

LOCAL
GOVERNMENT
COMMISSION
FOR ENGLAND

FINAL
RECOMMENDATIONS
ON THE FUTURE
ELECTORAL
ARRANGEMENTS FOR
CAMDEN

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

November 1999

LOCAL GOVERNMENT COMMISSION FOR ENGLAND

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

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CONTENTS

	page
LETTER TO THE SECRETARY OF STATE	<i>v</i>
SUMMARY	<i>vii</i>
1 INTRODUCTION	<i>1</i>
2 CURRENT ELECTORAL ARRANGEMENTS	<i>3</i>
3 DRAFT RECOMMENDATIONS	<i>7</i>
4 RESPONSES TO CONSULTATION	<i>9</i>
5 ANALYSIS AND FINAL RECOMMENDATIONS	<i>11</i>
6 NEXT STEPS	<i>21</i>
APPENDIX	
A Draft Recommendations for Camden (June 1999)	<i>23</i>

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



Local Government Commission for England

30 November 1999

Dear Secretary of State

On 5 January 1999 the Commission began a periodic electoral review of Camden under the Local Government Act 1992. We published our draft recommendations in June 1999 and undertook an eleven-week period of consultation.

We have now prepared our final recommendations in the light of the consultation. We have substantially confirmed our draft recommendations, although some modifications have been made (see paragraph 88) in the light of further evidence. This report sets out our final recommendations for changes to electoral arrangements in Camden.

We recommend that the London Borough of Camden be served by 54 councillors representing 18 wards, and that changes should be made to ward boundaries in order to improve electoral equality, having regard to the statutory criteria.

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

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

Yours sincerely

PROFESSOR MALCOLM GRANT
Chairman

SUMMARY

The Commission began a review of Camden on 5 January 1999. We published our draft recommendations for electoral arrangements on 29 June 1999, after which we undertook an eleven-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 Camden:

- **in 11 of the 26 wards the number of electors represented by each councillor varies by more than 10 per cent from the average for the borough, with one ward varying by more than 20 per cent;**
- **by 2004 electoral equality is not expected to improve, with the number of electors per councillor forecast to vary by more than 10 per cent from the average in 10 wards, and by more than 20 per cent in one ward.**

Our main final recommendations for future electoral arrangements (Figures 1 and 2 and paragraphs 88-89) are that:

- **Camden Borough Council should be served by 54 councillors, five fewer than at present;**
- **there should be 18 wards, eight fewer than at present, which would involve changes to the boundaries of all of the existing wards.**

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

- **In all of the 18 wards the number of electors per councillor would vary by no more than 5 per cent from the borough average both initially and by 2004.**

All further correspondence on these recommendations and the matters discussed in this report should be addressed to the Secretary of State for the Environment, Transport and the Regions, who will not make an order implementing the Commission's recommendations before 11 January 2000:

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

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

Ward name	Number of councillors	Constituent areas (existing wards)
1 Belsize	3	Adelaide ward (part); Belsize ward (part)
2 Bloomsbury	3	Bloomsbury ward (part); Brunswick ward (part)
3 Camden Town with Primrose Hill	3	Adelaide ward (part); Camden ward (part); Castlehaven ward (part); Caversham ward (part); Chalk Farm ward; Regent's Park ward (part); St Pancras ward (part)
4 Cantelowes	3	Camden ward (part); Caversham ward (part)
5 Fortune Green	3	Fortune Green ward; Kilburn ward (part); West End ward (part)
6 Frognal & Fitzjohns	3	Belsize ward (part); Fitzjohns ward (part); Frognal ward (part)
7 Gospel Oak	3	Gospel Oak ward; Grafton ward (part); Hampstead Town ward (part); South End ward (part)
8 Hampstead Town	3	Fitzjohns ward (part); Frognal ward (part); Hampstead Town ward (part); South End ward (part)
9 Haverstock	3	Adelaide ward (part); Grafton ward (part); Castlehaven ward (part); South End ward (part)
10 Highgate	3	Highgate ward; St John's ward (part)
11 Holborn & Covent Garden	3	Bloomsbury ward (part); Holborn ward
12 Kentish Town	3	Castlehaven ward (part); Caversham ward (part); St John's ward (part)
13 Kilburn	3	Kilburn ward (part); Priory ward (part); Swiss Cottage ward (part)
14 King's Cross	3	Brunswick ward (part); King's Cross ward
15 Regent's Park	3	Regent's Park ward (part); St Pancras ward (part); Somers Town ward (part)
16 St Pancras & Somers Town	3	Camden ward (part); St Pancras ward (part); Somers Town ward (part)
17 Swiss Cottage	3	Adelaide ward (part); Priory ward (part); Swiss Cottage ward (part)
18 West Hampstead	3	Kilburn ward (part); Swiss Cottage ward (part); West End ward (part)

