

LOCAL
GOVERNMENT
COMMISSION
FOR ENGLAND

FINAL
RECOMMENDATIONS
ON THE FUTURE
ELECTORAL
ARRANGEMENTS FOR
GUILDFORD
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 Guildford in Surrey.

Members of the Commission are:

Professor Malcolm Grant (Chairman)

Helena Shovelton (Deputy Chairman)

Peter Brokenshire

Professor Michael Clarke

Pamela Gordon

Robin Gray

Robert Hughes

Barbara Stephens (Chief Executive)

© Crown Copyright 1998

Applications for reproduction should be made to:
Her Majesty's Stationery Office Copyright Unit

The mapping in this report is reproduced from OS mapping by The Local Government Commission for England with the permission of the Controller of Her Majesty's Stationery Office, © Crown Copyright. Unauthorised reproduction infringes Crown Copyright and may lead to prosecution or civil proceedings. Licence Number: GD 03114G.

This report is printed on recycled paper. 

CONTENTS

	page
LETTER TO THE SECRETARY OF STATE	<i>v</i>
SUMMARY	<i>vii</i>
1 INTRODUCTION	<i>1</i>
2 CURRENT ELECTORAL ARRANGEMENTS	<i>3</i>
3 DRAFT RECOMMENDATIONS	<i>7</i>
4 RESPONSES TO CONSULTATION	<i>9</i>
5 ANALYSIS AND FINAL RECOMMENDATIONS	<i>13</i>
6 NEXT STEPS	<i>31</i>
APPENDICES	
A Final Recommendations for Guildford: Detailed Mapping	<i>33</i>
B Draft Recommendations for Guildford (February 1998)	<i>39</i>



Local Government Commission for England

1 September 1998

Dear Secretary of State

On 2 September 1997 the Commission began a periodic electoral review of Guildford under the Local Government Act 1992. We published our draft recommendations in February 1998 and undertook a nine-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 143-144) in the light of further evidence. This report sets out our final recommendations for changes to electoral arrangements in Guildford.

We recommend that Guildford Borough Council should be served by 48 councillors representing 22 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 be elected together 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

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Malcolm Grant'.

PROFESSOR MALCOLM GRANT
Chairman

SUMMARY

The Commission began a review of Guildford on 2 September 1997. We published our draft recommendations for electoral arrangements on 17 February 1998, after which we undertook a nine-week period of consultation.

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

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

- **in 10 of the 21 wards, the number of electors represented by each councillor varies by more than 10 per cent from the average for the borough, and five wards vary by more than 20 per cent from the average;**
- **by 2002 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 12 wards, and by more than 20 per cent in six wards.**

Our main final recommendations for future electoral arrangements (Figure 1 and paragraphs 143-144) are that:

- **Guildford Borough Council should be served by 48 councillors, three more than at present;**
- **there should be 22 wards, one more than at present;**
- **the boundaries of 13 of the existing wards should be modified, while eight wards should retain their existing boundaries;**
- **elections for the whole council 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 18 of the 22 wards, the number of electors per councillor would vary by no more than 10 per cent from the borough average, with only one ward, Send, varying by more than 20 per cent from the average.**
- **By 2002 the number of electors per councillor is forecast to vary by no more than 10 per cent from the average in all but three wards, with only Send ward varying by more than 20 per cent.**

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

- **new warding arrangements for Ash parish;**
- **an increase in the number of councillors for Worplesdon Parish Council.**

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 12 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	Map reference
1 Ash South & Tongham	3	Ash ward (part); Tongham ward (Tongham parish)	Maps 2 and A3
2 Ash Vale	2	Ash Vale ward (part)	Maps 2 and A2
3 Ash Wharf	2	Ash ward (part); Ash Vale ward (part)	Maps 2 and A2
4 Burpham (Guildford town)	2	Merrow & Burpham ward (part); Christchurch ward (part)	Large map
5 Christchurch (Guildford town)	2	Christchurch ward (part); Holy Trinity ward (part)	Large map
6 Clandon & Horsley	3	<i>Unchanged</i> (the parishes of East Clandon, East Horsley, West Clandon and West Horsley)	Map 2
7 Effingham	1	<i>Unchanged</i> (Effingham parish)	Map 2
8 Friary & St Nicolas (Guildford town)	3	Friary & St Nicolas ward (part); Onslow ward (part); Stoke ward (part)	Large map
9 Holy Trinity (Guildford town)	3	Holy Trinity ward (part); Friary & St Nicolas ward (part)	Large map
10 Lovelace	1	<i>Unchanged</i> (the parishes of Ockham, Ripley and Wisley)	Map 2
11 Merrow (Guildford town)	3	Merrow & Burpham ward (part); Christchurch ward (part)	Large map
12 Normandy	1	<i>Unchanged</i> (Normandy parish)	Map 2
13 Onslow (Guildford town)	3	Onslow ward (part); Westborough ward (part)	Large map
14 Pilgrims	1	The Pilgrims ward (part – the parishes of Puttenham, Seale & Sands, Shackleford and Wanborough)	Map 2
15 Pirbright	1	<i>Unchanged</i> (Pirbright parish)	Map 2
16 Send	2	<i>Unchanged</i> (Send parish)	Map 2
17 Shalford	2	Shalford ward (Shalford parish); The Pilgrims ward (part – the parishes of Artington and Compton)	Map 2

Figure 1 (continued):
 The Commission's Final Recommendations: Summary

	Ward name	Number of councillors	Constituent areas	Map reference
18	Stoke (Guildford town)	2	Stoke ward (part); Christchurch ward (part)	Large map
19	Stoughton (Guildford town)	3	Stoughton ward (part); Westborough ward (part)	Large map
20	Tillingbourne	2	<i>Unchanged</i> (the parishes of Albury, St Martha and Shere)	Map 2
21	Westborough (Guildford town)	3	Westborough ward (part); Stoughton ward (part)	Large map
22	Worplesdon	3	<i>Unchanged</i> (Worplesdon parish)	Map 2

Notes: 1 Guildford town is unparished and comprises the nine wards indicated.

2 Map 2 and the maps in Appendix A illustrate the proposed wards outlined above.

1. INTRODUCTION

1 This report contains our final recommendations on the electoral arrangements for the borough of Guildford in Surrey. We have now reviewed all the districts in Surrey as part of our programme of periodic electoral reviews of all principal local authority areas in England.

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

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

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), which sets out our approach to the reviews.

4 This review was in four stages. Stage One began on 2 September 1997, when we wrote to Guildford Borough Council inviting proposals for future electoral arrangements. Our letter was copied to Surrey County Council, Surrey Police Authority, the local authority associations, Surrey County Association of Parish and Town Councils, parish councils in the borough, Members of Parliament and the Member of the European Parliament with constituency interests in the borough, and the headquarters of the main political parties. At the start of the review and following publication of our draft recommendations, we published notices in the local press, issued a press release and invited the 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 February 1998 with the publication of our report, *Draft Recommendations on the Future Electoral Arrangements for Guildford in Surrey*, and ended on 20 April 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 The borough of Guildford covers some 27,000 hectares. It has a population of just over 120,000, which is growing. It straddles the North Downs, which run in an east-west direction, and is bisected north to south by the River Wey. The town of Guildford is the county town of Surrey and home of the county's university. It acts as a regional shopping, entertainment and sporting centre, and attracts a significant number of visitors. The town is sited in a gap in the North Downs, with a population of around 64,000, while a further 17,000 live in the urban Ash/Tongham area. The town is the focus for transport with the two main roads in the area, the A3 and the A31, converging at the edge of the town. It is served by a good rail network, with a fast connection to London and good links with many of the surrounding smaller towns and villages.

7 The remainder of the borough is predominantly rural in character, with nearly 19,000 hectares of green belt land encompassing traditional villages. The borough comprises 24 parishes, with Guildford town being the only unparished area.

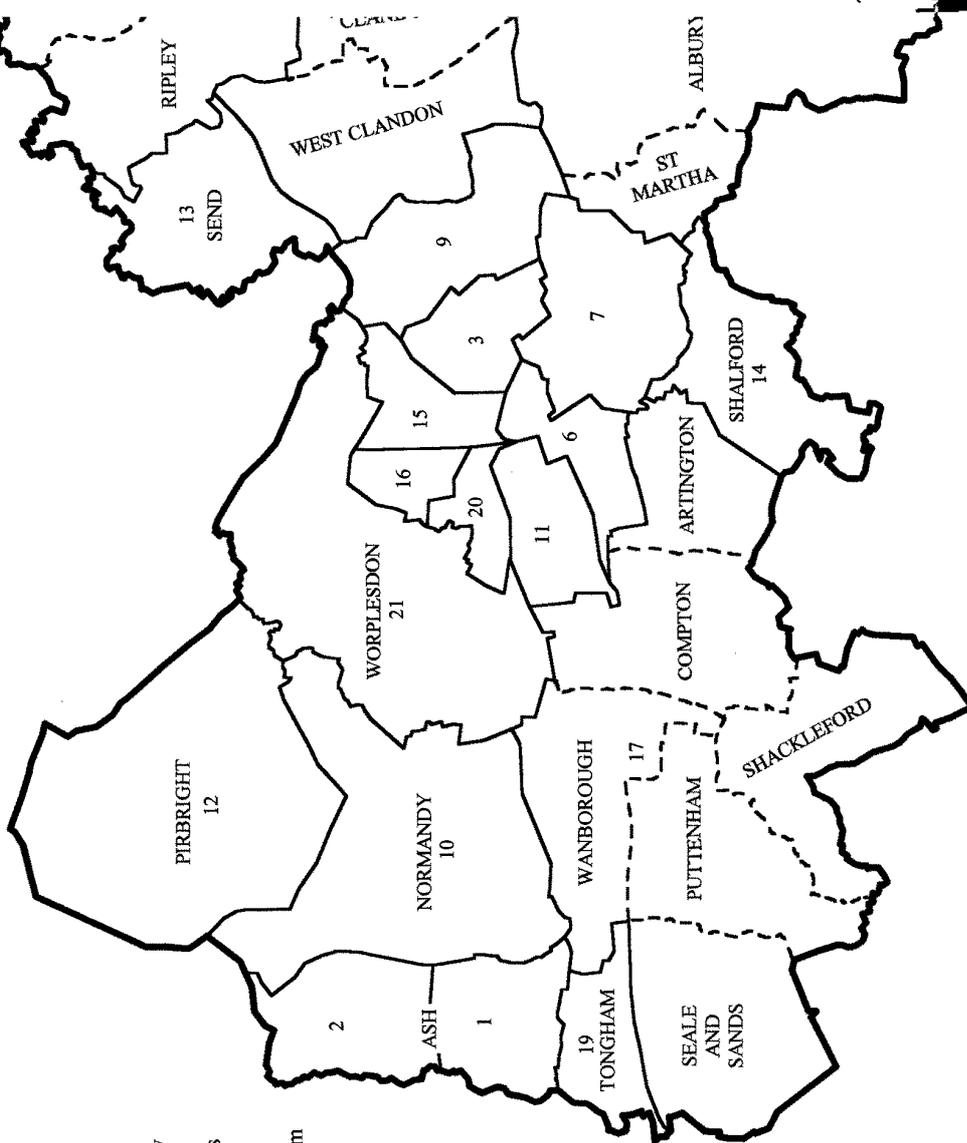
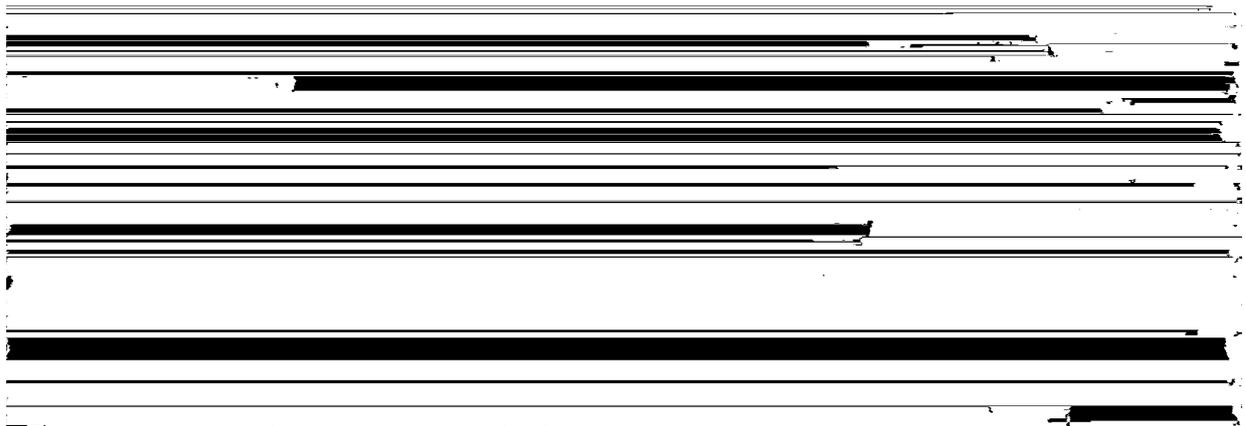
8 To compare levels of electoral inequality between wards, we calculated the extent to which the number of electors per councillor in each ward (the councillor:elector ratio) varies from the borough average in percentage terms. In the text which follows, this calculation may also be described using the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

9 The electorate of the borough (February 1997) is 97,681. The Council presently has 45 councillors who are elected from 21 wards, eight of which are in Guildford town (Map 1 and Figure 3). Nine wards are each represented by three councillors, six wards elect two councillors each, while the remaining six are single-member wards. The Council is elected together every four years.

