

Final recommendations on the future electoral arrangements for Bolton

Report to The Electoral Commission

October 2003

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What is The Boundary Committee for England?

The Boundary Committee for England is a committee of The Electoral Commission, an independent body set up by Parliament under the Political Parties, Elections and Referendums Act 2000. The functions of the Local Government Commission for England were transferred to The Electoral Commission and its Boundary Committee on 1 April 2002 by the Local Government Commission for England (Transfer of Functions) Order 2001 (SI 2001 No. 3692). The Order also transferred to The Electoral Commission the functions of the Secretary of State in relation to taking decisions on recommendations for changes to local authority electoral arrangements and implementing them.

Members of the Committee are:

Pamela Gordon (Chair)
Professor Michael Clarke CBE
Robin Gray
Joan Jones CBE
Ann M. Kelly
Professor Colin Mellors

Archie Gall (Director)

We are required by law to review the electoral arrangements of every principal local authority in England. Our aim is to ensure that the number of electors represented by each councillor in an area is as nearly as possible the same, taking into account local circumstances. We can recommend changes to ward boundaries, the number of councillors and ward names. We can also recommend changes to the electoral arrangements of parish and town councils.

This report sets out our final recommendations on the electoral arrangements for the borough of Bolton.

Summary

We began a review of Bolton's electoral arrangements on 14 May 2002. We published our draft recommendations for electoral arrangements on 25 February 2003, after which we undertook an eight-week period of consultation. We now submit final recommendations to The Electoral Commission.

- **This report summarises the representations that we received during consultation on our draft recommendations, and contains our final recommendations to The Electoral Commission.**

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

- **In seven of the 20 wards the number of electors represented by each councillor varies by more than 10% from the average for the borough, and three wards vary by more than 20% from the average.**
- **By 2006 this situation is expected to stay the same, with the number of electors per councillor forecast to vary by more than 10% from the average in seven wards and by more than 20% in three wards.**

Our main final recommendations for future electoral arrangements (see Tables 1 and 2 and paragraphs 143–144) are that:

- **Bolton Metropolitan Borough Council should have 60 councillors, the same as at present;**
- **there should be 20 wards, the same as at present;**
- **the boundaries of all of the existing wards should be modified.**

The purpose of these proposals is to ensure that, in future, each borough councillor represents approximately the same number of electors, bearing in mind local circumstances.

- **The number of electors per councillor in none of the proposed 20 wards would vary by more than 7% from the borough average.**
- **An improved level of electoral equality is forecast to continue, with the number of electors per councillor in all wards expected to vary by no more than 7% from the average for the borough in 2006.**

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

- **revised warding arrangements and an increase in the number of councillors for the parishes of Horwich and Westhoughton.**

All further correspondence on these final recommendations and the matters discussed in this report should be addressed to The Electoral Commission, which will not make an Order implementing them before 25 November 2003. The information in the representations will be available for public access once the Order has been made.

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Table 1: Final recommendations: summary

	Ward name	Number of councillors	Constituent areas	Large map reference
1	Astley Bridge	3	Part of Astley Bridge ward; part of Central ward	2
2	Bradshaw	3	Part of Bradshaw ward; part of Breighmet ward	2
3	Breightmet	3	Part of Bradshaw ward; part of Breighmet ward	2 & 4
4	Bromley Cross	3	Part of Bromley Cross ward; part of Bradshaw ward	2
5	Central	3	Part of Central ward; part of Halliwell ward	2 & 4
6	Crompton	3	Part of Astley Bridge ward; part of Central ward; part of Tonge ward	2 & 4
7	Farnworth	3	Part of Farnworth ward; part of Burnden ward	4
8	Great Lever	3	Part of Burnden ward; part of Derby ward	4
9	Harper Green	3	Harper Green ward; part of Burnden ward; part of Farnworth ward	4
10	Heaton & Lostock	3	Part of Blackrod ward; part of Deane-cum-Heaton ward; part of Hulton Park ward	1, 2, 3 & 4
11	Horwich & Blackrod	3	The parish of Blackrod; the proposed Horwich South West parish ward of Horwich parish; part of Blackrod ward	1 & 3
12	Horwich North East	3	The proposed Horwich North East parish ward of Horwich parish	1
13	Hulton	3	Part of Daubhill ward; part of Deane-cum-Heaton ward; part of Hulton Park ward	3 & 4
14	Kearsley	3	Kearsley ward; part of Farnworth ward	4
15	Little Lever & Darcy Lever	3	Part of Breightmet ward; part of Burnden ward; part of Little Lever ward	4
16	Rumworth	3	Part of Daubhill ward; part of Deane-cum-Heaton ward; part of Derby ward	4
17	Smithills	3	Smithills ward; part of Astley Bridge ward; part of Deane-cum-Heaton ward; part of Halliwell ward	1, 2 & 4
18	Tonge with the Haulgh	3	Part of Burnden ward; part of Central ward; part of Tonge ward	2 & 4
19	Westhoughton North & Chew Moor	3	The proposed Chequerbent, White Horse and Wingates parish wards of Westhoughton parish; part of Blackrod ward; part of Hulton Park ward	1 & 3
20	Westhoughton South	3	The proposed Central, Daisy Hill and Hoskers & Hart Common parish wards of Westhoughton parish	3