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

Figure 2:
The Commission's Final Recommendations for Camden

Ward name	Number of councillors	Electorate (1999)	Number of electors per councillor	Variance from average %	Electorate (2004)	Number of electors per councillor	Variance from average %
1 Belsize	3	7,784	2,595	3	7,637	2,546	-1
2 Bloomsbury	3	7,578	2,526	1	7,654	2,551	-1
3 Camden Town with Primrose Hill	3	7,721	2,574	2	7,820	2,607	2
4 Cantelowes	3	7,504	2,501	0	7,829	2,610	2
5 Fortune Green	3	7,317	2,439	-3	7,636	2,545	-1
6 Frogna1 & Fitzjohns	3	7,500	2,500	-1	7,650	2,550	-1
7 Gospel Oak	3	7,451	2,484	-1	7,713	2,571	0
8 Hampstead Town	3	7,536	2,512	0	7,729	2,576	0
9 Haverstock	3	7,284	2,428	-3	7,662	2,554	-1
10 Highgate	3	7,714	2,571	2	7,792	2,597	1
11 Holborn & Covent Garden	3	7,455	2,485	-1	7,681	2,560	0
12 Kentish Town	3	7,612	2,537	1	7,811	2,604	1
13 Kilburn	3	7,181	2,394	-5	7,352	2,450	-5
14 King's Cross	3	7,499	2,500	-1	7,632	2,544	-1
15 Regent's Park	3	7,703	2,568	2	7,800	2,600	1
16 St Pancras & Somers Town	3	7,675	2,558	2	7,824	2,608	2
17 Swiss Cottage	3	7,865	2,622	4	7,851	2,617	2
18 West Hampstead	3	7,301	2,434	-3	7,601	2,534	-1
Totals	54	135,680	—	—	138,674	—	—
Averages	—	—	2,513	—	—	2,568	—

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

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

1. INTRODUCTION

1 This report contains our final recommendations on the electoral arrangements for the London Borough of Camden.

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

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

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

4 We are required to make representations to the Secretary of State on the number of councillors who should serve on the Borough Council, and the number, boundaries and names of wards.

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

6 The broad objective of PERs is to achieve, so far as practicable, equality of representation across the borough as a whole. Wherever possible we try to build on schemes which have been prepared locally on the basis of careful and effective consultation. Local interests are normally in a

better position to judge what council size and ward configuration are most likely to secure effective and convenient local government in their areas, while allowing proper reflection of the identities and interests of local communities.

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

The London Boroughs

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

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

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

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

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

13 Following publication of the White Paper, we advised all authorities in our 1998/99 PER programme, including the London boroughs, that until any direction is received from the Secretary of State, the Commission would continue to maintain the approach to PERs as set out in the March 1998 *Guidance*. Nevertheless, we added that local authorities and other interested parties would no doubt wish to have regard to the Secretary of State's intentions and legislative proposals in formulating electoral schemes as part of PERs of their areas. Our general experience has been that proposals for three-member ward patterns emerged from most areas in London.

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

The Review of Camden

15 This is our first review of the electoral arrangements for Camden. The last such review was undertaken by our predecessor, the Local Government Boundary Commission (LGBC), which reported to the Secretary of State in August 1977 (Report No. 230).

16 This review was in four stages. Stage One began on 5 January 1999, when we wrote to Camden Borough Council inviting proposals for future electoral arrangements. We also notified the local authority associations, the Metropolitan Police, Members of Parliament and the Member of the European Parliament with constituency interests in the borough, and the headquarters of the main political parties. At the start of the review and following publication of our draft recommendations, we placed a notice in the local press, issued a press release and other publicity, and invited the Borough Council to publicise the review further. The closing date for receipt of representations was 29 March 1999. At Stage Two we considered all the representations received during Stage One and prepared our draft recommendations.

17 Stage Three began on 29 June 1999 with the publication of our report, *Draft Recommendations on the Future Electoral Arrangements for Camden*, and ended on 13 September 1999. Comments were sought on our preliminary conclusions. Finally, during Stage Four we reconsidered our draft recommendations in the light of the Stage Three consultation and now publish our final recommendations.

2. CURRENT ELECTORAL ARRANGEMENTS

18 The borough of Camden is located in inner London, covers 11 square miles and contains more than 180,000 people. The business centres of Holborn, Tottenham Court Road and New Oxford Street, the residential areas of Kilburn, Highgate, Hampstead, Kentish Town and Swiss Cottage, and the contrasting areas of Bloomsbury, Camden Town, King's Cross and Somers Town all combine to make the borough unique in character. It also contains significant centres of national importance, with the British Museum, the University of London, a number of leading teaching hospitals and the open spaces of Parliament Hill and Hampstead Heath all situated within its boundaries.