10 Since the last electoral review, there has been an increase in electorate in the borough, with around 10 per cent more electors than two decades ago as a result of new housing developments, particularly in Guildford town, the Ash/Tongham area and Worplesdon.

11 At present, each councillor represents an average of 2,171 electors, which the Borough Council forecasts will increase to 2,259 by the year 2002 if the present number of councillors is maintained. However, due to demographic and other changes over the past two decades, the number of electors per councillor in 10 of the 21 wards varies by more than 10 per cent from the borough average and in five wards by more than 20 per cent. The worst imbalance is in Merrow & Burpham ward where the average number of electors represented by each of the three councillors is 53 per cent above the borough average.

Map 1:
Existing Wards in Guildford



Key to Wards

- 1 Ash
- 2 Ash Vale
- 3 Christchurch
- 4 Clandon and Horsley
- 5 Effingham
- 6 Friary and St Nicolas
- 7 Holy Trinity
- 8 Lovelace
- 9 Merrow and Burpham
- 10 Normandy
- 11 Onslow
- 12 Pirbright
- 13 Send
- 14 Shalford
- 15 Stoke
- 16 Stoughton
- 17 The Pilgrims
- 18 Tillingbourne
- 19 Tongham
- 20 Westborough
- 21 Worplesdon

KEY

- EXISTING WARD BOUNDARY ———
- EXISTING PARISH BOUNDARY - - - - -

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 Ash	3	7,475	2,492	15	7,889	2,630	16
2 Ash Vale	2	4,686	2,343	8	5,616	2,808	24
3 Christchurch (Guildford town)	2	3,844	1,922	-11	3,946	1,973	-13
4 Clandon & Horsley	3	6,528	2,176	0	6,580	2,193	-3
5 Effingham	1	2,040	2,040	-6	2,050	2,050	-9
6 Friary & St Nicolas (Guildford town)	3	6,391	2,130	-2	6,562	2,187	-3
7 Holy Trinity (Guildford town)	2	4,628	2,314	7	5,052	2,526	12
8 Lovelace	1	1,852	1,852	-15	1,888	1,888	-16
9 Merrow & Burpham (Guildford town)	3	9,948	3,316	53	10,074	3,358	49
10 Normandy	1	2,360	2,360	9	2,402	2,402	6
11 Onslow (Guildford town)	3	6,457	2,152	-1	6,569	2,190	-3
12 Pirbright	1	1,898	1,898	-13	1,912	1,912	-15
13 Send	2	3,136	1,568	-28	3,258	1,629	-28
14 Shalford	1	3,063	3,063	41	3,093	3,093	37
15 Stoke (Guildford town)	3	5,460	1,820	-16	5,554	1,851	-18
16 Stoughton (Guildford town)	3	6,644	2,215	2	7,424	2,475	10
17 The Pilgrims	2	3,047	1,524	-30	3,111	1,556	-31
18 Tillingbourne	2	4,132	2,066	-5	4,272	2,136	-5

continued overleaf

Figure 2 (continued):
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 %
19 Tongham	1	1,679	1,679	-23	1,769	1,769	-22
20 Westborough (Guildford town)	3	6,033	2,011	-7	6,081	2,027	-10
21 Worplesdon	3	6,380	2,127	-2	6,554	2,185	-3
Totals	45	97,681	—	—	101,656	—	—
Averages	—	—	2,171	—	—	2,259	—

Source: Electorate figures are based on Guildford 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. For example, in 1997, electors in The Pilgrims ward were relatively over-represented by 30 per cent, while electors in Merrow & Burpham ward were significantly under-represented by 53 per cent. Figures have been rounded to the nearest whole number.

3. DRAFT RECOMMENDATIONS

¹² During Stage One we received representations from Guildford Borough Council, the Conservative Group on the Council, Guildford Conservative Association, Guildford District Labour Party, Guildford Liberal Democrats, Sir Paul Beresford MP, Nick Hawkins MP, five parish councils, one borough councillor, one local group and nine 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 Guildford in Surrey*. Our draft recommendations were based on the Borough Council's scheme, which achieved improved electoral equality, provided good boundaries while having regard to the statutory criteria and maintained the present mix of single- and multi-member wards. We proposed that:

- (a) Guildford Borough Council should be served by 48 councillors representing 21 wards;
- (b) the boundaries of 17 of the existing wards should be modified, while four wards should retain their existing boundaries;
- (c) there should be new warding arrangements for Ash parish and an increase in the number of councillors serving Ash and Worplesdon parish councils.

Draft Recommendation

Guildford Borough Council should comprise 48 councillors, serving 21 wards. The whole Council should continue to be elected together every four years.

¹³ Our proposals would have resulted in significant improvements in electoral equality, with the number of electors per councillor in 19 of the 21 wards varying by no more than 10 per cent from the borough average. This level of electoral equality was forecast to continue to 2002.

4. RESPONSES TO CONSULTATION

14 During the consultation on our draft recommendations report, 390 representations were received. A list of all respondents is available on request from the Commission. All representations may be inspected at the offices of Guildford Borough Council and the Commission.

Guildford Borough Council

15 The Borough Council considered that “the Commission has paid too much attention to equality of numbers and too little to communities and their interests”, and that we should reconsider our draft proposals in the light of the views expressed by the public.

16 It reported that during the course of the Council’s debate on the draft recommendations, a number of points were raised by individual members on specific areas of the borough. Members proposed that the boundary between Onslow and Friary wards in Guildford town should be adjusted so that the whole of Agraria Road is included in Friary ward; that Send and West Clandon parishes should continue to be in separate borough wards, noting that our predecessor, the Local Government Boundary Commission, had recommended the transfer of part of Send parish to West Clandon parish; and that the parishes of Normandy and Pirbright should also form separate borough wards.

17 The Council said that some members favoured the proposals for the Ash and Tongham area, while others did not. It proposed that the new Loseley ward should be renamed Shalford since the majority of the electorate live in the parish of the same name.

The Conservatives

18 The Conservative Group on the Borough Council expressed concern regarding the proposals to combine Send and West Clandon parishes, and Normandy and Pirbright parishes for borough warding purposes. The Group submitted alternative warding proposals for other parts of the borough which differed from its Stage One proposals in three areas – alternative boundaries

between Holy Trinity and Christchurch wards, and Westborough and Stoughton wards, and no change to the existing Worplesdon ward. It proposed that the new Loseley ward should be renamed Shalford, the same name as the county division covering the area. Alternatively, it would accept the proposed name of Shalford, Artington & Compton which the Borough Council had proposed at Stage One.

19 Guildford Conservative Association was disappointed that “the Commission has decided to adopt the Council’s purely numerical proposals”. In particular, the Association opposed the proposals for the existing Shalford and The Pilgrims wards, instead proposing that the two should be joined to form a three-member ward, coterminous with the county division. However, if we were to confirm our draft recommendations, it proposed that Loseley ward should be called Shalford, in line with the county division name.

The Liberal Democrats

20 The Liberal Democrat Group on the Borough Council stated that the proposals put forward by the Borough Council at Stage One were in fact officers’ proposals and were not agreed by the whole Council. Instead, the main political parties had agreed that “they would not attempt to reach a consensus over the proposals put before the Commission as there was another channel for each party to put forward their view”. The Group considered that we had disregarded the views of local people in areas such as Send, West Clandon, Normandy and Pirbright, and asked us to pay more attention to the views of local people in the final recommendations, rather than “to a simple number crunching exercise”.

21 Guildford Constituency Liberal Democrats considered that we had ignored the Liberal Democrats’ local consultation. They stated that greater weight should have been given to the community arguments expressed, and particularly the wishes of parish councils. The Liberal Democrats added that we had not made any reference to the “greater accountability and recognition of communities afforded by introducing two-member wards wherever possible in urban areas”, although they noted that the draft

recommendations in Waverley borough adopted that principle for the urban areas of Farnham and Godalming. They supported the draft recommendations for the existing wards of The Pilgrims, Shalford and Worplesdon – the only three rural wards in Guildford which fall within their constituency. In conclusion, they asked us to reconsider the Liberal Democrats’ Stage One proposals which they argued have “public support, are based upon a consistent theme of community and increased accountability, and achieve the goal of electoral equality”.

Guildford District Labour Party

22 Guildford District Labour Party asked us to reconsider our draft recommendations and instead accept the Labour Party’s Stage One proposal for a predominantly single-member ward system as it “produced wards of greater local cohesiveness and identity than the Commission’s proposed multi-member wards”. It also submitted alternative arrangements for our proposed Friary, Onslow and Stoke wards, and suggested that Friary ward should be renamed St Nicolas. The Labour Party reiterated its proposal for a separate University ward in the town.

Members of Parliament

23 Two submissions were received from Members of Parliament at Stage Three. Nick Hawkins, MP for Surrey Heath, supported the new Ash South & Tongham ward but did not agree with the proposed increase in the number of councillors for Ash Parish Council, as it would make the Council “unwieldy”. He also proposed that a better name for Ash Wharf ward might be Ash Village. Humphrey Malins CBE, MP for Woking, preferred Normandy and Pirbright to remain as separate wards, as they are distinct communities and “physically separated by the Ash ranges”.

Parish Councils

24 Surrey County Association of Parish and Town Councils and eight parish councils submitted representations during Stage Three. The Association’s view was that, in some cases, we had achieved electoral equality at the expense of local ties and clearly understood ward boundaries. It expressed concern about the proposals for the Ash and Tongham area and noted that, although the existing Tongham borough ward is over-represented compared to the borough average, it

would be relatively under-represented if compared to the councillor:elector ratios in Waverley borough and Mole Valley district, and added that this may be “a special case for preserving the concurrent parish and borough ward boundaries”. The Association asked for careful consideration to be given to any comments from Ash and Tongham parish councils.

25 East Clandon, Send, West Clandon and West Horsley parish councils all objected to the merger of Send and West Clandon parishes, instead proposing no change to both Clandon & Horsley ward and Send ward. They emphasised that the two parishes are quite different and physically separated by the A3. In addition, East Clandon, West Clandon and West Horsley parish councils outlined the important historical and community ties, and links between all four parishes in the existing Clandon & Horsley ward.

26 Normandy and Pirbright parish councils opposed the draft recommendation to amalgamate Normandy and Pirbright wards, arguing that both areas are quite distinct, have separate identities and nothing in common. Instead, they proposed no change to the existing wards.

27 Effingham Parish Council supported the proposals for no change to both its borough and parish council electoral arrangements. Shalford Parish Council considered that the proposal for its area was the best alternative “if the main objective is to equalise the number of electors for each councillor”.

Other Representations

28 A further 373 representations were received in response to our draft recommendations from local political groups, local organisations, councillors and residents.