Notes:

1. *The wards in the above table are illustrated on Map 2 and the large maps.*
2. *We have made a number of minor boundary amendments to ensure that existing ward boundaries adhere to ground detail. These changes do not affect any electors.*

Table 2: Final recommendations for Bolton

	Ward name	Number of councillors	Electorate (2001)	Number of electors per councillor	Variance from average %	Electorate (2006)	Number of electors per councillor	Variance from average %
1	Astley Bridge	3	10,418	3,473	1	10,496	3,499	0
2	Bradshaw	3	9,685	3,228	-6	9,777	3,259	-7
3	Brightmet	3	10,703	3,568	4	10,727	3,576	2
4	Bromley Cross	3	10,621	3,540	3	11,169	3,723	7
5	Central	3	10,335	3,445	0	10,567	3,522	1
6	Crompton	3	10,368	3,456	1	10,380	3,460	-1
7	Farnworth	3	10,899	3,633	6	11,131	3,710	6
8	Great Lever	3	9,877	3,292	-4	10,126	3,375	-3
9	Harper Green	3	10,253	3,418	0	10,387	3,462	-1
10	Heaton & Lostock	3	10,794	3,598	5	10,887	3,629	4
11	Horwich & Blackrod	3	9,544	3,181	-7	10,260	3,420	-2
12	Horwich North East	3	10,274	3,425	0	10,427	3,476	0
13	Hulton	3	10,573	3,524	3	10,701	3,567	2
14	Kearsley	3	10,742	3,581	4	10,847	3,616	4
15	Little Lever & Darcy Lever	3	9,783	3,261	-5	10,117	3,372	-3
16	Rumworth	3	10,504	3,501	2	10,479	3,493	0
17	Smithills	3	10,678	3,559	4	10,763	3,588	3
18	Tonge with the Haulgh	3	10,160	3,387	-1	10,160	3,387	-3
19	Westhoughton North & Chew Moor	3	9,867	3,289	-4	10,073	3,358	-4
20	Westhoughton South	3	9,745	3,248	-5	10,030	3,343	-4
	Totals	60	205,823	-	-	209,504	-	-
	Averages	-	-	3,430	-	-	3,492	-

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 proposals for the electoral arrangements for the borough of Bolton. We are reviewing the ten metropolitan boroughs in Greater Manchester as part of our programme of periodic electoral reviews (PERs) of all 386 principal local authority areas in England. The programme started in 1996 and is currently expected to finish in 2004.

2 This is our first review of the electoral arrangements of Bolton. Bolton's last review was carried out by the Local Government Boundary Commission, which reported to the Secretary of State in September 1978 (Report No. 289).

3 In making final recommendations to The Electoral Commission, we have had regard to:

- the statutory criteria contained in section 13(5) of the Local Government Act 1992 (as amended by SI 2001 No. 3692), i.e. the need to:
 - reflect the identities and interests of local communities;
 - secure effective and convenient local government; and
 - achieve equality of representation.
- Schedule 11 to the Local Government Act 1972.
- the general duty set out in section 71(1) of the Race Relations Act 1996 and the statutory Code of Practice on the Duty to Promote Race Equality (Commission for Racial Equality, May 2002), i.e. to have due regard to:
 - eliminating unlawful racial discrimination;
 - promoting equality of opportunity; and
 - promoting good relations between people of different racial groups.