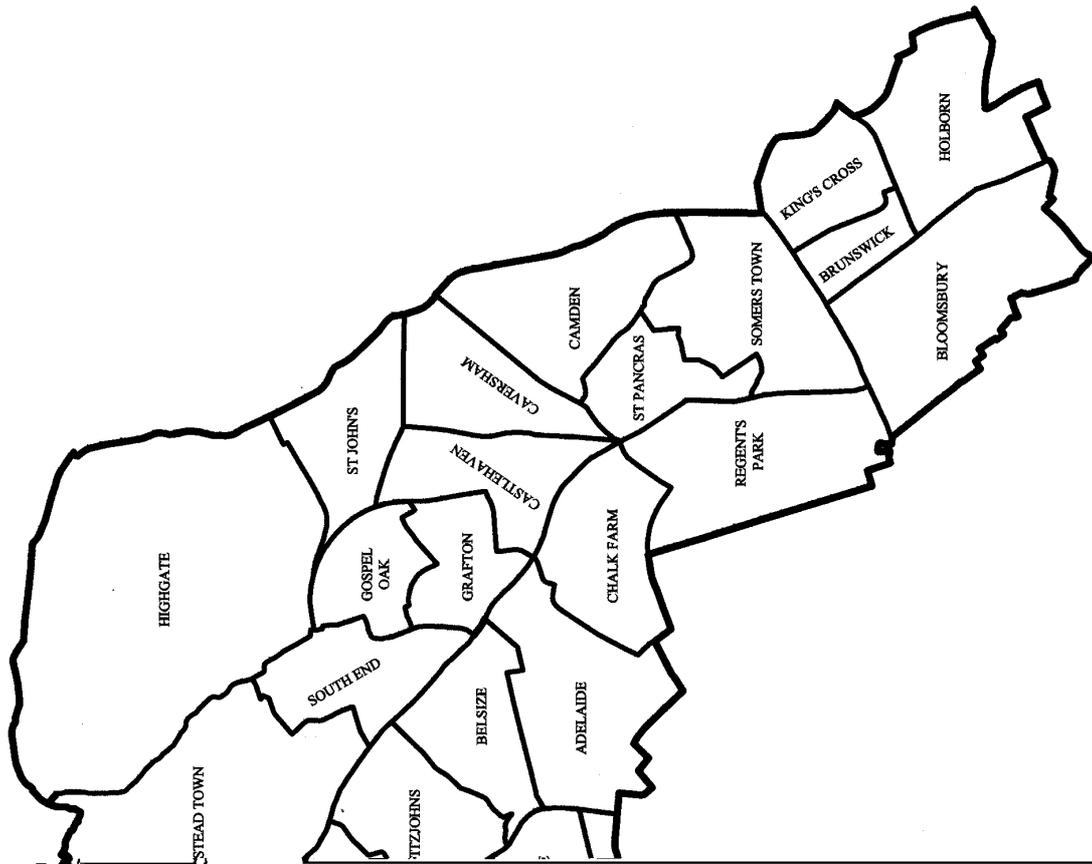
19 Good transport links exist throughout Camden, with the Finchley Road, the Euston Road, Haverstock Hill and Camden High Street all passing through the borough, linking central London with north London. The three major rail termini of Euston, King's Cross and St Pancras serve as principal links with the midlands and north of England, and a number of London Underground lines pass through the borough including the Bakerloo, Piccadilly, Northern and Victoria lines.

20 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'.

21 The electorate of the borough (February 1999) is 135,680. The Council currently has 59 councillors who are elected from 26 wards (Map 1 and Figure 3). Seven wards are each represented by three councillors and 19 wards elect two councillors each. As in all London boroughs, the whole council is elected together every four years.

22 Since the last electoral review, there has been a net decrease in electorate in the borough, with around 5 per cent fewer electors than two decades ago. At present, each councillor represents an average of 2,300 electors, which the Council forecasts will increase to 2,350 by the year 2004 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 11 of the 26 wards varies by more than 10 per cent from the borough average, and in one ward by more than 20 per cent. The worst imbalance is in Camden ward where both councillors represent on average 22 per cent more electors than the borough average.

Map 1:
Existing Wards in Camden



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Figure 3:
Existing Electoral Arrangements

Ward name	Number of councillors	Electorate (1999)	Number of electors per councillor	Variance from average %	Electorate (2004)	Number of electors per councillor	Variance from average %
1 Adelaide	3	5,867	1,956	-15	5,819	1,940	-16
2 Belsize	3	6,039	2,013	-12	5,921	1,974	-14
3 Bloomsbury	3	7,959	2,653	15	8,036	2,679	16
4 Brunswick	2	4,647	2,324	1	4,668	2,334	1
5 Camden	2	5,596	2,798	22	5,898	2,949	28
6 Castlehaven	2	4,104	2,052	-11	4,261	2,131	-7
7 Caversham	2	5,211	2,606	13	5,363	2,682	17
8 Chalk Farm	2	4,178	2,089	-9	4,206	2,103	-9
9 Fitzjohns	2	3,986	1,993	-13	4,177	2,089	-9
10 Fortune Green	2	4,095	2,048	-11	4,320	2,160	-6
11 Frognal	2	4,536	2,268	-1	4,558	2,279	-1
12 Gospel Oak	2	4,469	2,235	-3	4,548	2,274	-1
13 Grafton	2	4,417	2,209	-4	4,734	2,367	3
14 Hampstead Town	2	3,960	1,980	-14	3,969	1,985	-14
15 Highgate	3	7,460	2,487	8	7,533	2,511	9
16 Holborn	2	4,986	2,493	8	5,202	2,601	13
17 Kilburn	3	7,614	2,538	10	7,843	2,614	14
18 King's Cross	2	4,940	2,470	7	5,061	2,531	10
19 Priory	2	4,710	2,355	2	4,795	2,398	4
20 Regent's Park	3	6,772	2,257	-2	6,855	2,285	-1
21 Somers Town	2	4,890	2,445	6	4,935	2,468	7
22 South End	2	5,095	2,548	11	5,406	2,703	18