29 Both Mole Valley Conservative Association and Mole Valley Liberal Democrats supported no change to the borough wards in the Mole Valley constituency – i.e. Effingham, Lovelace and Tillingbourne. However, they objected to the merger of Send and West Clandon parishes for community and geographical reasons, and instead proposed no change to both Clandon & Horsley and Send wards. In addition, Mole Valley Conservative Association stated that if there must be change in the area, then “both the Clandon parishes [should] be transferred to a new Clandons with Send ward” in order to “keep the Clandons as a complete entity in a single ward”. The

Association added that it would be helpful in the near future to undertake a parish boundary review to correct a “small discrepancy on the East Horsley and Effingham boundary”. We are unable to review boundaries between parishes as part of the present review. Under the Local Government and Rating Act 1997, district and borough councils have the power to undertake a review of parish arrangements in their area, including parish boundaries.

30 The Clandon Society, Lovelace Conservative Association and The Royal British Legion – West Clandon Branch all objected to the separation of East and West Clandon, as they considered that long-established community ties and links would be broken. They all proposed no change to Clandon & Horsley ward. Send Liberal Democrats stated that the proposal to merge Send and West Clandon parishes would “create an artificial boundary which would not reflect the interests of the natural communities”. They therefore wished to retain Send as a two-member ward, as it is a “distinct, coherent community”. Councillors Cave and Taylor, members for Send ward, also objected to this merger as there is no support for it locally.

31 Councillors French, Mrs Powell and Ms Wicks, members for Clandon & Horsley ward, and over 210 local residents opposed the merger of Send and West Clandon parishes, stating that they have distinct and separate identities, with the A3 forming a physical barrier. In addition, the majority of these respondents argued that there are strong community links between East and West Clandon. Councillor Davis, member for Shere division, supported no change to the existing Clandon & Horsley and Send wards, stating that “there is little affinity between West Clandon and Send, and a considerable amount of community linkage between West and East Clandon”.

32 The Ash/Tongham Branch of Surrey Heath Conservative Association, Councillor Ades (member for Ash ward), Councillor Mrs Cassar (member for Ash division) and 21 local residents supported the draft recommendations for the Ash and Tongham area, but disagreed with the proposal to increase the number of councillors serving Ash Parish Council, as it would increase costs. Ash Green Residents’ Association reiterated its proposal that Ash parish should be divided latitudinally into three two-member wards, in order to group together areas with similar characteristics. However, it stated that “if this necessitates the linking of Tongham [with Ash]”, then our proposals for the Ash area would be supported. It

also wanted ‘Ash Green’ to be included in the ward name for the area, as it is “the only wholly rural community of the parish”. The Residents’ Association did not support Ash Parish Council’s Stage One proposals for two three-member wards for the Ash area, stating that they lacked detail, had no regard for communities and were “politically divisive”.

33 Councillors Ms Hoverd and Meckiffe (Tongham parish councillors) and 54 local residents objected to the inclusion of Tongham and south Ash in the same borough ward, arguing that the urban Ash area would destroy the rural Tongham community which has different needs. The councillors favoured no change to Tongham ward.

34 Normandy and Pirbright branches of Woking Constituency Conservative Association, Councillor Newman (member for Normandy ward), Councillor Mrs Cobley (member for Pirbright ward), Councillor Cobley (a Pirbright parish councillor), Councillor Laker (member for Pirbright, Normandy & Worplesdon division) and 50 local residents all objected to the proposed two-member Normandy & Pirbright ward. Instead, they wanted to retain the two current single-member wards, arguing that the two areas reflect distinct communities with disparate interests, and are geographically and historically separate. Councillors Newman and Laker considered that in light of their views on Normandy and Pirbright, there may also be a case for retaining a separate ward for Tongham.

35 Councillors Mr and Mrs Fox, two of the three members for Stoughton ward, objected to the draft recommendations for Stoughton and Westborough wards, and believed that the most appropriate area to transfer from Stoughton to Westborough should be Shepherds Hill, Fentum Road and the remaining south side of Shepherds Lane. They stated that “there are a number of areas where the Stoughton ward boundary with Worplesdon ward is both confusing and lacking in logic” and regretted that our remit did not include reviewing parish boundaries. Councillor Marks, also a member for Stoughton ward, objected to the proposals for the ward, arguing that the Liberal Democrats’ Stage One proposal for three two-member wards in this part of the town would strengthen the “perceived local ties” in the area, and had local support.

36 Councillors Allan and Shepperd, two of the three members for Merrow & Burpham ward, supported the proposed division of the ward into two separate wards, but did not consider there was

merit in modifying the boundary between Merrow and Christchurch wards around Epsom Road and Boxgrove Road. They added that local consultation by the Liberal Democrats indicated that “a majority of residents would prefer to retain the status quo”. Councillor Ms Johnson, member for Christchurch ward, supported our draft proposals for the ward, with the exception of retaining part of the existing boundary between Merrow and Christchurch wards around Epsom Road, and retaining the whole of Warren Road in Holy Trinity ward.

37 Councillors Mrs Baker and Bridger, members for Holy Trinity ward, objected to the proposal to enlarge the ward to form a three-member ward, arguing that it would “reduce the direct accountability of councillor to elector”. They supported the minor boundary change between Christchurch and Holy Trinity wards along Cross Lanes, affecting the Hilgay area, but proposed that the existing boundary around Clandon and Lower Edgeborough roads should be retained. They supported the Liberal Democrats’ Stage One proposal for a new two-member Wey Meadow ward in the south of the town.

38 Councillor Mrs Stewart, member for Shalford ward, suggested that the proposed Loseley ward should be renamed Shalford, in line with the county division name. Alternatively, she supported the Borough Council’s Stage One proposal to name the ward Shalford, Artington & Compton.

39 A resident of Guildford town supported the proposal submitted by the Conservatives and the Liberal Democrats to split Friary & St Nicolas ward into two, instead of retaining its “present arbitrary size”. He also objected to renaming the ward Friary as it is “inaccurate”, and proposed instead that it should be called ‘Guildford West Centre’. Mrs Sharp, a Liberal Democrat former candidate for the constituency of Guildford, considered that too much attention had been given to “the Borough Council’s view” in Guildford. She stated that natural communities had been sacrificed for the sake of numbers, and asked us to reconsider our proposal and pay more attention to the views of local residents.

5. ANALYSIS AND FINAL RECOMMENDATIONS

40 As indicated previously, our prime objective in considering the most appropriate electoral arrangements for Guildford 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”.

41 However, our function is not merely arithmetical. 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.

42 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.

43 Our *Guidance* states that, while we accept that the achievement of absolute electoral equality for the authority as a whole is likely to be unattainable, we consider that, if electoral imbalances are to be kept to the minimum, 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 Forecasts

44 At Stage One Guildford Borough Council submitted electorate forecasts for the year 2002, projecting an increase in the electorate of 4 per cent from 97,681 to 101,656 over the five-year period from 1997 to 2002. It expected most of the growth to be in Guildford town, particularly in Holy Trinity and Stoughton wards, as well as in the Ash area. 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 and assumed occupancy rates. In our draft recommendations report we accepted that this is an inexact science and, having given consideration to the forecast electorates, we were satisfied that they represented the best estimates that could reasonably be made at the time.

45 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

46 Our *Guidance* indicates that we would normally expect the number of councillors serving a borough or district council to be in the range of 30 to 60.

47 Guildford Borough Council is at present served by 45 councillors. At Stage One the representations received indicated a general consensus for a council size of 48, with the exception of Guildford District Labour Party, which proposed a council size of 46. In our draft recommendations report we considered the size and distribution of the electorate, the geography and other characteristics of the area, together with the representations received. We concluded that the statutory criteria and the achievement of electoral equality would best be met by a council of 48 members.

48 At Stage Three, the only alternative to our proposed council size of 48 came from the District Labour Party, which wanted the Commission to reconsider the Party's Stage One proposals which were based on a council size of 46. However, in

view of the general support for a council of 48 members, we are confirming our draft recommendation for a council size of 48 as final.

Electoral Arrangements

49 As set out in our draft recommendations report, we carefully considered all the representations received at Stage One, including the Borough Council's scheme and the five other borough-wide schemes submitted by the various political groups. From these representations, some considerations emerged which helped to inform us when preparing our draft recommendations.

50 First, there had been a positive response to the review. Respondents, including the Borough Council, the Conservative Group on the Council, Guildford Conservative Association, Guildford District Labour Party and Guildford Liberal Democrats all made positive proposals for change to the present electoral arrangements.

51 Second, there was general agreement that there should be a small increase in council size. All representations which made a specific proposal preferred a council size ranging from 46 to 48, and we put forward a proposal for a council of 48 members, which represented the majority view amongst the representations received. Although the Commission is generally cautious about any increase in council size, there has been considerable growth in the electorate since the last review, and this is expected to continue over the next five years.

52 Third, most respondents preferred a continuation of the recent tradition of mixed single- and multi-member wards. The District Labour Party's preferred scheme was an exception in preferring predominantly single-member wards. On balance, we concluded that there was a clear overall local preference for a continuation of mixed-member wards and proposed that there should be nine three-member wards, nine two-member wards and three single-member wards.

53 Fourth, respondents asked the Commission to take into account established communities. We sought to achieve this while also seeking electoral equality across the borough, taking into account the development which is expected, especially in Stoughton and Holy Trinity wards and in the Ash area. Generally, in this review, we have sought electoral equality by the year 2002 where there appears to be some confidence about future increases in electorate. This would inevitably result in some electoral imbalance in the short term.

54 Fifth, there was a degree of consensus on the

appropriate arrangements for certain parts of the borough. The proposals from the Conservative Group on the Council and Guildford Conservative Association were very similar, with both supporting 14 of the 22 wards proposed by the Borough Council, while the Liberal Democrats supported 12 of the Council's proposed wards.

55 Finally, we noted that respondents put forward proposals at Stage One which secured some improvements in electoral equality, while also reflecting the statutory criteria. For example, the number of wards in which the number of electors per councillor would vary by more than 10 per cent from the borough average would reduce from 10 to four under the Borough Council's proposals, to five under both Conservative schemes and the District Labour Party's preferred scheme, to seven under the Liberal Democrats, and to two under the District Labour Party's alternative scheme.

56 In our draft recommendations we sought to build on these proposals in order to put forward electoral arrangements which would achieve yet further improvements in electoral equality, while also seeking to reflect the statutory criteria. Where it existed, we sought to reflect the consensus among representations for warding arrangements in particular parts of the borough. Inevitably, we could not reflect the preferences of all respondents in our draft recommendations.

57 In view of the degree of consensus behind significant elements of the Council's proposals, we concluded that we should base our draft recommendations on the Borough Council's scheme. The scheme would provide much improved electoral equality than under the current arrangements; it would maintain the present mix of single- and multi-member wards, as preferred by the majority of respondents; and it would provide good boundaries, having regard to the statutory criteria. However, to improve electoral equality further, we departed from the Council's scheme in four wards – Clandon & Horsley, Normandy, Pirbright and Send.

58 In response to our draft recommendations report, a number of respondents expressed the view that we had paid too much attention to achieving electoral equality and too little to communities and their interests in certain areas. Some argued that we should have had more regard to the local consultations undertaken by the Borough Council and the political parties. However, it is our task to balance the sometimes conflicting evidence we receive and match it against the statutory criteria. Whatever proposals

we put forward for the borough, therefore, inevitably we will not be able to reflect all the preferences of all respondents.

59 At Stage Three the Borough Council commented on our proposed wards of Send & West Clandon, Normandy & Pirbright, Onslow, Friary and Loseley, and on the Ash and Tongham area. All three political parties submitted proposals during Stage Three, in many cases reiterating their Stage One submissions.

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

- (a) Guildford town
 - Christchurch and Merrow & Burpham wards;
 - Friary & St Nicolas, Holy Trinity and Onslow wards;
 - Stoke, Stoughton and Westborough wards.
- (b) The Parished Area
 - Ash, Ash Vale and Tongham wards;
 - Clandon & Horsley, Effingham, Lovelace and Send wards;
 - Normandy, Pirbright and Worplesdon wards;
 - Shalford, The Pilgrims and Tillingbourne wards.