4 Details of the legislation under which the review of Bolton is being conducted are set out in a document entitled *Guidance and Procedural Advice for Periodic Electoral Reviews* (published by the Electoral Commission in July 2002). This *Guidance* sets out the approach to the review.

5 Our task is to make recommendations on the number of councillors who should serve on a council, and the number, boundaries and names of wards. We can also propose changes to the electoral arrangements for parish and town councils in the borough.

6 The broad objective of PERs is to achieve, so far as possible, equal representation across the borough as a whole. Schemes which would result in, or retain, an electoral imbalance of over 10% in any ward will have to be fully justified. Any imbalances of 20% or more should only arise in the most exceptional circumstances, and will require the strongest justification.

7 We are not prescriptive on council size. However, we believe that any proposals relating to council size, whether these are for an increase, a reduction or no change, should be supported by evidence and argumentation. Given the stage now reached in the introduction of new political management structures under the provisions of the Local Government Act 2000, it is important that whatever council size interested parties may propose to us they can demonstrate that their proposals have been fully thought through, and have been developed in the context of a review of internal political management and the role of councillors in the new structure. However, we have found it necessary to safeguard against upward drift in the number of councillors, and we believe that any proposal for an increase in council size will need to be fully justified. In particular, we do not accept that an increase in electorate should automatically result in an increase in the number of councillors, or that changes should be made to the size of the council simply to make it more consistent with the size of other similar councils.

8 Under the provisions of the Local Government Act 1972 there is no limit to the number of councillors who can be returned from each metropolitan borough ward. However, the figure must be divisible by three. In practice, all metropolitan borough wards currently return three

councillors. Where our recommendation is for multi-member wards, we believe that the number of councillors to be returned from each ward should not exceed three, other than in very exceptional circumstances. Numbers in excess of three could lead to an unacceptable dilution of accountability to the electorate and we have not, to date, prescribed any wards with more than three councillors.

9 This review was in four stages. Stage One began on 14 May 2002, when we wrote to Bolton Metropolitan Borough Council inviting proposals for future electoral arrangements. We also notified Greater Manchester Police Authority, the Local Government Association, Greater Manchester Local Councils Association, parish and town councils in the borough, Members of Parliament with constituency interests in the borough, Members of the European Parliament for the North-West Region and the headquarters of the main political parties. We placed a notice in the local press, issued a press release and invited Bolton Metropolitan Borough Council to publicise the review further. The closing date for receipt of representations, the end of Stage One, was 16 September 2002. At Stage Two we considered all the submissions received during Stage One and prepared our draft recommendations.

10 Stage Three began on 25 February 2003 with the publication of the report, *Draft recommendations on the future electoral arrangements for Bolton* and ended on 22 April 2003. During this period comments were sought from the public and any other interested parties on the preliminary conclusions. Finally, during Stage Four the draft recommendations were reconsidered in the light of the Stage Three consultation, and we now publish the final recommendations.

2 Current electoral arrangements

11 The borough of Bolton lies on the north-western edge of the Greater Manchester urban area. Comprising a mix of urban towns and rural villages, Bolton has good road and rail links with the rest of Greater Manchester and the north. The borough contains three parishes.

12 The electorate of the borough is 205,823 (December 2001). The Council presently has 60 members who are elected from 20 wards, all of which are three-member wards.

13 At present each councillor represents an average of 3,430 electors, which the Borough Council forecasts will increase to 3,492 by the year 2006 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 seven of the 20 wards varies by more than 10% from the borough average, while three wards vary by more than 20%. The worst imbalance is in Deane-cum-Heaton ward where each councillor represents 33% more electors than the borough average.

14 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'.