continued overleaf

Figure 3 (continued):
Existing Electoral Arrangements

Ward name	Number of councillors	Electorate (1999)	Number of electors per councillor	Variance from average %	Electorate (2004)	Number of electors per councillor	Variance from average %
23 St John's	2	4,715	2,358	3	4,807	2,404	5
24 St Pancras	2	3,727	1,864	-19	3,803	1,902	-17
25 Swiss Cottage	3	6,949	2,316	1	6,939	2,313	1
26 West End	2	4,758	2,379	3	5,017	2,509	9
Totals	59	135,680	—	—	138,674	—	—
Averages	—	—	2,300	—	—	2,350	—

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

Note: The 'variance from average' column shows by how far, in percentage terms, the number of electors per councillor varies from the average for the borough. The minus symbol (-) denotes a lower than average number of electors. For example, in 1999, electors in St Pancras ward are relatively over-represented by 19 per cent, while electors in Camden ward are relatively under-represented by 22 per cent. Figures have been rounded to the nearest whole number.

3. DRAFT RECOMMENDATIONS

²³ During Stage One, we received 31 representations. The Council, the Liberal Democrat Group on the Council and the Camden Conservative Committee all submitted borough-wide schemes. 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 Camden*.

²⁴ Our draft recommendations were based on the Borough Council's scheme, which achieved improved electoral equality, provided good boundaries while having regard to the statutory criteria and proposed a pattern of entirely three-member wards. We considered that, in general, this scheme provided a better balance between electoral equality and the statutory criteria than either the current arrangements or other schemes submitted at Stage One. We proposed that:

- (a) Camden Borough Council should be served by 54 councillors;
- (b) there should be 18 wards, involving changes to the boundaries of all existing wards.

Draft Recommendation

Camden Borough Council should comprise 54 councillors serving 18 wards.

²⁵ Our proposals would have resulted in significant improvements in electoral equality, with the number of electors per councillor varying by no more than 3 per cent from the borough average in any ward. This level of electoral equality was forecast to improve further, with all wards expected to vary by no more than 2 per cent from the borough average in 2004.

4. RESPONSES TO CONSULTATION

26 During the consultation on our draft recommendations report, 115 representations were received. A list of respondents is available on request from the Commission. All representations may be inspected at the offices of Camden Borough Council and the Commission by appointment.

Camden Borough Council

27 The Borough Council endorsed our draft recommendation and stated that it would oppose major additional changes which had not been subject to public consultation. It stated that it had made the draft recommendations available for public consultation, and consequently accepted our amendments to the scheme submitted by the Council as being an improvement upon its original scheme. The Council offered detailed comments both in support of its original submission as well as supporting those amendments made to the scheme in the Draft Recommendations report.

Camden Conservative Committee

28 The Camden Conservative Committee on the Borough Council broadly agreed with the draft recommendations. However, it opposed the draft recommendations for the areas of Primrose Hill, Regent's Park and Camden Town and the Bloomsbury and Holborn wards, proposing alternative warding arrangements in those areas. It also proposed minor boundary changes between Swiss Cottage and Kilburn wards and Haverstock and Gospel Oak wards.

Camden Borough Council Liberal Democrat Group

29 Councillor Rea, representing Fortune Green ward, wrote on behalf of The Liberal Democrat Group on the Borough Council and Hampstead and Highgate Liberal Democrats reiterating its support for a council size of 57. Councillor Rea

submitted detailed proposals for modified wards to the west of the Finchley Road, arguing that its proposals better reflected local communities. It also proposed modifications to the proposed Camden Town with Primrose Hill ward.

Members of Parliament

30 We also received a submission from Glenda Jackson, Member of Parliament for Hampstead and Highgate. Ms Jackson stated that she fully supported the draft recommendations and that they would be a positive change for residents.

Other Representations

31 We received a further 111 representations in response to our draft recommendations. Forty-five respondents stated their dissatisfaction with the proposed Camden Town with Primrose Hill ward. The respondents argued that the railway line into Euston acted as a natural boundary between the communities of Camden and Primrose Hill. A number of residents expressed a preference for no change, appearing to have been under the misapprehension that Primrose Hill is currently located in the same ward as Regent's Park. Thirty-two residents opposed our proposals for the proposed Haverstock ward. Eleven residents expressed their support for the draft recommendations. Many commented on their specific area of the borough and argued that the draft recommendations were a good reflection of the local communities.

32 We received comments from a number of local residents' groups and political associations. The Hampstead and Highgate, Heath, Holborn and St Pancras and Kilburn branches of the Labour Party supported the draft recommendations. The South Branch of the Hampstead and Highgate Labour Party stated that it believed the proposed councillor:elector ratio was too high for an inner London borough. We also received submissions from five local residents' associations (the Combined Residents' Associations of South

Hampstead, the Judd Street Residents' Association, the Sandwich, Sinclair & Thanet Residents' Association, the One Parkhill Road Residents' and Lessees' Association and the South End Green Residents' Association) and the Bedford Estates opposing the draft recommendations for their areas of the borough.