Guildford town

61 Guildford town accounts for more than 50 per cent of the borough's electorate. The town is represented by 22 councillors, elected from eight wards: Christchurch and Holy Trinity each elect two councillors; and Friary & St Nicolas, Merrow & Burpham, Onslow, Stoke, Stoughton and Westborough are each represented by three councillors. Based on the current council size of 45, overall the town is under-represented.

62 At Stage One, both the Borough Council and the Liberal Democrats proposed a total of 24 councillors for the town, based on a 48-member council, representing nine and 11 wards respectively. The Conservative Group on the Council and Guildford Conservative Association also proposed a total of 24 councillors for Guildford town, but representing 10 and 11 wards respectively. The District Labour Party's preferred scheme was for 23 single-member wards in the town, while its alternative proposal was for a total of nine wards, represented by 23 councillors, both based on a council size of 46.

63 We recognise the under-representation which exists in Guildford town, due in part to the housing development which has taken place throughout the town, most significantly in Merrow & Burpham ward, and that under a council of 48 members, the town merits a total of 24 members. We also note that the town is currently served by a pattern of multi-member wards, and that there is general support to retain this pattern.

64 At Stage Three in view of comments received in relation to detailed ward boundaries, there appeared to be a general consensus that the town merits 24 councillors based on a council size of 48. The majority of representations received for this area commented on specific boundaries and they are described in more detail below. Our proposed boundaries are illustrated on the large map at the back of the report.

Christchurch and Merrow & Burpham wards

65 Christchurch and Merrow & Burpham wards are located in the east of Guildford town, and the number of electors per councillor is 11 per cent below and 53 per cent above the borough average respectively (13 per cent and 49 per cent in 2002). The wards are served by two and three borough councillors respectively.

66 At Stage One the Borough Council proposed some adjustments to the current boundary between Christchurch and Holy Trinity wards which would transfer electors from Holy Trinity to Christchurch. The proposed boundary would follow Cross Lanes from the railway line, and run along the existing boundary to Warren Road. It would continue along the centre of Warren Road, instead of along the backs of houses as at present, to One Tree Corner. The north-western boundary of Christchurch ward would follow the A3, instead of the River Wey, although this modification would not affect any electors.

67 The Borough Council recognised that Merrow and Burpham are two separate communities and proposed dividing the existing ward into two new wards, using the railway line as a defined boundary between the two. The Council stated that "the vast majority of development has taken place in the Burpham local area and has increased the electorate of the community to such an extent that the division of the existing ward into these two distinct areas ... is appropriate". The Council allocated an additional two councillors to the area, resulting in a three-member Merrow ward and a two-member Burpham ward.

68 The Council proposed that the boundary between Christchurch ward and the two new wards should go north and east along Merrow Downs from Warren Road towards the allotment gardens, then north to Epsom Road. It also proposed to include numbers 121 to 143 (odd numbers) on Epsom Road, and all of Orchard Close in Merrow ward, thereby utilising much of the existing boundary. This boundary also formed part of the Stage One proposals from the Merrow Residents' Association.

69 The Conservative Association and the Conservative Group on the Council suggested that the Borough Council's proposed Christchurch ward be enlarged by adding a number of streets, including Clandon Road and Lower Edgeborough Road, from Holy Trinity ward, and they also used the A3 as the northern boundary. The Liberal Democrats used Cross Lanes as part of its proposed boundary for Christchurch ward, but the remainder of the southern ward boundary in the Warren Road area followed the existing one, except for including a few properties at the top of Albury Road and Tangier Road in Christchurch ward. Both Conservative schemes and the Liberal Democrats' scheme supported the Borough Council's proposed Burpham and Merrow wards, although the Liberal Democrats did not include some properties on the north side of Epsom Road as the Conservatives did, proposing instead to retain the existing boundary.

70 The District Labour Party's alternative scheme included two three-member wards – Merrow and Burpham, covering the existing Merrow & Burpham ward and part of Christchurch ward.

71 In our draft recommendations report, having considered carefully all the representations received, we decided to consult on the Borough Council's proposals for the three wards of Burpham, Christchurch and Merrow, which would achieve improved electoral equality. Although the other borough-wide schemes would also achieve similar electoral equality, we noted that the Borough Council's proposals had the advantage of utilising clearer boundaries, having regard to community identities, and appeared to have some support locally. Under our draft recommendations, the number of electors per councillor in Burpham, Christchurch and Merrow wards would be 5 per cent below, 1 per cent below and equal to the borough average respectively (5 per cent, 4 per cent and 3 per cent below in 2002).

72 At Stage Three the Conservative Group reiterated its initial proposal to transfer a number of roads from Holy Trinity ward to Christchurch ward "in order to tidy up the ... ward boundaries".

Guildford Constituency Liberal Democrats reiterated its Stage One proposals for the wards as detailed earlier.

73 Councillors Allan and Shepperd, members for Merrow & Burpham ward, supported the proposal to divide the ward into two. They argued that local consultation showed that most residents in this area preferred no change, and wanted to retain the existing boundary with Christchurch ward around Epsom Road. Councillor Ms Johnson, a member for Christchurch ward, also wanted to retain the existing ward boundary in this area, and to retain the whole of Warren Road in Holy Trinity ward, as under the current arrangements, rather than split the road between Christchurch and Holy Trinity wards. Councillors Mrs Baker and Bridger, members for Holy Trinity ward, supported the transfer of the Hilgay area to Christchurch ward, but questioned the proposal to modify the boundary in the south to go along the centre of Warren Road, as "there is a degree of community of feeling across the road".

74 Having carefully considered the representations received, we have decided to endorse our draft recommendation for Burpham ward as it would achieve reasonable electoral equality and has received some local support.

75 However, we have decided to move away from our draft recommendation to modify the boundary between Christchurch and Holy Trinity wards to go along the centre of Warren Road, and between Christchurch and Merrow wards to include the properties in the Epsom Road and Orchard Close area in Merrow ward. In both areas, we propose to retain the existing boundary in order to keep like communities together, as submitted by a number of respondents, except for modifying the boundary to include nos. 28, 30, 37 and 39 Tangier Road in Christchurch ward in order to incorporate the whole road in one borough ward. This minor amendment formed part of the Liberal Democrats' Stage One proposal in this area and would not adversely affect electoral equality. In order to follow ground detail, the proposed boundary between Christchurch and Merrow wards would follow the western edge of the allotment gardens and the open space north of Downside Road. This would not affect any electors.

76 Under our final recommendations, the number of electors per councillor in Burpham, Christchurch and Merrow wards would be 5 per cent, 6 per cent and 1 per cent below the borough average respectively (5 per cent, 9 per cent and 4 per cent in 2002).

Friary & St Nicolas, Holy Trinity and Onslow wards

77 The three wards of Friary & St Nicolas, Holy Trinity and Onslow are situated in the south of the town, and the number of electors per councillor in the wards is 2 per cent below, 7 per cent above and 1 per cent below the borough average respectively (3 per cent below, 12 per cent above and 3 per cent below in 2002).

78 At Stage One the Borough Council proposed a new Friary ward covering most of the existing Friary & St Nicolas ward. The north-eastern boundary of the new Friary ward would follow Chertsey Street and Stoke Road, instead of High Street, transferring some electors to Holy Trinity ward. Its northern boundary would be extended to the River Wey to include those electors south of the river, currently in Stoke ward (which is detailed later). The ward boundary between Holy Trinity and Christchurch would be modified to follow Cross Lanes in a southerly direction, then along the centre of Warren Road. The enlarged Holy Trinity ward would gain an additional councillor, to become a three-member ward. The north-eastern boundary of Onslow ward, which currently follows the railway line, would be extended to the A3 to include those electors in Ash Grove “because the only means of access ... in that road is via the A3 and to gain access to the town centre residents must travel through Onslow ward”.

79 Both Conservative schemes proposed that Friary & St Nicolas ward should be divided into two new wards, St Nicolas and St Saviours. St Nicolas ward would elect one councillor and would be formed from polling district AD plus Mareschal Road, Mountside and Mount Place from polling district AC. St Saviours ward would elect two councillors and comprise polling districts AA and AB (Friary East and West) and polling district FA (Stoke South). While the Conservative Group supported the Borough Council’s proposed Onslow ward, the Conservative Association proposed a new two-member Guildford Park ward covering the University, Ash Grove and part of the existing Friary & St Nicolas ward (those electors in the area bounded by Wodeland Avenue, High Street, Park Street and the railway line). The remainder of Onslow would form a modified two-member Onslow ward.

80 The District Labour Party’s multi-member ward proposal included a new St Nicolas ward which would cover most of the existing Friary & St Nicolas ward. Its north-eastern boundary with Holy Trinity ward would follow the existing

boundary of the River Wey as far as High Street, but then run along High Street, Chertsey Street, Stoke Road and York Road, and between Kings Road and Queens Road until it rejoined the existing boundary of the railway line. Holy Trinity ward would be extended northwards to Epsom Road (the A246), to include part of Christchurch ward. Onslow ward would be divided into two wards, Onslow and University.

81 The Liberal Democrats proposed three two-member wards of Friary, Holy Trinity and Wey Meadow, in place of the Borough Council’s two three-member wards of Holy Trinity and Friary. They also proposed a minor boundary adjustment between the proposed Wey Meadow and Onslow wards, which would include the whole of Agraria Road in Wey Meadow ward, arguing that “this is an opportunity to improve the local community feeling by bringing both sides [of the road] into a single ward”. No further changes were proposed for Onslow ward as “there is no wish locally to see the University represented by a separate ward councillor, since this is likely to reduce accountability”.

82 Our draft recommendations adopted the Borough Council’s proposals for all three wards. The proposals would retain broadly the existing ward pattern in the area, follow well-defined boundaries, and have regard to community identities. We noted the Liberal Democrats’ proposal to include the whole of Agraria Road in one ward, but in the absence of further support for it, we were content to retain the existing boundary along the centre of Agraria Road and included it as part of our draft recommendations.

83 We did not consider that the proposals from the District Labour Party for a single-member University ward, or from the Conservative Association for a single-member Guildford Park ward focused on the University, would provide for convenient and effective local government, particularly as the majority of the electorate would be students and there would be some periods when there would be few electors in the ward. The Liberal Democrats considered that it would “reduce accountability”, and move away from the pattern of multi-member wards in the town. We included the Borough Council’s proposed Onslow ward as part of our draft recommendations. The number of electors per councillor in Friary, Holy Trinity and Onslow wards would be 1 per cent above, 10 per cent below and 7 per cent above the borough average respectively (equal to the average, 7 per cent below and 4 per cent above in 2002).

84 In response to our draft recommendations the Borough Council proposed that the boundary between Friary and Onslow wards (along Agraria Road) should be modified to include the whole of Agraria Road in Friary ward, "as this would give a clean boundary line". The Conservative Group reiterated its Stage One proposal that Friary & St Nicolas ward should cease to exist and that two new wards, St Nicolas and St Saviours, should cover the same area and part of Stoke South (polling district FA). It supported our proposed Onslow ward, and proposed a modified Holy Trinity ward which extended further into Christchurch ward. The Liberal Democrats reiterated their Stage One proposals which included three two-member wards instead of our proposed two three-member wards of Friary and Holy Trinity, and the whole of Agraria Road being included in one ward.

85 Guildford District Labour Party reiterated its view that Friary ward should be renamed St Nicolas, electing two councillors as at present, and that 1,942 electors located south of the A3 and north of the railway should form part of Stoke ward as at present, to achieve "a more manageable and better shaped Friary ward, and preserve the links between the parts of the present Stoke ward either side of the A3". The Labour Party reiterated its preference for a separate University ward as "students form a quite distinct set of electors to those in the remainder of the Onslow ward".

86 Councillors Mrs Baker and Bridger, the two members for Holy Trinity ward, opposed the proposals for the modified three-member ward "as it takes the ward further away from its heartland and makes the ward too big". They proposed that the south-western part of the ward should be included in a new Wey Meadow ward, as proposed by the Liberal Democrat Group at Stage One. A resident of Friary & St Nicolas ward supported the Conservative and Liberal Democrat groups' Stage One proposals, that the ward should be split as "the Friary bit has little in common with the St Nicolas bit". He also objected to renaming the ward Friary as it was "inaccurate", and proposed that 'Guildford West Centre' would be more appropriate. Councillor Ms Johnson, one of the two members for Christchurch ward, and both members for Holy Trinity ward wanted to retain the existing ward boundary between Holy Trinity and Christchurch in the Warren Road area for community reasons.

