	898	-36	909	909	-36
2	Brentwood North	3	4,654	1,551	11	4,796	1,599	12
3	Brentwood South	3	3,978	1,326	-5	4,094	1,365	-4
4	Brentwood West	3	3,856	1,285	-8	3,922	1,307	-8
5	Brizes & Doddinghurst	3	5,271	1,757	26	5,295	1,765	24
6	Herongate & Ingrave	1	1,652	1,652	18	1,672	1,672	18
7	Hook End & Wyatts Green	1	1,622	1,622	16	1,628	1,628	15
8	Hutton East	3	3,436	1,145	-18	3,443	1,148	-19
9	Hutton North	3	3,421	1,140	-18	3,423	1,141	-20
10	Hutton South	3	5,157	1,719	23	5,190	1,730	22
11	Ingatestone & Fryerning	3	3,787	1,262	-10	3,794	1,265	-11
12	Mountnessing	1	904	904	-35	920	920	-35
13	Pilgrims Hatch	3	5,052	1,684	20	5,067	1,689	19
14	Shenfield	3	4,193	1,398	0	4,208	1,403	-1
15	South Weald	1	1,097	1,097	-22	1,106	1,106	-22
16	Warley	3	4,478	1,493	7	4,877	1,626	14
17	West Horndon	1	1,101	1,101	-21	1,103	1,103	-22
	Totals	39	54,557	-	-	55,447	-	-
	Averages	-	-	1,399	-	-	1,422	-

Source: Electorate figures are based on information provided by Brentwood Borough Council.

Note: The 'variance from average' column shows by how far, in percentage terms, the number of electors per councillor varies from the average for the borough. The minus symbol (-) denotes a lower than average number of electors. For example, in 1999, electors in Blackmore ward were relatively over-represented by 36 per cent, while electors in Brizes & Doddinghurst ward were relatively under-represented by 26 per cent. Figures have been rounded to the nearest whole number.

3 DRAFT RECOMMENDATIONS

19 During Stage One we received seven representations, including a borough-wide scheme from Brentwood Borough Council, and submissions from three parish councils, and three local residents. In the light of these representations and evidence available to us, we reached preliminary conclusions which were set out in our report, *Draft Recommendations on the Future Electoral Arrangements for Brentwood in Essex*.

20 Our draft recommendations were based on the Borough Council's proposals, which achieved improved levels of electoral equality and provided a pattern of one-, two- and three-member wards. However, we moved away from the Borough Council's scheme in four areas, affecting six wards, using options generated by Council officers during the early stages of the review process, together with some of our own proposals. We also proposed renaming three of the Council's proposed wards. We proposed that:

- Brentwood Borough Council should be served by 37 councillors, compared with the current 39, representing 15 wards, two fewer than at present;
- the boundaries of 15 of the existing wards should be modified, while two wards should retain their existing boundaries.

Draft Recommendation

Brentwood Borough Council should comprise 37 councillors, serving 15 wards. The Council should continue to hold elections by thirds.

21 Our proposals would have resulted in significant improvements in electoral equality, with the number of electors per councillor in 13 of the 15 wards varying by no more than 10 per cent from the borough average. This level of electoral equality was forecast to improve further, with no ward varying by more than 10 per cent from the average by 2004.

4 RESPONSES TO CONSULTATION

22 During the consultation on our draft recommendations report, 138 representations were received. A list of all respondents is available on request from the Commission. All representations may be inspected at the offices of Brentwood Borough Council and the Commission.

Brentwood Borough Council

23 The Borough Council supported our draft recommendations in relation to council size and broadly supported our proposed warding arrangements subject to a number of minor modifications in order to provide for more clearly identifiable boundaries. These changes would affect no electors. It also proposed that the proposed Blackmore & Wyatts Green ward should be renamed Tipps Cross ward and that the proposed Herongate, Ingrave & West Horndon ward should be renamed Thorndon ward.

Parish Councils

24 Ingatestone & Fryerning Parish Council proposed that our proposed Ingatestone & Mountnessing ward should be changed to Ingatestone, Fryerning & Mountnessing, as originally proposed by the Borough Council. Stondon Massey Parish Council expressed support for our proposed Blackmore & Wyatts Green and Brizes & Doddinghurst wards. However, it strongly opposed the proposed name of Blackmore & Wyatts Green ward and suggested the alternative name of Blackmore & Stondon Massey.

Other Representations

25 A further 135 representations were received in response to our draft recommendations from local residents. These submissions were all in relation to the West Horndon area of the borough and opposed the amalgamation of the wards of Herongate & Ingrave and West Horndon into a new two-member Herongate, Ingrave & West Horndon ward. They expressed concern that West Horndon would lose its representation if it were to share two councillors with the Herongate & Ingrave area.

5 ANALYSIS AND FINAL RECOMMENDATIONS

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

27 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 also have regard to the desirability of fixing identifiable boundaries and to maintaining local ties which might otherwise be broken.

28 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.