5. ANALYSIS AND FINAL RECOMMENDATIONS

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

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

35 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.

36 Our *Guidance* states that, while we accept that the achievement of absolute electoral equality for the authority as a whole is likely to be unattainable, we consider that, if electoral imbalances are to be kept to the minimum, the objective of electoral equality should be the starting point in any review. We therefore strongly recommend that, in formulating electoral schemes, local authorities and other interested parties should start from the standpoint of electoral equality, and then make adjustments to reflect relevant factors, such as community identity. Regard must also be had to five-year forecasts of changes in electorates. We will require particular justification for schemes which result in, or retain, an electoral imbalance over 10

per cent in any ward. In reviews of predominantly urban areas such as the London boroughs, our experience suggests that we would expect to achieve a high degree of electoral equality in all wards.

Electorate Forecasts

37 At Stage One the Borough Council submitted electorate forecasts for the year 2004, projecting an increase in the electorate of 2 per cent from 135,680 to 138,746 over the five-year period from 1999 to 2004. It expected most of the growth to be in the current Camden, Fortune Green and South End wards. The Council estimated rates and locations of housing development with regard to the unitary development plan for the borough, and the expected rate of building over the five-year period and assumed occupancy rates. Advice from the Borough Council on the likely effect on electorates of changes to ward boundaries was obtained.

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

39 As already indicated, the Commission's starting point is to assume that the current council size facilitates effective and convenient local government.

40 Camden Borough Council currently has 59 members. At Stage One the Borough Council and the Camden Conservative Committee both proposed a reduction in the council size by five councillors to 54 councillors. The Liberal Democrat Group supported the proposal for an overall reduction in council size, but proposed a reduction of two councillors to 57.

41 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 54 members.

42 At Stage Three, the Liberal Democrat Group reiterated its support for a council size of 57 and the South Branch of the Hampstead and Highgate Labour Party stated its opposition to a council size of 54. It stated that it believed that a 57-member council would better reflect local communities and would provide for more natural boundaries. However, in view of the general support for a council of 54 members, which would provide a good electoral scheme, we are confirming our draft recommendation for a council size of 54 as final.

Electoral Arrangements

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

44 First, although the current electoral arrangements in Camden provide for a mixture of two- and three-member wards, the Council, the Liberal Democrat Group and the Camden Conservative Committee all submitted proposals at Stage One based on a pattern of three-member wards throughout the borough. Second, there was a consensus among the majority of members of the Council for a reduction in council size albeit for either a 54- or 57-member council. Third, broadly similar proposals were presented during Stage One for certain wards within the borough. For example, in the northern and western parts of the borough, the Council and the Camden Conservative Committee and the Liberal Democrat Group put forward similar warding patterns for a number of wards. Fourth, many of the ward names proposed by the political parties were similar under each of the schemes, although individual preferences were also voiced. Finally, all three

borough-wide schemes provided for a substantially improved level of electoral equality. All proposed wards would vary by less than 10 per cent from the average number of electors per councillor for the borough, both initially and by 2004.

45 We stated in our draft recommendations report that, in view of the degree of consensus behind substantial elements of the Council's proposals, and the consultation exercise which it had undertaken, we should base our draft recommendations on its proposals. We considered that its scheme would, on balance, provide a better balance between electoral equality and the statutory criteria than either the current arrangements or the other schemes which had been submitted during Stage One.

46 At Stage Three the Council supported the draft recommendations in their entirety, including those areas where we had moved away from its original submission. The Liberal Democrats stated that, although they maintained that the borough would be better served by the 19-ward option, they accepted the recommendation for 18 wards. The Camden Conservative Committee agreed that there should be 54 councillors for 18 wards. Both groups submitted modifications to a number of the proposed ward boundaries.

47 As indicated above, our draft recommendations were based on the Council's Stage One submission. We have reviewed these in the light of further evidence and the representations received during Stage Three, and judge that modifications should be made to a number of our proposed boundaries. The following areas, based on existing wards, are considered in turn:

- (a) Adelaide, Belsize, Fitzjohns, Frogna and Hampstead Town wards;
- (b) Bloomsbury, Brunswick, Holborn and King's Cross wards;
- (c) Camden, Castlehaven, Caversham, Chalk Farm, Regent's Park, St Pancras and Somers Town wards;
- (d) Fortune Green, Kilburn, Priory, Swiss Cottage and West End wards;
- (e) Gospel Oak, Grafton, Highgate, St John's and South End wards.

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

Adelaide, Belsize, Fitzjohns, Frognal and Hampstead Town wards

49 Presently Adelaide and Belsize wards return three councillors each, with Fitzjohns, Frognal and Hampstead Town wards returning two councillors each. The electors within this area are currently somewhat over-represented on the Council with the number of electors per councillor in the five wards being 15 per cent, 12 per cent, 13 per cent, 1 per cent and 14 per cent below the borough average respectively. Over the five-year period to 2004, this level of inequality is not projected to improve with the wards varying from the average by 16 per cent, 14 per cent, 9 per cent, 1 per cent and 14 per cent respectively.