87 We have given careful consideration to the evidence and representations received, but are not convinced that they justify substantial change from

our draft recommendations in the southern part of the town. We maintain the view that a separate University ward would not provide convenient and effective local government due to the high proportion of student population. However, as stated earlier, we propose to retain the existing ward boundary between Holy Trinity and Christchurch wards in the Warren Road area (subject to nos. 28, 30, 37 and 39 Tangier Road being included in Christchurch ward, so that the whole of the road falls within one borough ward in order to reflect community ties). This would not adversely affect electoral equality. We propose to retain the existing Friary & St Nicolas ward name to reflect the communities in the ward, and endorse the proposal submitted by both the Borough Council and the Liberal Democrats to include the whole of Agraria Road in Friary & St Nicolas ward.

88 Under our final recommendations the number of electors per councillor in the wards of Friary & St Nicolas, Holy Trinity and Onslow would be 2 per cent above, 6 per cent below and 5 per cent above the borough average, forecast to improve further in 2002.

Stoke, Stoughton and Westborough wards

89 The three three-member wards of Stoke, Stoughton and Westborough have electoral variances of 16 per cent, 2 per cent and 7 per cent respectively (18 per cent, 10 per cent and 10 per cent in 2002).

90 At Stage One the Borough Council proposed that those electors south of the River Wey and north of the railway line should be transferred from Stoke ward to the new Friary ward (detailed earlier), and that the boundary between Stoke ward and Christchurch ward should follow the A3, instead of the River Wey, to include Stoke Mill House in Stoke ward. Stoke would become a two-member ward. The Council proposed that the boundary between Stoughton and Westborough wards should be modified. From the junction of the A3/Worplesdon Road, it would run north along Worplesdon Road and west along the backs of numbers 2-92 Sheepfold Road. It would then continue across Rydes Hill Road to the town boundary. This would involve the transfer of some 120 electors from Westborough to Stoughton, and approximately 800 electors from Stoughton to Westborough.

91 Both Conservative schemes supported the Council's proposals for Stoke ward, but retained Sheepfold and Worplesdon roads in Stoughton

ward, rather than transferring them to a modified Westborough ward. The Conservative Association argued that the area is “an integral part of Stoughton”. In addition, the Conservative Group on the Council proposed that some 280 electors in the Rydeshill area, currently in Worplesdon ward (and parish), should be transferred to Westborough ward.

92 The Liberal Democrats supported the Council’s proposed Stoke ward, except for retaining the River Wey as the boundary between Stoke and Christchurch wards (thereby retaining Stoke Mill House in Christchurch ward). They proposed renaming Stoke ward as Bellfields or North Guildford “since the name Stoke is no longer relevant to the area”. In place of the Council’s proposed two three-member wards of Stoughton and Westborough, the Liberal Democrats proposed three two-member wards – Grange Park, Rydes Hill and Westborough.

93 The District Labour Party’s alternative proposal was for three three-member wards to cover the area of the existing Stoke, Stoughton and Westborough wards. Its proposed boundary between Stoughton and Westborough wards was similar to the Borough Council’s. The Party also included an area south of the railway line from the existing Friary & St Nicolas ward in its proposed Stoke ward, and retained Stoke as a three-member ward.

94 Our draft recommendations included the Borough Council’s proposals for all three wards, with the exception of making the A3, which is used as a boundary in the neighbouring areas, the boundary between Stoke and Friary wards, instead of the River Wey. This would not affect any additional electors. The Council’s proposals would retain the existing ward pattern in the area, using well-defined boundaries and having regard to local identities. Although the District Labour Party’s proposals were slightly better on electoral equality, they were based on a 46-member council. Under our draft recommendations for a 48-member council, the number of electors per councillor in Stoke, Stoughton and Westborough wards would be 13 per cent above, 3 per cent below and 9 per cent above the borough average respectively (10 per cent, 6 per cent and 6 per cent above in 2002).

95 At Stage Three the Conservative Group supported our proposed Stoke ward, but opposed the transfer of Sheepfold and Worplesdon roads from Stoughton ward to Westborough ward. Guildford Constituency Liberal Democrats supported our proposed Stoke ward, but restated its Stage One proposal for three two-member wards – Grange Park, Rydes Hill and Westborough

– in place of the modified two three-member wards of Stoughton and Westborough. The District Labour Party suggested that the proposed Stoke ward should be extended south across the A3, as under the current arrangements, to include 1,942 electors from the proposed Friary ward, and that Stoke ward should continue to elect three councillors, as at present. Friary ward would elect two councillors, instead of the current three.

96 The three members for Stoughton ward opposed the proposals for this area. Two of the three members, Councillors Mr and Mrs Fox, proposed instead that the only change to the boundary between Stoughton and Westborough wards should involve the transfer of Shepherds Hill, Fentum Road and the southern side of Shepherds Lane, from Stoughton to Westborough. Under this proposal, we calculated that, based on 2002 electorate figures, Westborough ward would have good electoral equality and Stoughton ward would be under-represented by 12 per cent. Furthermore, the members considered that the boundary between Stoughton and Worplesdon wards is confusing and regretted that the Commission is unable to review parish boundaries as part of the current review. Councillor Marks supported the Liberal Democrats’ proposals for three two-member wards in the area.

97 We have carefully considered the representations received during the consultation period. However, we remain of the view that the proposals put forward by the Borough Council for the three wards in this area would provide the best electoral equality taking into account the forecast growth, notably in Stoughton ward, and build on the existing ward pattern, having regard to well-defined boundaries and communities. We therefore confirm our draft recommendations for the three wards as final. Although some degree of imbalance would persist in Stoke ward (13 per cent, improving to 10 per cent in 2002), we consider that any further improvement in this area is limited due to the ward’s well-defined boundaries of the A3 to the south, the railway line to the west, the town boundary to the north and the River Wey to the east.

The Parished Area

98 Guildford borough contains 24 parishes which are covered by 13 borough wards (see Map 1). The number of electors per councillor varies by more than 10 per cent from the borough average in seven wards, two of which, The Pilgrims and Shalford, vary by at least 30 per cent from the average. The wards are discussed in more detail in the following paragraphs.

Ash, Ash Vale and Tongham wards

⁹⁹ Ash parish currently comprises the two borough wards of Ash and Ash Vale, represented by three and two borough councillors respectively. A significant amount of new housing development is earmarked for the parish over the next five years. The number of electors per councillor is 15 per cent above the average in Ash ward and 8 per cent above in Ash Vale ward (16 per cent and 24 per cent respectively in 2002). Tongham ward (and parish) is over-represented, with 23 per cent fewer electors than the borough average (22 per cent fewer in 2002).

¹⁰⁰ At Stage One, in order to improve electoral equality, the Borough Council proposed a reconfiguration of the three wards and an additional borough councillor for the area. In the north of Ash it proposed a revised two-member Ash Vale ward; the centre of Ash would be covered by a new two-member Ash Wharf ward; while a new three-member Ash South & Tongham ward would cover the southern part of Ash and the whole of Tongham parish.

¹⁰¹ The Borough Council's proposed boundary between the revised Ash Vale ward and the new Ash Wharf ward would follow the existing boundary along the Basingstoke Canal as far as Ash Hill Road (the A321) in the west of the area, then run along the centre of Vale Road before turning east and following the rear of properties on the north side of Heathvale Bridge Road. The boundary would continue to the south of the ambulance station, and run eastwards across Ash Common until it rejoined the existing boundary. The Council's proposed boundary between the new Ash South & Tongham and Ash Wharf wards would follow the railway line in an east-west direction, then turn south along the centre of Love Lane and west along Ash Street, as far as Star Lane. It would continue along the rear of properties on the east side of Star Lane, and run in a westerly direction until it rejoined the existing boundary, thereby including the whole of Shawfield Lane in Ash South & Tongham ward.

¹⁰² Both Conservative schemes supported the Borough Council's proposals in this area. In its preferred scheme, the District Labour Party proposed that the existing wards of Ash and Ash Vale be replaced by six single-member wards, while Tongham parish would be combined with the parishes of Puttonham, Seale & Sands, Shackelford and Wanborough to form a new Tongham & Pilgrims ward. Under its alternative multi-member ward scheme, Ash parish area would be served

by two three-member wards. Guildford Liberal Democrats proposed three two-member wards to cover the existing Ash and Ash Vale wards, with Tongham ward retaining its existing boundaries.

¹⁰³ Nick Hawkins MP considered that there should be a new ward combining Tongham with the southern part of Ash, and Surrey Heath Conservative Association informed the Borough Council that it supported the Council's proposals for Ash and Tongham parishes. The Borough Council also heard from Ash Parish Council, whose view was that the Ash parish area should be served by two three-member wards; from Tongham Parish Council, who opposed the parish being linked with the southern part of Ash; and from Ash Green Residents' Association, which stated that Tongham should remain a separate ward, although it supported the Council's proposed Ash Vale and Ash Wharf wards. The Residents' Association stated that Ash Green should be included in the name of any ward covering the southern part of Ash and Tongham.

¹⁰⁴ The Borough Council had indicated that, as a result of its consultation exercise, no consensus had been reached on its proposals for this area. However, in view of the significant electoral imbalance which exists in Tongham ward, we consulted on the Borough Council's proposals for two two-member wards of Ash Vale and Ash Wharf, and one three-member Ash South & Tongham ward. We noted that the growth in electorate forecast over the five-year period in the Ash parish area makes it difficult to achieve electoral equality both now and in 2002. Under our draft recommendations, the number of electors per councillor would be 5 per cent below the borough average in Ash South & Tongham ward, 13 per cent below in Ash Vale ward and 10 per cent above in Ash Wharf ward (1 per cent below, 6 per cent above and 7 per cent above respectively in 2002).

¹⁰⁵ At Stage Three the Borough Council stated that "although some members favoured the linking of Ash South with the parish of Tongham, others did not". The Conservative Group on the Council, Nick Hawkins MP, Surrey Heath Conservative Association – Ash and Tongham Branch, Councillor Ades (member for Ash ward), Councillor Mrs Cassar (member for Ash division) and 21 residents of the area supported our proposals for all three borough wards. In addition, Nick Hawkins MP proposed that Ash Wharf ward could be renamed Ash Village.

106 Ash Green Residents' Association repeated its view that Ash parish should be divided into three two-member borough wards. Alternatively, it would support the draft recommendations if the parish must be linked with Tongham, but proposed that Ash Green should be included in the ward name as it is the only wholly rural community in the parish. Councillors Hoverd and Meckiffe, Tongham parish councillors, and 54 residents of the area opposed the merger of Tongham with the southern part of Ash in order to preserve urban and rural interests, and supported no change to Tongham ward. Surrey County Association of Parish and Town Councils asked us to give careful consideration to any comments from Ash and Tongham parish councils.

107 Having carefully considered the representations received, we remain concerned at the levels of electoral inequality which would persist if Tongham ward was retained on its existing boundaries. We note that the Ash and Tongham area as a whole merits seven councillors and that the draft recommendations would provide an appropriate balance of representation across a relatively urban area. We have received views both for and against the proposal, and we remain of the view that the Borough Council's proposals for the area would achieve the best level of electoral equality, having regard to the statutory criteria. We therefore confirm our draft recommendations for Ash South & Tongham, Ash Vale and Ash Wharf wards as final.

108 We also consider that the ward names proposed by the Borough Council satisfactorily reflect the areas covered and received a degree of support locally. We are therefore content to include them as part of our final recommendations.

Clandon & Horsley, Effingham, Lovelace and Send wards

109 The number of electors per councillor in Clandon & Horsley ward, which comprises the parishes of East Clandon, East Horsley, West Clandon and West Horsley, is equal to the borough average (3 per cent below in 2002). Send parish currently forms a ward on its own and is over-represented, with each of the two councillors for the ward representing on average 28 per cent fewer electors than the borough average (unchanged in 2002). Lovelace ward, which comprises Ockham, Ripley and Wisley parishes, has 15 per cent fewer electors than the borough average (16 per cent in 2002).