29 Our *Guidance* states that we accept that the achievement of absolute electoral equality for the authority as a whole is likely to be unattainable. However, we consider that, if electoral imbalances are to be kept to the minimum, such an objective should be the starting point in any review. We therefore strongly recommend that, in formulating electoral schemes, local authorities and other interested parties should start from the standpoint of absolute electoral equality and only then make adjustments to reflect relevant factors, such as community identity and interests. Regard must also be had to five-year forecasts of change in electorates.

Electorate Forecasts

30 At Stage One, the Borough Council submitted electorate forecasts for the year 2004, projecting an increase in the electorate of some 2 per cent from 54,557 to 55,447 over the five-year period from 1999 to 2004. It expected most of the growth to be in Warley ward, although a significant amount was also expected in the more urban Brentwood North and Brentwood South wards. The Council estimated rates and locations of housing development with regard to structure and local plans, the expected rate of building over the five-year period and assumed occupancy rates. Advice from the Borough Council on the likely effect on electorates of changes to ward boundaries was obtained. In our draft recommendations report we accepted that forecasting electorates is an inexact science and, having given consideration to the Borough Council’s figures, were content that they represented the best estimates that can reasonably be made at this time.

31 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

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

33 Brentwood Borough Council is at present served by 39 councillors. At Stage One, the Borough Council proposed a council of 37 members, which it argued would “achieve a more satisfactory councillor:elector ratio across the whole borough”. We received no further comments regarding council size at Stage One.

34 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, and concluded that the achievement of electoral equality and the statutory criteria would best be met by a council of 37 members.

35 At Stage Three, the Borough Council supported our draft recommendation for a reduction in council size from 39 to 37. No further submissions relating to council size were received. Accordingly, we remain of the view that the balance of evidence supports reducing the number of councillors for Brentwood to 37, which we consider would achieve the best balance between the number of members required to facilitate effective and convenient local government, and the need to reflect the identities and interests of the local community. We have therefore decided to confirm our draft recommendation for a council size of 37 as final.

Electoral Arrangements

36 As set out in our draft recommendations report, we carefully considered all the representations received at Stage One, including the borough-wide scheme from the Borough Council. From these representations, some considerations emerged which helped to inform us when preparing our draft recommendations.

37 The Borough Council proposed a council of 37 members, two fewer than at present, serving 15 wards, compared to the existing 17. Throughout the borough, the Council proposed revised warding arrangements utilising strong boundaries, while having regard to the identities and interests of the local community. An extensive consultation process was undertaken with local residents and interested parties. The Council’s submission was unanimously approved by the full Council. In addition, the Borough Council’s proposals would result in improved levels of electoral equality for the borough as a whole. However, we sought to build on these proposals in order to put forward electoral arrangements which would maintain this improved level of electoral equality, while providing for more clearly identifiable boundaries and having regard to the statutory criteria.

38 In response to our draft recommendations report, a large number of respondents expressed opposition with regards to our proposed Herongate, Ingrave & West Horndon ward. They argued that the two areas to be joined are geographically separated from each other and that West Horndon in particular would lose its representation if it were to share two councillors with Herongate & Ingrave.

39 At Stage Three the Borough Council supported our draft recommendations, although it proposed a number of minor modifications in order to provide for more clearly identifiable boundaries, as well as two new ward names.

40 We have reviewed our draft recommendations in the light of further evidence and the representations received during Stage Three. For borough warding purposes, the following areas, based on existing wards, are considered in turn:

- (a) Brentwood North, Brentwood South and Brentwood West wards;
- (b) Hutton East, Hutton North, Hutton South and Shenfield wards;
- (c) Ingatestone & Fryerning and Mountnessing wards;
- (d) Blackmore, Brizes & Doddinghurst and Hook End & Wyatts Green wards;
- (e) Pilgrims Hatch and South Weald wards;
- (f) Herongate & Ingrave, Warley and West Horndon wards.

41 Details of our final recommendations are set out in Figures 1 and 2, and illustrated on Map 2, in Appendix A and on the large map inserted in the back cover of this report.

Brentwood North, Brentwood South and Brentwood West wards

42 The existing wards of Brentwood North, Brentwood South and Brentwood West are situated in the centre of the borough. The area is unparished and each ward is currently represented by three councillors. Under existing arrangements, Brentwood South and Brentwood West wards contain 5 per cent and 8 per cent fewer electors per councillor than the borough average respectively, while Brentwood North ward contains 11 per cent more electors per councillor than the borough average. This level of electoral equality is projected to remain relatively constant over the next five years.

43 At Stage One, the Borough Council proposed retaining the existing warding arrangements for Brentwood North and Brentwood South wards, arguing that reasonable levels of electoral equality were achieved under a council size of 37. It proposed modifying the southern boundary of the existing Brentwood West ward to incorporate the former hospital site, which is currently under development, to the south of the railway line in Warley ward. The Council argued that this would address the high level of electoral inequality which is projected for Brentwood West ward by 2004 when the new properties are expected to be occupied. It also argued that Crescent Road, currently located in Brentwood West ward, is the main access road to the new estate.