50 The Council proposed at Stage One that the boundaries of the five wards should be revised and that Adelaide ward should be disbanded. The remaining ward boundaries would be revised in order to facilitate three-member wards, utilising strong boundaries such as the Finchley Road for the proposed Frognal ward. The Council's proposed Belsize, Frognal and Hampstead Town wards would initially be 3 per cent above, 1 per cent below and equal to the borough average respectively. By 2004 electoral equality in this area would improve, with all three wards varying by 1 per cent or less from the average.

51 The Borough Council and the Camden Conservative Committee broadly endorsed our draft recommendations for the five wards. The Camden Conservative Committee proposed that to better reflect the geographical area it would be more appropriate to name the proposed Frognal ward Frognal & Fitzjohns, after the two roads that run through the new ward. The Liberal Democrat Group supported the proposals for Frognal and Hampstead Town wards but opposed the proposed Belsize ward. Two local residents wrote in support of the proposals for Belsize and Frognal wards, stating that the proposals were the "best option" and reflected local communities.

52 The Liberal Democrats proposals for the Camden Town area would have resulted in consequential changes to Belsize ward. The Camden Conservative Committee agreed with our draft recommendations for Belsize ward stating that it largely agreed with the proposals for the area.

53 We have given careful consideration to the further evidence and representations received, but are not convinced that there is justification for substantial

change to our draft recommendations in this part of the borough. We do, however, support the Camden Conservative Committee's proposal to name the proposed Frognal ward Frognal & Fitzjohns, a name with which, we consider, local electors could identify. We maintain the view that the proposals reflect local communities and confirm our draft recommendation for Belsize and Frognal & Fitzjohns wards as final. We are also confirming our proposed Hampstead Town ward subject to a minor boundary modification (involving no electors) between Hampstead Town and Gospel Oak wards (as described later). Details of our final recommendations in this area are illustrated on the large map inserted at the back of this report.

Bloomsbury, Brunswick, Holborn and King's Cross wards

54 These four wards are located in the south of the borough, to the south of the Euston Road, and return a total of nine councillors. Bloomsbury ward returns three councillors, and varies from the borough average number of electors per councillor by 15 per cent initially, projected to be 16 per cent by 2004. Brunswick, Holborn and King's Cross wards each return two councillors, with the number of electors per councillor in the three wards being 1 per cent above, 8 per cent above and 7 per cent above the borough average respectively (1 per cent, 13 per cent and 10 per cent by 2004).

55 The Council proposed in its Stage One submission to modify all four wards suggesting that the Euston Road should be retained as a strong boundary between these wards and the rest of the borough to the north. The proposals included disbanding Brunswick ward with its constituent electors divided between the enlarged King's Cross and Holborn wards. It proposed that an area around Russell Square should be included within the proposed Holborn ward. Under its proposals, the number of electors per councillor in the proposed Bloomsbury, Holborn and King's Cross wards would be 2 per cent above, 3 per cent below and 1 per cent below the borough average respectively. By 2004, Bloomsbury ward would be equal to the average, while the other two wards would each vary by 1 per cent below.

56 The Liberal Democrat Group's Stage One proposals which, as stated earlier, were based on a different council size, did not allow for the retention of the Euston road as a boundary to the southern wards. This is one of the factors which persuaded us against the Liberal Democrat Group's proposals and, as the remainder of its proposals in

this area were not compatible with the Council's, we did not put them forward at draft recommendation stage. The Camden Conservative Committee supported the number of councillors for this area but proposed alternative warding arrangements.

57 We stated in our draft recommendations report that we were of the view that the Covent Garden community could be considered a discrete area and that the electors around Great Queen Street, Macklin Street, Newton Street and Parker Street should be located within the same ward, which was not provided for under the Camden Conservative Committee's proposal.

58 At Stage Three, the Council and the Liberal Democrat Group supported our proposed Bloomsbury, Holborn and King's Cross wards. The Council stated in its submission that its Stage One proposals had been modified to reflect the comments it had received during its first stage of consultation. Further consultation which the Council had conducted indicated support for its boundary in the Coram's Fields area and it therefore considered that the boundary should not be further amended.

59 The Camden Conservative Committee proposed modifications to the proposed Bloomsbury and Holborn wards. It stated that the Bloomsbury area was a distinct community which the draft recommendations had divided between two wards, and it proposed to recognise the community of Bloomsbury by the inclusion of Russell Square in the proposed Bloomsbury ward, and creating a new Holborn and Covent Garden ward. The southern part of the existing Bloomsbury ward would be added to the existing Holborn ward, placing the Holborn underground station as the key focal point for the new Holborn & Covent Garden ward. This proposal would enable the retention of Russell Square within Bloomsbury ward.

60 During Stage Three we received a number of submissions opposing the draft recommendations from local residents' and the Bedford Estates. It was suggested that the proposed Covent Garden & Holborn would be a more homogenous ward, and would allow the two areas [Holborn and Covent Garden] with a 'similar outlook and ambiance' to be located within a single electoral area. The Camden Conservative Committee's proposals provided for a good level of electoral equality, with the proposed Bloomsbury and Holborn & Covent

Garden wards varying by no more than 1 per cent from the borough average initially and by 2004.