110 At Stage One the Borough Council, the Conservative Group on the Council, the Conservative Association and the Liberal Democrats supported the retention of Send, Clandon & Horsley and Lovelace wards. Under both its schemes, the District Labour Party proposed that Send parish should be combined with the parishes of East Clandon and West Clandon to form a new two-member Send & Clandon ward; that West Horsley should form a single-member ward on its own; and that Lovelace ward boundary should be extended to include the parishes of East Horsley and Effingham, to form a new three-member ward. However, as an alternative to its preferred scheme, it considered retaining the existing Lovelace ward.

111 Send and West Clandon parish councils, Sir Paul Beresford MP, The Clandon Society and 10 local residents all opposed the merger of Send and West Clandon parishes for reasons of community identity, geography and history. East Clandon Parish Council informed the Borough Council that it had no objections to the proposal for a modified Clandon & Horsley ward, excluding West Clandon parish. Ockham Parish Council proposed no change to Lovelace ward.

112 To address the high level of over-representation in Send ward, the Borough Council had initially consulted on a proposal to create a new ward comprising the parishes of Send and West Clandon, and a modified Clandon & Horsley ward. However, in the light of the responses it received it proposed no change to both Send and Clandon & Horsley wards.

113 In view of the widespread support for no change to Lovelace ward, we consulted on no change for the ward. Under our draft recommendations, the number of electors per councillor would be 9 per cent below the borough average (11 per cent below in 2002). We recognised that a degree of electoral inequality would persist in Lovelace ward, but considered that community identity in the area outweighed any negative effect of the continuing electoral imbalance.

114 While we were sympathetic to the views expressed, we remained concerned at the high level of electoral imbalance which would persist in Send ward. Having considered alternative configurations of warding arrangements for this area, including combining Send parish with Ripley parish to its east, we decided to consult on a two-member Send

& West Clandon ward and a three-member East Clandon & Horsley ward in order to secure improved electoral equality. Under our draft recommendations the number of electors per councillor would be 1 per cent above the borough average in Send & West Clandon ward and 9 per cent below in East Clandon & Horsley ward (equal to the average and 12 per cent below respectively in 2002).

115 At Stage Three the Borough Council stated that its members were surprised that the Commission had proposed the merger of Send and West Clandon “despite the overwhelming local opposition” and the fact that in 1982 the Local Government Boundary Commission had transferred a large part of Send parish to West Clandon parish “on the basis that the two parishes were distinctly separate”. The Council’s general view was that electoral equality “should be applied more flexibly in rural areas than in urban areas”.

116 The Conservative Group on the Council was concerned about the proposed merger of Send and West Clandon parishes, as the Borough Council had consulted on this merger and rejected it on the grounds of community identity, geography and history. Guildford Constituency Liberal Democrats stated that “the Commission have ignored those parts of the Borough Council officers’ proposals (West Clandon and Send) on which there had been significant consultation with residents”. The Liberal Democrat Group on the Council was also concerned that we had disregarded the views of local people which had been evident through the Liberal Democrats’ local consultation.

117 East Clandon, Send, West Clandon and West Horsley parish councils, Lovelace Conservative Association, Mole Valley Liberal Democrats, Send Liberal Democrats, The Clandon Society, West Clandon Branch of The Royal British Legion, the member for Shere division, the two members for Send ward, the three members for Clandon & Horsley ward and over 210 local residents all opposed our draft recommendation to combine Send and West Clandon parishes to form one ward, citing community, cultural, geographical and historical reasons. They all supported no change in this area. Mole Valley Conservative Association also opposed the merger, and stated that if there must be change, then both East and West Clandon parishes together with Send parish should form a new Clandons & Send ward in order to keep the Clandons “as a complete entity”. Mole Valley Conservative Association and Mole Valley Liberal Democrats also supported no change to Lovelace ward.

118 We have given careful consideration to the views expressed to us during the consultation stage, including that there are strong community ties between East and West Clandon, and between the Clandons and Horsleys; that there is a community of interests between the areas which is not shared by Send north of the A3; the presence of the A3 which forms the boundary between West Clandon and Send; and that Send is a community distinct from the surrounding area.

119 While we remain concerned at the electoral inequality which would persist in Send ward if it is retained on its existing boundaries, we recognise the limitations due to its position in the borough: to the south-west is Guildford town, to the south is the A3, and to the north and west the parish boundary is also the borough boundary. We have considered different configurations of parishes in this area in an attempt to address the significant electoral imbalance which exists in Send, including combining the ward with Lovelace ward to its east which comprises the parishes of Ripley, Ockham and Wisley. However, such a combination would have little advantage in terms of electoral equality in the area as a whole and may have an adverse effect on the communities, recognising that the parishes of Send and Ripley in particular often have conflicting needs. Any improvement to the electoral imbalance in Lovelace ward is restricted by its location in the north-east corner of the borough and the configuration of settlements in the wider area.

120 In these exceptional circumstances, we have therefore concluded that the only real alternative is to retain the wards of Clandon & Horsley, Send and Lovelace on their existing boundaries. Under our final recommendations the number of electors per councillor in Clandon & Horsley, Lovelace and Send wards would be 7 per cent above, 9 per cent below and 23 per cent below the borough average respectively (4 per cent above, 11 per cent below and 23 per cent below in 2002).

121 Under the current arrangements, the number of electors per councillor in Effingham ward (and parish) is 6 per cent below the borough average (9 per cent in 2002).

122 At Stage One the Borough Council, both Conservative schemes and the Liberal Democrats all proposed no change to Effingham ward. Under both its schemes, the District Labour Party proposed that Effingham ward should be combined with Lovelace ward and East Horsley parish to form a new three-member ward.

However, as an alternative to its preferred scheme, it considered retaining the existing Effingham ward. Effingham Parish Council proposed no change to Effingham ward.

123 In the light of the widespread support for no change and the good electoral equality in the ward, we consulted on no change for Effingham ward. Under our draft recommendations the number of electors per councillor would be equal to the borough average in Effingham ward (3 per cent below in 2002).

124 In response to our consultation report Mole Valley Conservative Association, Mole Valley Liberal Democrats and Effingham Parish Council supported no change to Effingham ward.

125 We have not received any opposition to our draft recommendation for this ward which has good electoral equality. We are therefore confirming our proposal for no change to Effingham ward as final.

Normandy, Pirbright and Worplesdon wards

126 These three wards (and parishes) are situated in the north-west of the borough. The number of electors per councillor is 9 per cent above the borough average in Normandy ward (6 per cent in 2002), 13 per cent below in Pirbright ward (15 per cent in 2002) and 2 per cent below in Worplesdon ward (3 per cent in 2002).

127 At Stage One, in its initial consultation exercise, the Borough Council proposed merging the two single-member wards of Normandy and Pirbright to form a two-member ward which would improve electoral equality. However, the Council stated that there had been opposition to the proposal in question as the parishes considered that they had little in common. It also indicated that its proposal to retain Worplesdon ward on its existing boundaries had local support. In its submission, therefore, the Borough Council proposed that there should be no change to the three wards.

128 The Conservative Association and the Liberal Democrats supported the retention of these wards on their existing boundaries. While the Conservative Group supported the Borough Council's proposals for Normandy and Pirbright, it proposed the transfer of a number of streets from Worplesdon ward (and parish) to Westborough ward. In both its schemes, the District Labour Party proposed that the parishes of Normandy and Pirbright should be combined to form a new two-member ward. Under its preferred scheme, the

Labour Party proposed that three single-member wards should cover the existing Worplesdon ward. Alternatively, it supported no change to Worplesdon ward. Worplesdon Parish Council supported no change to the borough warding for its area and objected to any part of its area being included in another borough ward. Normandy and Pirbright parish councils and the Normandy Branch of Woking Constituency Conservative Association informed the Borough Council of their opposition to a merger of Normandy and Pirbright wards as the areas are quite distinct.

129 Having carefully considered the evidence received at Stage One, which reflected some difference of opinion, we remained concerned at the electoral imbalance which would persist in Normandy and Pirbright wards. We therefore consulted on a two-member Normandy & Pirbright ward, which had the support of the District Labour Party and would provide a superior level of electoral equality for the area. In view of the good electoral equality found in Worplesdon ward, we consulted on no change for the ward. Under our draft recommendations the number of electors per councillor would be 5 per cent above the borough average in Normandy & Pirbright ward (2 per cent in 2002) and 5 per cent above the average in Worplesdon ward (3 per cent in 2002).

130 At Stage Three the Borough Council stated that members opposed the merger of Normandy and Pirbright wards and suggested that the Commission be more flexible when attempting to achieve electoral equality in rural areas, compared to urban areas. The Conservative and Liberal Democrat groups on the Council, and Guildford Constituency Liberal Democrats supported the views expressed for no change to both wards. In addition, the Conservative Group changed its view from Stage One, and instead supported no change to Worplesdon ward. Guildford Constituency Liberal Democrats also supported no change to Worplesdon ward.

131 Normandy and Pirbright parish councils, Humfrey Malins MP, the Normandy and Pirbright branches of Woking Constituency Conservative Association, both Normandy and Pirbright borough councillors (Councillors Mrs Cobley and Newman), Councillor Mr Cobley (a Pirbright parish councillor), Councillor Laker, member for Worplesdon division, and 50 residents of the Normandy and Pirbright areas all objected to the proposed merger of Normandy and Pirbright wards, mainly for community, geographical and historical reasons.

132 We have noted the views expressed to us regarding Normandy and Pirbright wards. In seeking to address the relative levels of under- and over-representation in these areas, we recognise that alternative options are very limited, particularly in view of the consequential changes which we are proposing in the surrounding areas. A two-member ward covering the area, as proposed in our draft recommendations, would have a clear advantage in electoral equality terms but, it has been argued, would be at the cost of community identities. Normandy and Pirbright are described as “separate and distinct villages, geographically separated by large tracts of military training grounds [with] no public transport services linking the two”. We have heard local views and have concluded that in this area community identity outweighs the need to improve the current electoral imbalances. We therefore propose to move away from our draft recommendations and propose no change to the existing Normandy and Pirbright wards.

133 Under our final recommendations the number of electors per councillor in Normandy and Pirbright wards would be 16 per cent above and 7 per cent below the borough average respectively (13 per cent above and 10 per cent below in 2002). We recognise that a degree of inequality would remain, but conclude that the two areas are distinct and should maintain separate representation.

134 In view of the good electoral equality and general support for no change to Worplesdon ward, we confirm our draft recommendation for the ward as final.

Shalford, The Pilgrims and Tillingbourne wards

135 Shalford ward (and parish) is served by one borough councillor, who represents 41 per cent more electors than the borough average (37 per cent in 2002). The Pilgrims ward currently comprises the parishes of Artington, Compton, Puttenham, Seale & Sands, Shackleford and Wanborough, and the number of electors represented by each of the two councillors for the ward is 30 per cent below the borough average (31 per cent in 2002). In Tillingbourne ward, which comprises the parishes of Albury, St Martha and Shere, each of the two councillors represents on average 5 per cent fewer electors than the borough average (unchanged in 2002).

136 At Stage One the Borough Council proposed that the parishes of Artington and Compton (currently in The Pilgrims ward), which lie east of

the A3, should be combined with Shalford parish to form a new two-member Shalford, Artington & Compton ward. The remaining parishes in The Pilgrims ward would form a new single-member Pilgrims ward. The Council also proposed no change to Tillingbourne ward. The Liberal Democrats supported the Borough Council's proposals for all three wards, but suggested that the proposed Shalford, Artington & Compton ward be called 'Loseley'.

137 The Conservative Association and the Conservative Group on the Council supported the Borough Council's proposal for Tillingbourne ward, but proposed the amalgamation of the existing Shalford and The Pilgrims wards to form a new three-member ward. The District Labour Party proposed a new two-member ward, comprising the parishes of Puttenham, Seale & Sands, Shackleford, Tongham and Wanborough to cover the south-west of the borough. It also proposed combining the parishes of Artington, Compton and Shalford to form a two-member ward, while retaining Tillingbourne ward on its existing boundaries. In addition the Labour Party put forward other proposals which involved splitting parishes in the eastern part of the borough.