44 Under the Borough Council's proposals, Brentwood North ward would contain 5 per cent more electors per councillor than the borough average, while Brentwood South and Brentwood West wards would contain 10 per cent and 13 per cent fewer electors per councillor than the average respectively. This level of electoral equality is projected to remain relatively constant over the next five years with the exception of Brentwood West ward which is expected to contain 5 per cent fewer electors per councillor than the average by 2004, as a result of the housing development on the former hospital site.

45 In our draft recommendations report, we noted that the Borough Council's proposals for this area would provide for improved levels of electoral equality by 2004, while reflecting the identities and interests of the local community. We therefore proposed endorsing the Borough Council's proposals for this area, subject to a minor boundary amendment in the south-eastern corner of Brentwood South ward to provide for a more clearly identifiable boundary. We proposed modifying the ward boundary to run to the south of Avenue Lodge and Octagon Lodge. This change resulted in the transfer of two electors from the existing Herongate & Ingrave ward to Brentwood South ward.

46 At Stage Three the Borough Council supported our draft recommendations for Brentwood North, Brentwood South and Brentwood West wards. However, they proposed a minor amendment to the south-eastern corner of Brentwood North ward, adjoining Shenfield ward. They proposed that the cricket ground and school playing fields to the north of Shenfield Road should form part of a revised Brentwood North ward, arguing that this would provide for a more clearly identifiable boundary. This proposal would affect no electors. No other submissions were received in relation to this area.

47 Having carefully considered the evidence received at Stage Three, we have decided to endorse our draft recommendations for Brentwood South and Brentwood West wards as final. However, we have been persuaded by the Borough Council's proposal to amend the boundary between Brentwood North and Shenfield wards, as we consider that this would provide for a more clearly defined boundary while having no effect on electoral equality.

48 Under our final recommendations, Brentwood South and Brentwood West wards would contain 10 per cent and 13 per cent fewer electors per councillor than the borough average respectively (9 per cent and 5 per cent fewer by 2004). Brentwood North ward would contain 5 per cent more electors per councillor than the average (7 per cent more by 2004). Our proposals for the Brentwood area are illustrated on Maps A2, A3 and A7 in Appendix A.

Hutton East, Hutton North, Hutton South and Shenfield wards

49 The existing wards of Hutton East, Hutton North, Hutton South and Shenfield are situated in the central and eastern part of the borough. The area is unparished and each of the four wards is currently represented by three councillors. Under existing arrangements, Hutton East and Hutton North wards both contain 18 per cent fewer electors per councillor than the borough average, while Hutton South ward contains 23 per cent more electors per councillor than the average and Shenfield ward contains equal to the average number of electors per councillor. This level of electoral equality is projected to deteriorate marginally over the next five years.

50 At Stage One, the Borough Council proposed creating a new two-member Hutton Central ward in this area, combining parts of the surrounding Hutton East, Hutton North and Hutton South wards. It proposed that the western boundary of Hutton Central ward should follow eastwards along the rear of the properties on the north side of Mount Avenue (including Kandlewood and Willow Close), and southwards along the rear of properties on the west side of Hanging Hill Lane to the boundary with the existing Herongate & Ingrave ward. The new Hutton Central ward would also incorporate the housing estate to the west of Cedar Road, currently in the existing Hutton East ward, as well as the Great Oaks area, to the north of the A129 Rayleigh

Road, currently located in Hutton North ward. Under these proposals, each of the four revised Hutton wards would be represented by two councillors. The Council proposed that Shenfield ward remain unchanged.

51 Under the Council's proposals Shenfield ward, Hutton Central and Hutton East wards would contain 5 per cent, 4 per cent and 7 per cent fewer electors per councillor than the borough average respectively, while Hutton North and Hutton South wards would contain 11 per cent and 7 per cent more electors per councillor than the borough average respectively. This level of electoral equality is projected to improve marginally over the next five years, with electoral variances of 6 per cent fewer, 5 per cent fewer, 8 per cent fewer, 9 per cent more and 6 per cent more than the average respectively by 2004.

52 In our draft recommendations report, we decided to endorse the Borough Council's proposals for Shenfield ward. We noted that its proposals for the Hutton area would provide for improved levels of electoral equality while having regard to the statutory criteria. We noted the strong level of community identity which exists in the Hutton area and judged that the Council's proposals appeared to respect this element. We therefore proposed endorsing the Council's proposals in this area subject to three minor modifications. We proposed transferring the Long Meadow area, which can only be accessed from Hanging Hill Lane, from Hutton South ward to the new Hutton Central ward. We considered that this change would better reflect community ties in this area, while improving electoral equality in both wards. In addition, we proposed two minor boundary modifications, one in the south-western corner of the new Hutton Central ward adjoining the existing Herongate & Ingrave ward, and the other in the north-eastern part of Hutton Central ward bordering Hutton East ward. Both of these modifications tied the existing boundaries to ground detail and affected no electors.