61 We also received submissions from the Judd Street Residents' Association and the Sandwich, Sinclair & Thanet Residents' Association opposing the proposed boundary between the proposed King's Cross and Holborn wards. We note comments that the residents' associations have made; however, we are of the view that no suitable alternative boundary has been proposed. Also, the Council stated its support for the draft recommendations and strongly opposed any modification to the proposed boundary in the area.

62 We have carefully considered the representations received during the consultation period. We are of the view that the Camden Conservative Committee's proposals for this area improve upon the draft recommendations. The proposals allow both the Bloomsbury and Covent Garden areas to be located within wards which clearly reflect their local communities.

63 Under our final recommendations, the number of electors per councillor in the proposed Bloomsbury, Holborn & Covent Garden and King's Cross wards would be 1 per cent below, 1 per cent above and 1 per cent below the borough average respectively (1 per cent below, equal to and 1 per cent above the average by 2004). We consider that our final recommendations provide the best balance between securing good levels of electoral equality, whilst securing strong and clearly identifiable boundaries and taking into account community identities. Details of our final recommendations in this area are illustrated on the large map inserted at the back of this report.

Camden, Castlehaven, Caversham, Chalk Farm, Regent's Park, St Pancras and Somers Town wards

64 Presently Regent's Park ward returns three councillors, and varies from the borough average number of electors per councillor by 2 per cent initially, projected to be 1 per cent by 2004. Camden, Castlehaven, Caversham, Chalk Farm, St Pancras and Somers Town wards return two councillors each, with the number of electors per councillor in the six wards being 22 per cent above, 11 per cent below, 13 per cent above, 9 per cent below, 19 per cent below and 6 per cent above the borough average respectively. Such levels of

we are not persuaded to move substantially away from our draft recommendations. The Camden Conservative Committee's proposals would necessitate a relatively radical departure from the draft recommendations. We are of the view that the area cannot be considered in isolation but in relation to the overall scheme for the borough. The Camden Conservative Committee's scheme for this area would impact upon the proposed neighbouring wards. We are of the view that such modifications would be detrimental to the proposed wards of Canteloves, Kentish Town and St Pancras & Somers Town. We therefore remain of the view that the Council's proposals would achieve the best electoral equality, having regard to the statutory criteria, and therefore confirm our draft recommendations for Camden Town with Primrose Hill, Canteloves, Kentish Town, Regent's Park and St Pancras & Somers Town wards as final. Under our final recommendations, the number of electors per councillor in the proposed Camden Town with Primrose Hill, Canteloves, Kentish Town, Regent's Park and St Pancras & Somers Town wards would be 2 per cent, equal to, 1 per cent, 2 per cent and 2 per cent from the borough average, (2 per cent, 2 per cent, 1 per cent, 1 per cent and 2 per cent by 2004). Details of our final recommendations in this area are illustrated on the large map inserted at the back of this report.

Fortune Green, Kilburn, Priory, Swiss Cottage and West End wards

⁷³ Currently Kilburn and Swiss Cottage wards return three councillors each, with the number of electors per councillor in the two wards being 10 per cent and 1 per cent above the borough average respectively, projected to be 14 per cent and 1 per cent by 2004. Fortune Green, Priory and West End wards each return two councillors, with the number of electors per councillor in the three wards being 11 per cent below, 2 per cent above and 3 per cent above the borough average respectively (6 per cent, 4 per cent and 9 per cent by 2004).

⁷⁴ At Stage One the Council proposed including some electors from the neighbouring Adelaide ward and to modify the boundaries of the five wards to form four wards, with the Finchley Road being retained as a boundary. An enlarged Fortune Green ward would additionally include electors from the present Kilburn and West End wards, while a revised Kilburn ward would include

electors from parts of the present Kilburn, Swiss Cottage and Priory wards. A new West Hampstead ward would comprise parts of the present Kilburn, Swiss Cottage and West End wards, while the remainder of Swiss Cottage ward would form part of a revised Swiss Cottage ward with parts of Priory ward and the neighbouring Adelaide ward.

⁷⁵ We adopted the Council's scheme in our draft recommendations, and we believed that the Council's proposals, which utilised the centres of West End Lane and Acol Road as ward boundaries in this area were the most suitable proposal. However, we invited further evidence on local community identities during the Stage Three consultation period.

⁷⁶ At Stage Three the Council endorsed its Stage One proposals and commented that it believed that the centre of roads provided a more clearly drawn boundary. It also noted that it had not received any comments on this proposed boundary during its own consultation on the draft recommendations and therefore did not consider it appropriate to make any changes. We also received comments from local residents with regard to the boundary between the proposed Swiss Cottage and Kilburn wards stating that they did not feel that the recommendations reflected the community in this area.

⁷⁷ The Combined Residents' Associations of South Hampstead stated that the proposal had a better regard for community boundaries keeping the Combined Residents' Associations of South Hampstead principally within the Swiss Cottage ward instead of splitting it between three adjoining wards. It also proposed a modification to the West Hampstead/Swiss Cottage boundary.