138 We considered that the Borough Council's proposals for these three wards would secure improved electoral equality while taking into account the geography and community identity of the area. We were also aware that its proposals had some degree of support locally and would bring together communities with similar interests. Accordingly, we consulted on the Council's proposals in this area. We also consulted on the Liberal Democrats' proposed ward name of 'Loseley' with which they considered communities in the area would identify. Under our draft recommendations the number of electors per councillor would be 3 per cent below the average in Pilgrims ward (the name being modified from 'The Pilgrims'), 2 per cent above in Loseley ward and 2 per cent above in Tillingbourne ward (5 per cent below, 1 per cent below and 1 per cent above respectively in 2002).

139 At Stage Three Guildford Constituency Liberal Democrats supported the draft recommendations for our proposed Loseley and Pilgrims wards – both of which fall within their constituency. The Borough Council stated that the name 'Loseley' did not find favour, and suggested that 'Shalford' would be a better name “as the majority of the electorate lived in that parish”. The Conservative Group on the Council reiterated its Stage One view that the existing Shalford and The Pilgrims wards

should be merged to form a new three-member ward, coterminous with the county division. Guildford Conservative Association also voiced this opinion, but stated that if we confirm our draft recommendation, then Loseley ward should be renamed Shalford.

140 Shalford Parish Council supported the proposed Loseley ward. Councillor Mrs Stewart, member for Shalford ward, proposed that the new Loseley ward name should be changed to Shalford (the same name as the county division), or if not, to Shalford, Artington & Compton, as proposed by the Borough Council at Stage One. Mole Valley Conservative Association and Mole Valley Liberal Democrats both supported the retention of Tillingbourne ward on its existing boundaries.

141 Having considered the representations received at Stage Three, we maintain the view that the Borough Council's proposals for these three wards would provide good levels of electoral equality, while having regard to the statutory criteria. We are therefore confirming our draft recommendations for all three wards as final, subject to renaming Loseley ward as Shalford which has more local support.

Electoral Cycle

142 In the initial stage of the review we did not receive any proposals for change to the Borough Council's electoral cycle. In our draft recommendations report, therefore, we proposed that the present system of whole-council elections every four years in Guildford be retained. At Stage Three no comments were received to the contrary, and we confirm our draft recommendation as final.

Conclusions

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

- (a) in Guildford town – we propose that the Friary & St Nicolas ward name should be retained, and that the whole of Agraria Road be included in the ward; the existing boundary between Christchurch and Holy Trinity wards in the Warren Road area should be retained, except for transferring nos. 28, 30, 37 and 39 Tangier Road from Holy Trinity to Christchurch; and the existing boundary between Christchurch

and Merrow wards in the Epsom Road area should be retained;

- (b) the retention of the wards of Clandon & Horsley, Normandy, Pirbright and Send on their existing boundaries.

144 We conclude that, in Guildford:

- (a) there should be an increase in council size from 45 to 48;
- (b) there should be 22 wards, one more than at present;
- (c) the boundaries of 13 of the existing wards should be modified;
- (d) whole-council elections should continue to be held every four years.

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

146 As Figure 3 shows, our recommendations would result in a reduction in the number of wards with an electoral variance of more than 10 per cent from 10 to four, with only one ward, Send, varying by more than 20 per cent above the borough average. This improved level of electoral equality would improve marginally in 2002. We conclude that our recommendations would best meet the need for electoral equality, having regard to the statutory criteria.

Final Recommendation

Guildford Borough Council should comprise 48 councillors serving 22 wards, as detailed and named in Figures 1 and 4, and illustrated on Map 2 and in Appendix A. The whole Council should continue to be elected together every four years.

Parish Council Electoral Arrangements

147 In undertaking reviews of electoral arrangements, we are required to comply as far as is reasonably practicable with the provisions set out in Schedule 11 to the 1972 Act. The Schedule provides that if a parish is to be divided between different borough wards, it must also be divided into parish wards, so that each parish ward lies wholly within a single ward of the borough. Accordingly, in our draft recommendations report we proposed

Figure 3:
Comparison of Current and Recommended Electoral Arrangements

	1997 electorate		2002 forecast electorate	
	Current arrangements	Final recommendations	Current arrangements	Final recommendations
Number of councillors	45	48	45	48
Number of wards	21	22	21	22
Average number of electors per councillor	2,171	2,035	2,259	2,118
Number of wards with a variance more than 10 per cent from the average	10	4	12	3
Number of wards with a variance more than 20 per cent from the average	5	1	6	1

consequential changes to the warding arrangements for Ash parish to reflect the proposed borough wards.

¹⁴⁸ Ash Parish Council currently has 12 councillors serving three parish wards. At Stage One, to reflect its borough warding proposals for the Ash area, the Borough Council proposed that Ash parish be re-warded into three new parish wards: Ash South, Ash Vale and Ash Wharf, represented by five parish councillors each. This proposal would increase the number of councillors representing the parish from 12 to 15. Ash Parish Council advised the Borough Council that the number of councillors representing the parish should be increased from 12 to 14, representing two modified wards; each parish ward would be represented by seven councillors. However, we consulted on the Borough Council's proposed borough wards for the Ash area, and therefore included the Borough Council's proposals for Ash parish as part of our draft recommendations.

¹⁴⁹ In response to our consultation report, Nick Hawkins MP, Surrey Heath Conservative Association (Ash/Tongham Branch), Councillor Ades, member for Ash, Councillor Mrs Cassar, member for Ash division, and 21 local residents all objected to the proposed increase in the number of parish councillors on Ash Parish Council, citing additional costs. No further comments were received from the Borough Council or Ash Parish Council.

¹⁵⁰ Having considered all the evidence received, and in light of the confirmation of our proposed borough wards in the area, we confirm our draft recommendation for warding Ash parish as final.

¹⁵¹ However, we are concerned at the opposition received to the proposed increase in the number of parish councillors. We recognise that under the Local Government and Rating Act 1997 the Borough Council can undertake a review of parish council electoral arrangements in its area. We consider that, before an increase in the number of councillors on the Parish Council is recommended, there should be widespread local consultation to assess whether there is local support. Having consulted on this proposal, we have received local opposition to it and, in the circumstances, do not consider that the evidence provided to the Commission justifies an increase in council size. We therefore propose that, at present, Ash Parish Council should continue to have 12 councillors representing the proposed three wards, as illustrated in Appendix A.

Final Recommendation

Ash Parish Council should comprise 12 councillors, as at present, representing three wards: Ash South, Ash Vale and Ash Wharf, represented by four councillors each. The parish ward boundaries should be modified to reflect the borough wards in the area, as illustrated on Maps A2 and A3 in Appendix A.

152 At Stage One Worplesdon Parish Council proposed an additional councillor for Wood Street parish ward, to improve electoral equality with its other three parish wards. This would increase the parish council size to 16. We consulted on this proposal in our draft recommendations report.

153 At Stage Three no comments were received in relation to this proposal and we are therefore content to confirm our draft recommendation as final.

Final Recommendation

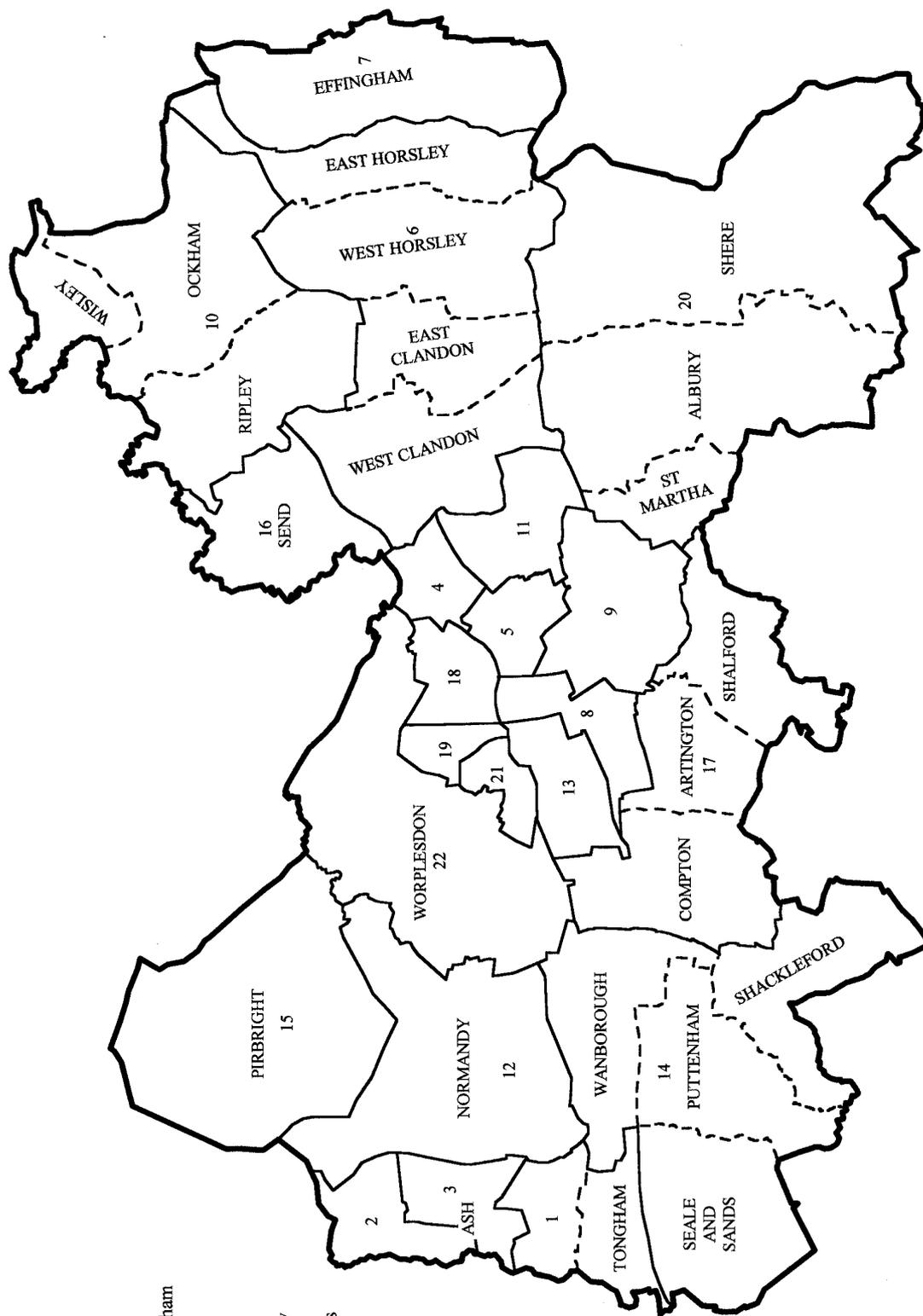
Worplesdon Parish Council should comprise 16 councillors, one more than at present, representing the existing four parish wards: Fairlands (represented by five councillors), Jacob's Well (three), Perry Hill (three) and Wood Street (five).

154 In our draft recommendations report we proposed that there should be no change to the electoral cycle of parish councils in the borough, and are confirming this as final.

Final Recommendation

For parish councils, whole-council elections should continue to take place every four years, on the same cycle as that of the Borough Council.