53 At Stage Three, the Borough Council endorsed our proposed boundaries in the Hutton area in their entirety. They also expressed support for the proposed ward name of Hutton Central. We received no further representations in relation to this area and are therefore content to confirm our draft recommendations for Hutton Central, Hutton North and Hutton South wards as final. However, we propose a minor consequential amendment to the northern boundary of Hutton East ward as a result of proposals made by the Council with regard to the Mountnessing area (as discussed later in this report). In relation to Shenfield ward, we also propose a minor modification to the boundary with Brentwood North ward as a result of the Council's proposals in that area, as detailed above. Both these amendments would involve no electors.

54 Under our final recommendations, Hutton Central, Hutton East and Shenfield wards would contain 1 per cent, 7 per cent and 5 per cent fewer electors per councillor than the borough average respectively (2 per cent, 8 per cent and 6 per cent fewer by 2004). Hutton North and Hutton South wards would contain 11 per cent and 4 per cent more electors per councillor than the borough average respectively (9 per cent and 3 per cent more by 2004). Our proposals for the Hutton and Shenfield areas are illustrated on Maps A6 and A7 in Appendix A and on the large map at the back of this report.

Ingatestone & Fryerning and Mountnessing wards

55 The existing wards of Ingatestone & Fryerning and Mountnessing are situated in the north-east of the borough. Ingatestone & Fryerning ward is coterminous with Ingatestone & Fryerning parish and is currently represented by three councillors. Mountnessing ward is coterminous with Mountnessing parish and is currently represented by one councillor. Under existing arrangements, Ingatestone & Fryerning and Mountnessing wards contain 10 per cent and 35 per cent fewer electors per councillor than the borough average respectively. This level of electoral equality is projected to remain relatively constant over the next five years.

56 At Stage One, the Borough Council proposed merging the existing three-member Ingatestone & Fryerning ward and single-member Mountnessing ward to create a new three-member Ingatestone & Fryerning & Mountnessing ward. It argued that these wards are of a similar rural nature and that it would not be advisable to address the high level of electoral inequality which currently exists in Mountnessing ward by joining it with the more urban Shenfield ward. Under the Borough Council's proposals the new Ingatestone & Fryerning & Mountnessing ward would contain 6 per cent more electors per councillor than the borough average currently, improving to 5 per cent more in five years' time.

57 Mountnessing Parish Council opposed the amalgamation of its parish with Ingatestone & Fryerning ward arguing that it would be "detrimental to the electorate of Mountnessing, as there is a very different demographic composition of the two areas". It proposed retaining the two wards with a modification to the boundary to include the Heybridge estate area south of The Leas, currently in Ingatestone & Fryerning ward, in a revised single-member Mountnessing ward. Under its proposals, the revised Ingatestone & Fryerning ward would be represented by two councillors. Under Mountnessing Parish Council's proposals, Ingatestone & Fryerning and Mountnessing wards would contain 10 per cent more and 1 per cent fewer electors per councillor than the borough average respectively (8 per cent more and 1 per cent fewer in 2004).

58 In our draft recommendations report, we concluded that the Borough Council's proposals would address the high levels of electoral inequality which exist in this area, while having regard to the identities and interests of the local community. While we noted that the proposals put forward by Mountnessing Parish Council would have also provided for improved levels of electoral equality, we were not persuaded that the community would have been better served under these arrangements which, if endorsed, would have resulted in the warding of a small area of Ingatestone & Fryerning Parish Council. In addition, we noted that the Borough Council's proposals for this area united the Heybridge estate in a single ward, as also favoured by Mountnessing Parish Council.

59 We therefore proposed endorsing the Borough Council's proposals for this area. However, for the purpose of consultation, we proposed that the Council's proposed Ingatestone & Fryerning & Mountnessing ward be renamed Ingatestone & Mountnessing ward.

60 At Stage Three, the Borough Council supported our proposed amalgamation of Ingatestone & Fryerning and Mountnessing wards into a new three-member ward and also expressed support for the name of Ingatestone & Mountnessing ward. However, in order to provide for more clearly identifiable boundaries, the Council proposed two minor amendments to the southern boundary

of Ingatestone & Mountnessing ward, adjoining Hutton East ward. They proposed realigning the boundary with the B1002 Roman Road and the A12 Brentwood by-pass, around the Mountnessing roundabout. They also proposed that where the River Wid meets Wash Road, the boundary should run southwards until it meets the Shenfield to Southend Victoria railway line and then continue along the railway line in an easterly direction to the borough boundary. Both of these minor amendments would affect no electors.

61 Ingatestone & Fryerning Parish Council proposed that our proposed Ingatestone & Mountnessing ward should be renamed Ingatestone, Fryerning & Mountnessing as originally proposed by the Borough Council in their Stage One submission.

62 Having carefully considered the representations received at Stage Three, we have decided to endorse our draft recommendations for Ingatestone & Mountnessing ward as final, subject to the minor modifications proposed by the Borough Council which we believe would provide for more clearly identifiable boundaries. In addition, we have been persuaded to amend the name of the ward to Ingatestone, Fryerning & Mountnessing as proposed by Ingatestone & Fryerning Parish Council and as initially proposed by the Borough Council.