⁷⁸ The Camden Conservative Committee proposed modifications to the Swiss Cottage/Kilburn boundary which it argued would allow a further modification to the West Hampstead and Fortune Green wards. However, Councillor Rea, representing Fortune Green ward, on behalf of the Liberal Democrat Group and the Hampstead & Highgate Liberal Democrats, stated that the proposed modifications did not reflect local community identities and interests. The Liberal Democrat Group proposed major modifications to the wards west of the Finchley Road. The proposals modified the proposed West Hampstead, Kilburn and Swiss Cottage wards and created a new South Hampstead ward. The Liberal Democrats also proposed the addition of the Wavel Mews and Acol

Road area in its proposed Swiss Cottage ward. Having considered the evidence during Stage Three, we are of the view that this area does hold closer ties with the community within the proposed Swiss Cottage ward than with the proposed Kilburn ward. Moving the electors would however result in a marked deterioration in the electoral equality within the two wards (4 per cent and 5 per cent respectively, 2 per cent and 5 per cent by 2004). We are of the view, however, that this can be justified given the nature of the borough boundary in this area.

recommendations, but proposed modifications to the scheme. It suggested that the Haverstock ward name was erroneous and should be named Grafton & Chalk Farm ward. It also proposed to place the whole of Parkhill Road in Gospel Oak ward and make a number of consequential changes to surrounding wards.

86 The Liberal Democrat Group proposed significant modifications to the draft recommendations in this area of the borough, including a new Adelaide & Primrose Hill ward and modified Belsize, Camden Town and Kentish Town wards. The modifications which the Liberal Democrat Group propose have merit; however, the proposals for a Adelaide & Primrose Hill ward cannot be viewed in isolation. The consequential modifications which would be necessary in order to implement the Group's proposal does not, in the Commission's view, have such merit and indeed would be detrimental to the integrity of the proposed wards in the surrounding area.

87 We have noted the views expressed particularly with regard to the Parkhill Road area. There appears to be a difference of opinion between local residents in the area. Our draft recommendations no longer divide the area between three roads, which we believe is an improvement on the current situation. We have also given careful consideration to those comments which we received from the Steeles Road area. However, without necessitating a radical departure from the draft recommendations, we do not believe that it is appropriate to alter our proposals within the area. We propose confirming our draft recommendations, subject to the minor modification to the boundary between Gospel Oak and Hampstead Town wards. Under our final recommendations the number of electors per councillor in Gospel Oak, Highgate, Haverstock and Kentish Town wards would vary from the borough average by 1 per cent, 2 per cent, 3 per cent and 1 per cent the borough average respectively. By 2004, all four wards would vary by 1 per cent or less from the average. Details of our final recommendations in this area are illustrated on the large map inserted at the back of this report.

Conclusions

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

- (a) the boundary between the proposed Holborn and Bloomsbury wards should be modified to create a new Holborn & Covent Garden ward and a modified Bloomsbury ward;
- (b) the boundary between Kilburn and Swiss Cottage ward should be modified to include Wavel Mews and Acol Road in the proposed Swiss Cottage ward;
- (c) the boundary between Gospel Oak and Hampstead town wards should be slightly modified;
- (d) Froggnal ward should be renamed Froggnal & Fitzjohns ward.

89 We conclude that, in Camden:

- (a) there should be a reduction in council size from 59 to 54;
- (b) there should be 18 wards, eight fewer than at present, which would involve changes to the boundaries of all of the existing wards.

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

91 As shown in Figure 4, our final recommendations for Camden Borough Council would result in a reduction in the number of wards where the number of electors per councillor varies by more than 10 per cent from the borough average from eleven to none. This improved balance of representation is expected to improve further with all wards expected to vary by no more than 5 per cent in 2004. Our final recommendations are set out in more detail in Figures 1 and 2, and illustrated on Map 2 and the large map at the back of this report.

Final Recommendation

Camden Borough Council should comprise 54 councillors serving 18 wards, as detailed and named in Figures 1 and 2, and illustrated on the large map in the back of the report.

Figure 4 :
Comparison of Current and Recommended Electoral Arrangements

	1999 electorate		2004 forecast electorate	
	Current arrangements	Final recommendations	Current arrangements	Final recommendations
Number of councillors	59	54	59	54
Number of wards	26	18	26	18
Average number of electors per councillor	2,300	2,513	2,350	2,568
Number of wards with a variance more than 10 per cent from the average	11	0	10	0
Number of wards with a variance more than 20 per cent from the average	1	0	1	0

Map 2:
The Commission's Final Recommendations for Camden



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6. NEXT STEPS

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

93 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.

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

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

APPENDIX A

Draft Recommendations for Camden

Our final recommendations, detailed in Figures 1 and 2, differ from those we put forward as draft recommendations in 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 Figure A1, is that we propose to rename Frognal ward as Frognal & Fitzjohns ward.

Figure A1:

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

Ward name	Number of councillors	Electorate (1999)	Number of electors per councillor	Variance from average %	Electorate (2004)	Number of electors per councillor	Variance from average %
Bloomsbury	3	7,724	2,575	2	7,734	2,578	0
Holborn	3	7,309	2,436	-3	7,602	2,534	-1
Kilburn	3	7,391	2,464	-2	7,561	2,520	-2
Swiss Cottage	3	7,655	2,552	2	7,641	2,547	-1

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

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