Map 2:
The Commission's Final Recommendations for Guildford



- Key to Wards
- 1 Ash South and Tongham
 - 2 Ash Vale
 - 3 Ash Wharf
 - 4 Burpham
 - 5 Christchurch
 - 6 Clandon and Horsley
 - 7 Effingham
 - 8 Friary and St Nicolas
 - 9 Holy Trinity
 - 10 Lovelace
 - 11 Merrow
 - 12 Normandy
 - 13 Onslow
 - 14 Pilgrims
 - 15 Pirbright
 - 16 Send
 - 17 Shalford
 - 18 Stoke
 - 19 Stoughton
 - 20 Tillingbourne
 - 21 Westborough
 - 22 Worplesdon

KEY

PROPOSED WARD BOUNDARY ———

EXISTING PARISH BOUNDARY - - - - -

© Crown Copyright 1998

Figure 4:
The Commission's Final Recommendations for Guildford

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 Ash South & Tongham	3	5,795	1,932	-5	6,277	2,092	-1
2 Ash Vale	2	3,558	1,779	-13	4,478	2,239	6
3 Ash Wharf	2	4,487	2,244	10	4,519	2,260	7
4 Burpham (Guildford town)	2	3,884	1,942	-5	4,037	2,019	-5
5 Christchurch (Guildford town)	2	3,835	1,918	-6	3,871	1,936	-9
6 Clandon & Horsley	3	6,528	2,176	7	6,580	2,193	4
7 Effingham	1	2,040	2,040	0	2,050	2,050	-3
8 Friary & St Nicolas (Guildford town)	3	6,229	2,076	2	6,420	2,140	1
9 Holy Trinity (Guildford town)	3	5,741	1,914	-6	6,165	2,055	-3
10 Lovelace	1	1,852	1,852	-9	1,888	1,888	-11
11 Merrow (Guildford town)	3	6,073	2,024	-1	6,112	2,037	-4
12 Normandy	1	2,360	2,360	16	2,402	2,402	13
13 Onslow (Guildford town)	3	6,438	2,146	5	6,550	2,183	3
14 Pilgrims	1	1,970	1,970	-3	2,022	2,022	-5
15 Pirbright	1	1,898	1,898	-7	1,912	1,912	-10
16 Send	2	3,136	1,568	-23	3,258	1,629	-23
17 Shalford	2	4,140	2,070	2	4,182	2,091	-1
18 Stoke (Guildford town)	2	4,598	2,299	13	4,672	2,336	10

continued overleaf

Figure 4 (continued):
The Commission's Final Recommendations for Guildford

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 %
19 Stoughton (Guildford town)	3	5,938	1,979	-3	6,717	2,239	6
20 Tillingbourne	2	4,132	2,066	2	4,272	2,136	1
21 Westborough (Guildford town)	3	6,669	2,223	9	6,718	2,239	6
22 Worplesdon	3	6,380	2,127	5	6,554	2,185	3
Totals	48	97,681	—	—	101,656	—	—
Averages	—	—	2,035	—	—	2,118	—

Source: Electorate figures are based on Guildford 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.

6. NEXT STEPS

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

156 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.

157 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 Guildford: Detailed Mapping

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

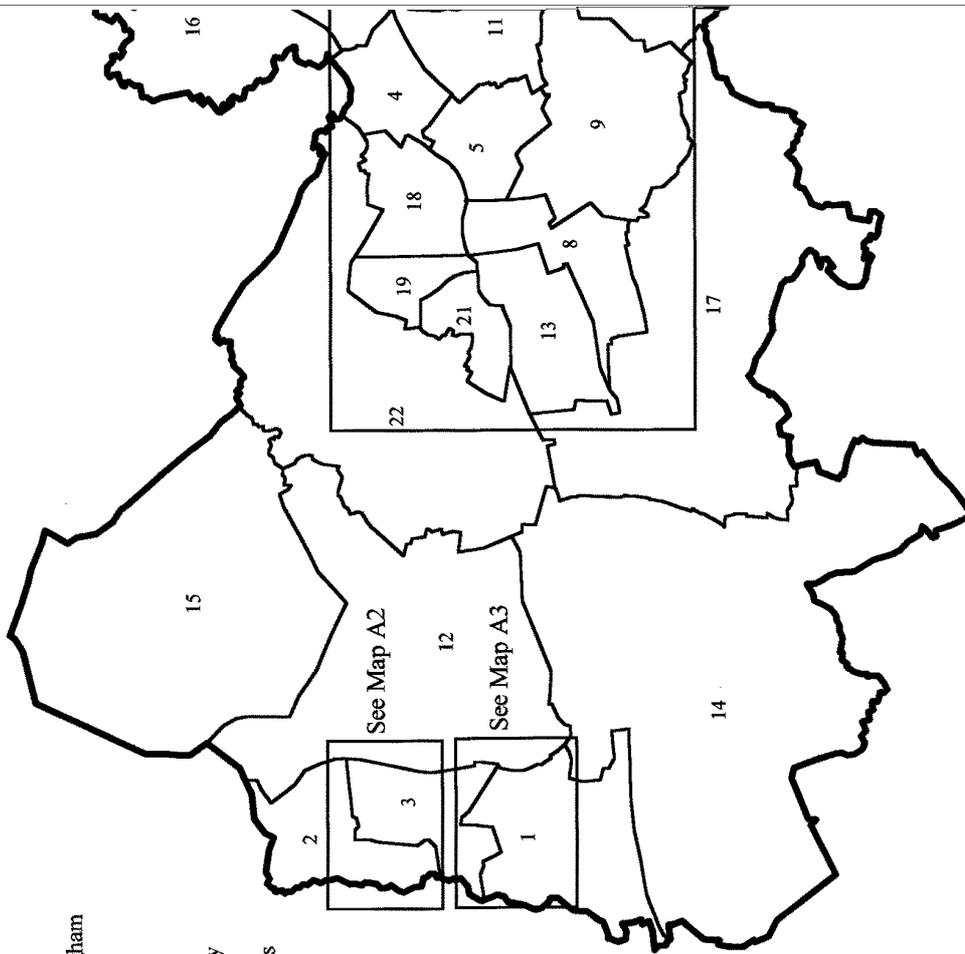
Map A1 illustrates, in outline form, the proposed ward boundaries within the borough and indicates the areas which are shown in more detail on Maps A2, A3 and on the large map inserted at the back of the report.

Map A2 illustrates the proposed boundary between Ash Vale and Ash Wharf borough and parish wards.

Map A3 illustrates the proposed boundary between Ash Wharf and Ash South parish wards, and between Ash Wharf and Ash South & Tongham borough wards.

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

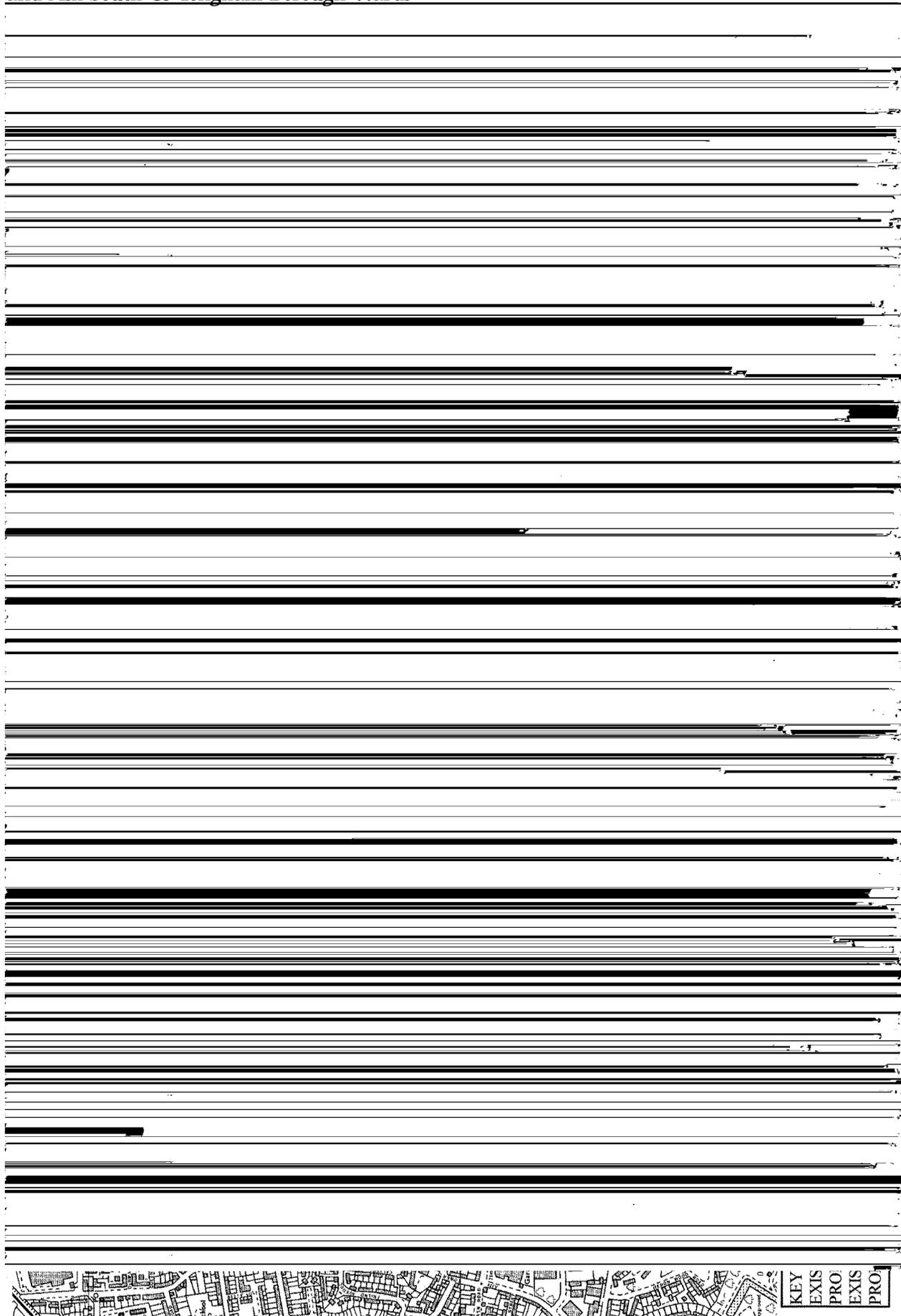
Map A1:
Final Recommendations for Guildford: Key Map



Key to Wards

- 1 Ash South and Tongham
- 2 Ash Vale
- 3 Ash Wharf
- 4 Burpham
- 5 Christchurch
- 6 Clandon and Horsley
- 7 Effingham
- 8 Friary and St Nicolas
- 9 Holy Trinity
- 10 Lovelace
- 11 Merrow
- 12 Normandy
- 13 Onslow
- 14 Pilgrims
- 15 Pirbright
- 16 Send
- 17 Shalford
- 18 Stoke
- 19 Stoughton
- 20 Tillingbourne
- 21 Westborough
- 22 Worplesdon

*Map A3:
Proposed Boundary between Ash Wharf and Ash South Parish Wards, and between Ash Wharf
and Ash South & Tongham Borough Wards*



APPENDIX B

Draft Recommendations for Guildford

Our final recommendations, detailed in Figures 1 and 4, differ from those we put forward as draft recommendations in respect of a number of 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 Loseley ward as Shalford.

Figure B1:

The Commission's Draft Recommendations: Constituent Areas

Ward name	Constituent areas
Christchurch (Guildford town)	Christchurch ward (part)*; Holy Trinity ward (part)*
East Clandon & Horsley	Clandon & Horsley ward (part – the parishes of East Clandon, East Horsley and West Horsley)
Friary (Guildford town)	Friary & St Nicolas ward (part); Stoke ward (part)
Holy Trinity (Guildford town)	Holy Trinity ward (part)*; Friary & St Nicolas ward (part)
Merrow (Guildford town)	Merrow & Burpham ward (part); Christchurch ward (part)*
Normandy & Pirbright	Normandy ward (Normandy parish); Pirbright ward (Pirbright parish)
Onslow (Guildford town)	Onslow ward; Westborough ward (part)
Send & West Clandon	Send ward (Send parish); Clandon & Horsley ward (part – West Clandon parish)

** Although some of the constituent areas appear the same as under our final recommendations, in fact our final recommendations propose that a smaller part of Holy Trinity ward should be transferred to Christchurch ward; and the existing boundary between Christchurch and Merrow wards is only slightly amended to follow ground detail and would not affect any electors.*

Figure B2:

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

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 %
Christchurch (Guildford town)	2	4,020	2,010	-1	4,056	2,028	-4
East Clandon & Horsley	3	5,569	1,856	-9	5,621	1,874	-12
Friary (Guildford town)	3	6,140	2,047	1	6,331	2,110	0
Holy Trinity (Guildford town)	3	5,516	1,839	-10	5,940	1,980	-7
Merrow (Guildford town)	3	6,113	2,038	0	6,152	2,051	-3
Normandy & Pirbright	2	4,258	2,129	5	4,314	2,157	2
Onslow (Guildford town)	3	6,527	2,176	7	6,639	2,213	4
Send & West Clandon	2	4,095	2,048	1	4,217	2,109	0

Source: Electorate figures are based on Guildford 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.