63 Under our final recommendations, the proposed Ingatestone, Fryerning & Mountnessing ward would contain 6 per cent more electors per councillor than the borough average, improving to 5 per cent more by 2004. Our proposals for Ingatestone, Fryerning & Mountnessing ward are illustrated on Map A6 at Appendix A.

Blackmore, Brizes & Doddinghurst and Hook End & Wyatts Green wards

64 The existing wards of Blackmore, Brizes & Doddinghurst and Hook End & Wyatts Green are situated in the north and north-west of the borough. Blackmore ward is coterminous with Blackmore ward of Blackmore, Hook End & Wyatts Green parish and is currently represented by one councillor. Brizes & Doddinghurst ward contains the parishes of Doddinghurst, Kelvedon Hatch, Navestock and Stondon Massey and is currently represented by three councillors. Hook End & Wyatts Green ward is coterminous with Hook End & Wyatts Green ward of Blackmore, Hook End & Wyatts Green parish and is currently represented by one councillor. Under existing arrangements all three wards have high levels of electoral inequality. Brizes & Doddinghurst and Hook End & Wyatts Green wards contain 26 per cent and 16 per cent more electors per councillor than the borough average respectively, while Blackmore ward contains 36 per cent fewer electors per councillor than the average. This level of electoral equality is not projected to change significantly over the next five years.

65 At Stage One, the Borough Council proposed combining the existing Blackmore and Hook End & Wyatts Green wards with Stondon Massey parish from the existing Brizes & Doddinghurst ward to form a new two-member Blackmore, Hook End & Wyatts Green & Stondon Massey ward. It proposed a revised Brizes & Doddinghurst ward, represented by three councillors, comprising the remaining part of the existing ward. The Council argued that these areas share common community interests as well as good communication and transport links. Under the Borough Council's proposals, Blackmore, Hook End & Wyatts Green & Stondon Massey ward and Brizes & Doddinghurst ward would contain 4 per cent and 7 per cent more

electors per councillor than the borough average respectively, improving to 3 per cent more and 5 per cent more over the next five years.

66 Blackmore, Hook End & Wyatts Green Parish Council supported the Council's proposed wards in this area, while Stondon Massey Parish Council opposed the transfer of its parish to the new Blackmore, Hook End & Wyatts Green & Stondon Massey ward, arguing that its natural affiliation is with the neighbouring parishes of Kelvedon Hatch and Doddinghurst. It proposed that an alternative solution would be to transfer the Wyatts Green area to Brizes & Doddinghurst ward.

67 In our draft recommendations report, we concluded that the Borough Council's proposals for this area would address the high levels of electoral inequality which exist, while having regard for the identities and interests of the local community. While we noted the concerns of Stondon Massey Parish Council, we were not persuaded that the identities and interests of the community would have been adversely affected by the transfer of the parish to a new ward. In addition, its proposal to transfer the Wyatts Green area to Brizes & Doddinghurst ward would have required the formation of a four-member ward in order to address the high level of under-representation which currently exists. However, our *Guidance* states, "In circumstances where our recommendation is for multi-member wards, we believe that the number of councillors to be returned from each ward should not exceed three, other than in very exceptional circumstances. Numbers in excess of three could result in an unacceptable dilution of accountability to the electorate." We were not persuaded by the evidence received that a four-member ward would be justified for this area and therefore decided not to adopt Stondon Massey Parish Council's proposal.

68 We proposed endorsing the Borough Council's proposals for this area. However, for the purpose of consultation, we proposed that the Council's Blackmore, Hook End & Wyatts Green & Stondon Massey ward should be changed to Blackmore & Wyatts Green ward.

69 At Stage Three, the Borough Council supported our proposed Blackmore & Wyatts Green and Brizes & Doddinghurst wards. However, the Council stated that it did not consider that the proposed name of Blackmore & Wyatts Green fairly represented the constituent parts of the new ward and proposed the alternative name of Tipps Cross which, it argued, would be named after the well known crossroad which lies at the centre of the new ward.

70 Stondon Massey Parish Council reconsidered its submission at Stage One and supported our proposed Blackmore & Wyatts Green and Brizes & Doddinghurst wards. However, it strongly opposed our proposed ward name of Blackmore & Wyatts Green on the basis that the name of Stondon Massey does not feature. It proposed an alternative of Blackmore & Stondon Massey ward in order to better reflect the constituent parts of the new ward.

71 Having considered the representations received at Stage Three, we have decided to confirm our draft recommendations for Blackmore & Wyatts Green and Brizes & Doddinghurst wards as final, subject to an amended ward name. We have been persuaded to adopt Stondon Massey Parish Council's proposal to change the name of Blackmore & Wyatts Green ward to Blackmore & Stondon Massey ward. We consider that this name would provide a more accurate description of the proposed new ward than that proposed by the Borough Council.

72 Under our final recommendations, Blackmore & Stondon Massey and Brizes & Doddinghurst wards would contain 4 per cent and 7 per cent more electors per councillor than the borough average respectively, improving to 3 per cent and 5 per cent more by 2004.

Pilgrims Hatch and South Weald wards

73 The existing wards of Pilgrims Hatch and South Weald are situated in the central and western part of the borough. The area is unparished, with Pilgrims Hatch ward currently being represented by three councillors and South Weald ward by one councillor. Under existing arrangements Pilgrims Hatch ward contains 20 per cent more electors per councillor than the borough average, while South Weald ward contains 22 per cent fewer electors than the average. This level of electoral inequality is projected to remain relatively constant over the next five years.

74 At Stage One, the Borough Council proposed combining the area to the south-west of the A128 Ongar Road, from the existing Pilgrims Hatch ward, to a revised single-member South Weald ward. The Council argued that the area being transferred, which is locally known as Coxtie Green, would sit comfortably with the rural part of South Weald ward, and that the A128 Ongar Road represents a natural boundary between the larger urbanised and semi-rural areas. Under the Borough Council's proposals the revised Pilgrims Hatch and South Weald wards would contain 6 per cent more and equal to the borough average number of electors per councillor respectively (4 per cent more and 1 per cent fewer in five years time).

75 In our draft recommendations report, we noted that the Borough Council's proposals in this area would provide for improved levels of electoral equality while having regard for the identities and interests of the local community and geographical factors. We therefore proposed endorsing the Council's proposals in full as part of our draft recommendations.

76 At Stage Three, the Borough Council supported our proposed Pilgrims Hatch and South Weald wards. However, they proposed a minor amendment in the south of Pilgrims Hatch ward, resulting in the transfer of the Larkin's playing field from South Weald ward to Pilgrims Hatch ward. The Council argued that the playing field can only be accessed from Ongar Road in Pilgrims Hatch.

77 We received no further representations in relation to this area and are therefore content to confirm our draft recommendations for Pilgrims Hatch and South Weald wards as final, subject to the minor amendment proposed by the Borough Council. Under our final recommendations, Pilgrims Hatch ward would contain 6 per cent more electors per councillor than the borough average (4 per cent more by 2004). South Weald ward would contain equal to the average number of electors per councillor (1 per cent fewer by 2004). The proposed boundary between Pilgrims Hatch and South Weald wards is illustrated on Map A4 in Appendix A.

Herongate & Ingrave, Warley and West Horndon wards

78 The existing wards of Herongate & Ingrave, Warley and West Horndon are situated in the south of the borough. The area is unparished, with Herongate & Ingrave and West Horndon

wards each currently represented by a single councillor and Warley ward currently represented by three councillors. Under existing arrangements Herongate & Ingrave and Warley wards contain 18 per cent and 7 per cent more electors per councillor than the borough average respectively, while West Horndon ward contains 21 per cent fewer electors than the average. This level of electoral equality is projected to remain relatively constant over the next five years, with the exception of Warley ward where the number of electors per councillor is projected to increase to 14 per cent more than the borough average by 2004.

79 At Stage One, the Borough Council proposed combining the existing Herongate & Ingrave and West Horndon wards, together with the Petresfield estate, situated in the south-eastern corner of the existing Warley ward, bordered by the A127 London to Southend arterial road and the railway line. These proposals would result in the formation of a new two-member Herongate & Ingrave & West Horndon ward. The remainder of the existing Warley ward, less the area transferred to Brentwood West ward, as previously discussed, would form a revised three-member Warley ward. The Council argued that its proposal to unite Herongate & Ingrave and West Horndon wards would address the electoral imbalances which exist in the area. It also noted that, prior to 1974, these communities had shared a ward. It also argued that the Petresfield estate lies in the village of West Horndon and is thus better situated in West Horndon ward.

80 Under the Borough Council's proposals, Herongate & Ingrave & West Horndon and Warley wards would each contain 2 per cent fewer electors per councillor than the borough average. This level of electoral equality is projected to remain relatively constant over the next five years.

81 We received three further submissions from local residents at Stage One, all relating to the West Horndon area. Two residents, in a joint submission, opposed the Borough Council's proposals to merge Herongate & Ingrave and West Horndon wards, arguing that, "the two communities do not naturally mix" and that the A127 forms a natural boundary between them. However, they supported the Council's proposals to transfer the Petresfield estate area, currently located in Warley ward, to West Horndon ward. Another local resident supported the Council's proposal to include the industrial site in West Horndon ward. A further local resident opposed combining Herongate & Ingrave ward with West Horndon ward, but supported the Council's proposals to include the Petresfield estate and neighbouring industrial site in West Horndon ward.

82 In our draft recommendations report, we noted that there was some support among local residents for the Council's proposal to unite the Petresfield estate with the West Horndon ward which we considered would reflect community identities. We noted that there was some opposition from local residents to the Council's proposals to combine Herongate & Ingrave and West Horndon wards into a two-member Herongate & Ingrave & West Horndon ward. While we recognised the desire of some residents to maintain separate wards for each community, we considered that the level of electoral equality in this area should be addressed. In addition, we considered that while these areas are separate communities they share some similarities and were also informed by the Borough Council that they had formed part of the same ward prior to 1974. While it would be possible to maintain two separate wards for this area, we were unable to find a suitable boundary which would secure a more reasonable level of electoral equality than the Council's proposals. We therefore proposed to base our draft recommendations on the Council's proposals for this area.

83 We did, however, propose three modifications to the Council's proposals. For the purpose of consultation, we proposed that its Herongate & Ingrave & West Horndon ward should be changed to Herongate, Ingrave & West Horndon ward. We also proposed a minor amendment to the boundary between Herongate, Ingrave & West Horndon and Hutton Central wards, as detailed above. In addition, we proposed a boundary modification resulting in the transfer of two electors from Herongate, Ingrave & West Horndon ward to Brentwood South ward, also previously discussed.

84 At Stage Three, the Borough Council supported our proposed Herongate, Ingrave & West Horndon and Warley wards. However, they proposed that a more appropriate name for Herongate, Ingrave & West Horndon ward would be Thorndon ward. They argued that the inclusion of references to all areas within the new ward would be impracticable and that Thorndon is a historic name common to both of the original wards, and as such would be a more viable option.

85 We received a further 135 representations in relation to this area from local residents. A number of these representations opposed the amalgamation of Herongate & Ingrave and West Horndon to form a new Herongate, Ingrave & West Horndon ward. They argued that the two areas form distinct communities, separated by the A127 arterial road. However, the main cause of concern for most respondents was that the two areas would have to share two councillors as opposed to having a single councillor representing each area separately. They argued that West Horndon needs to have its own councillor, preferably resident in the village, in order for the area to be represented effectively. Five residents expressed support for the inclusion of part of Warley ward in the proposed Herongate, Ingrave & West Horndon ward. In addition, 32 residents argued that if South Weald, which they considered was similar to West Horndon, was to remain a single-member ward then the same could be done for West Horndon.

86 Having considered the representations received during Stage Three, we have decided to confirm our draft recommendations for Herongate, Ingrave & West Horndon and Warley wards as final. While we note the concerns of local residents in the West Horndon area, we have not been persuaded by the evidence received that our draft recommendations would adversely affect the identities and interests of the local community. In addition, we did not receive any suitable alternative proposals for warding arrangements in this area from local residents at Stage Three. We note that under current arrangements the existing Herongate & Ingrave and West Horndon wards have unacceptably high levels of electoral inequality which would be successfully resolved by amalgamating the two wards. We have also not been persuaded by proposals which compared West Horndon to South Weald ward. We consider that each area should be considered on its merits and that in the case of South Weald it was possible to enlarge the current ward without dividing a neighbouring settlement. This is not possible in the case of West Horndon. In relation to ward names, we have not been persuaded to amend the name of Herongate, Ingrave & West Horndon ward to Thorndon ward as proposed by the Borough Council. We consider that our proposed ward name better represents the constituent parts of our proposed ward.

87 We recognise the desire of local residents in West Horndon to have separate representation for their area. While we have felt unable to recommend this through borough warding arrangements, an alternative would be to create a parish council for West Horndon, which is

currently unparished. This could be achieved through a petition from local residents to the Borough Council or, alternatively, through a parish review undertaken by the Borough Council.

88 Under our final recommendations, Herongate, Ingrave & West Horndon and Warley wards would contain 3 per cent and 2 per cent fewer electors per councillor than the borough average respectively (3 per cent and 2 per cent fewer by 2004). Our proposals for the Herongate, Ingrave & West Horndon and Warley areas are illustrated on Maps A2, A3 and A5 in Appendix A.

Electoral Cycle

89 At Stage One, we received one representation regarding the Borough Council's electoral cycle. The Borough Council stated that it recognised that, under the Government's proposals for the modernisation of local government, a move towards annual elections could be more easily facilitated where two-member wards already exist. It also stated that, "although the proposals now submitted were not drawn up with this in mind, it appears sensible to the Council that this is taken into account".

90 We carefully considered the representation made by the Borough Council, and considered that at present there appeared to be a majority view that the present electoral cycle should be retained. We therefore proposed no change to the current electoral cycle of elections by thirds.

91 At Stage Three the Borough Council supported the retention of elections by thirds for the borough. No further comments were received to the contrary, and we therefore confirm our draft recommendation as final.

Conclusions

92 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 which provide for more clearly identifiable boundaries and involve no electors:

- We propose modifying the boundary between Brentwood North and Shenfield wards.
- We propose modifying the boundary between Ingatestone, Fryerning & Mountnessing and Hutton East wards.
- We propose modifying the boundary between Pilgrims Hatch and South Weald wards.
- We propose that Blackmore & Wyatts Green ward should be renamed Blackmore & Stondon Massey ward.

- We propose that Ingatestone & Mountnessing ward should be renamed Ingatestone, Fryerning & Mountnessing.

93 We conclude that, in Brentwood:

- there should be a reduction in council size from 39 to 37;
- there should be 15 wards, two fewer than at present;
- the boundaries of all of the existing wards should be modified;
- the Council should continue to hold elections by thirds.

94 Figure 4 shows the impact of our final recommendations on electoral equality, comparing them with the current arrangements, based on 1999 and 2004 electorate figures.

Figure 4: Comparison of Current and Recommended Electoral Arrangements

	1999 electorate		2004 forecast electorate	
	Current arrangements	Final recommendations	Current arrangements	Final recommendations
Number of councillors	39	37	39	37
Number of wards	17	15	17	15
Average number of electors per councillor	1,399	1,475	1,422	1,499
Number of wards with a variance more than 10 per cent from the average	12	2	14	0
Number of wards with a variance more than 20 per cent from the average	6	0	6	0

95 As Figure 4 shows, our recommendations would result in a reduction in the number of wards with an electoral variance of more than 10 per cent from 12 to two with no wards varying by more than 20 per cent from the borough average. This improved level of electoral equality would improve further by 2004, with no ward varying by more than 10 per cent from the borough average. We conclude that our recommendations would best meet the need for electoral equality, having regard to the statutory criteria.

Final Recommendation

Brentwood Borough Council should comprise 37 councillors serving 15 wards, as detailed and named in Figures 1 and 2, and illustrated on Map 2 and in Appendix A. The Council should continue to hold elections by thirds.

Parish Council Electoral Arrangements

96 In our draft recommendations report, we did not propose any consequential changes to the electoral arrangements of parish councils in the borough as a result of our draft recommendations.

97 Similarly we are not proposing any consequential changes to the electoral arrangements of parish councils as a result of modifications made to our draft recommendations.

Map 2: The Commission's Final Recommendations for Brentwood

6 NEXT STEPS

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

99 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 before 9 January 2001.

100 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 Brentwood: Detailed Mapping

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

Map A1 illustrates, in outline form, the proposed ward boundaries within the borough and indicates the areas which are shown in more detail in Maps A2, A3, A4, A5, A6 and A7 and the large map at the back of the report.

Map A2 illustrates the proposed boundary between Brentwood South, Herongate, Ingrave & West Horndon and Warley wards.

Map A3 illustrates the proposed boundary between Brentwood West and Warley wards.

Map A4 illustrates the proposed boundary between Pilgrims Hatch and South Weald wards.

Map A5 illustrates the proposed boundary between Herongate, Ingrave & West Horndon and Warley wards.

Map A6 illustrates the proposed boundary between Ingatestone, Fryerning & Mountnessing and Hutton East wards.

Map A7 illustrates the proposed boundary between Brentwood North and Shenfield wards.

The **large map** inserted in the back of the report illustrates the proposed warding arrangements for the Hutton area.

Map A1: Final Recommendations for Brentwood: Key Map

Map A2: Proposed Boundary between Brentwood South, Herongate, Ingrave & West Horndon and Warley Wards

Map A3: Proposed Boundary between Brentwood West and Warley Wards

Map A4: Proposed Boundary between Pilgrims Hatch and South Weald Wards

Map A5: Proposed Boundary between Herongate, Ingrave & West Horndon and Warley Wards

Map A6: Proposed Boundary between Ingatestone, Fryerning & Mountnessing and Hutton East Wards

Map A7: Proposed Boundary between Brentwood North and Shenfield Wards

APPENDIX B

Draft Recommendations for Brentwood

Our final recommendations, detailed in Figures 1 and 2, differ from those we put forward as draft recommendations in respect of only three wards, where our draft proposals are set out below. The only other change from draft to final recommendations, which is not included in Figures B1 and B2, is that we propose to rename Blackmore & Wyatts Green ward as Blackmore & Stondon Massey ward and Ingatestone & Mountnessing ward as Ingatestone, Fryerning & Mountnessing ward. We also propose minor amendments to the boundaries of Hutton East, Pilgrim Hatch and South Weald wards which have no impact on constituent areas or the number of electors per councillor.

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

Ward name	Constituent areas
Brentwood North	<i>Unchanged</i>
Ingatestone & Mountnessing	Ingatestone & Fryerning ward (Ingatestone & Fryerning parish); Mountnessing ward (Mountnessing parish)
Shenfield	<i>Unchanged</i>

Figure B2: The Commission's Draft Recommendations: Number of Councillors and Electors by Ward

Ward name	Number of councillors	Electorate (1999)	Number of electors per councillor	Variance from average %	Electorate (2004)	Number of electors per councillor	Variance from average %
Brentwood North	3	4,654	1,551	5	4,796	1,599	7
Ingatestone & Mountnessing	3	4,691	1,564	6	4,714	1,571	5
Shenfield	3	4,193	1,398	-5	4,208	1,403	-6

Source: Electorate figures are based on information provided by Brentwood Borough Council.

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