Map 1: Existing wards in Bolton

Table 3: Existing electoral arrangements

	Ward name	No. of councillors	Electorate (2001)	Number of electors per councillor	Variance from average %	Electorate (2006)	Number of electors per councillor	Variance from average %
1	Astley Bridge	3	11,312	3,771	10	11,370	3,790	9
2	Blackrod	3	10,479	3,493	2	11,251	3,750	7
3	Bradshaw	3	10,964	3,655	7	11,046	3,682	5
4	Brightmet	3	10,331	3,444	0	10,331	3,444	-1
5	Bromley Cross	3	11,159	3,720	8	11,789	3,930	13
6	Burnden	3	9,921	3,307	-4	10,219	3,406	-2
7	Central	3	8,389	2,796	-18	8,590	2,863	-18
8	Daubhill	3	9,038	3,013	-12	9,038	3,013	-14
9	Deane-cum-Heaton	3	13,699	4,566	33	13,835	4,612	32
10	Derby	3	9,938	3,313	-3	9,970	3,323	-5
11	Farnworth	3	9,811	3,270	-5	10,019	3,340	-4
12	Harper Green	3	10,542	3,514	2	9,779	3,260	-7
13	Halliwel	3	9,716	3,239	-6	10,608	3,536	1
14	Horwich	3	11,550	3,850	12	11,562	3,854	10
15	Hulton Park	3	13,174	4,391	28	13,453	4,484	28
16	Kearsley	3	10,291	3,430	0	10,372	3,457	-1
17	Little Lever	3	9,357	3,119	-9	9,729	3,243	-7
18	Smithills	3	8,646	2,882	-16	8,730	2,910	-17
19	Tonge	3	8,038	2,679	-22	8,038	2,679	-23
20	Westhoughton	3	9,468	3,156	-8	9,775	3,258	-7
	Totals	60	205,823	-	-	209,504	-	-
	Averages	-	-	3,430	-	-	3,492	-

Source: Electorate figures are based on information provided by Bolton Metropolitan 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 2001, electors in Deane-cum-Heaton ward were relatively under-represented by 33%, while electors in Tonge ward were relatively over-represented by 22%. Figures have been rounded to the nearest whole number.

3 Draft recommendations

15 During Stage One 13 representations were received, including borough-wide schemes from Bolton Metropolitan Borough Council, the Conservative Group on the Council and the Liberal Democrat Group on the Council. In addition to these, we received six submissions from local branches of the Bolton Liberal Democrats, one from the Liberal Democrats Bolton Area Party, two submissions from town councils and one from a local resident. In the light of these representations and the evidence available to us, we reached preliminary conclusions which were set out in our report, *Draft recommendations on the future electoral arrangements for Bolton*.

16 Our draft recommendations were based on the Liberal Democrats' proposals, which achieved some improvement in electoral equality, with no ward having an electoral variance of over 8% from the borough average by 2006. However, we moved away from the Liberal Democrats' scheme in a number of areas, using options generated by the Borough Council in the proposed Horwich & Blackrod ward and amending the boundaries of the proposed Bradshaw, Brightmet, Bromley Cross, Farnworth East and Little Lever wards to group similar communities in single wards. We proposed that:

- Bolton Metropolitan Borough Council should have 60 councillors representing 20 wards, as at present;
- the boundaries of all the existing wards should be modified;
- there should be new warding arrangements for the parishes of Horwich and Westhoughton.

Draft recommendation

Bolton Metropolitan Borough Council should have 60 councillors, serving 20 wards.

17 Our proposals would have resulted in significant improvements in electoral equality, with the number of electors per councillor in all of the 20 wards varying by no more than 9% from the borough average. This level of electoral equality was forecast to continue, with no ward varying by more than 8% from the average in 2006.

4 Responses to consultation

18 During the consultation on the draft recommendations report, 15 representations were received. A list of all respondents is available from us on request. All representations may be inspected at our offices and those of Bolton Metropolitan Borough Council.

Bolton Metropolitan Borough Council

19 Bolton Metropolitan Borough Council (Bolton Metro) stated that it had no comments to make on the draft recommendations.

The Conservative Group on the Council

20 The Conservative Group on the Council (the Conservatives) put forward borough-wide amendments to the draft recommendations. They proposed amendments to the proposed Bradshaw, Bromley Cross, Horwich & Blackrod, Horwich North East, Lostock with Heaton and Westhoughton North wards and also proposed three ward name changes. The Conservatives also commented that 'the draft proposals have received little publicity within the area with no open debate within the Council'.

The Liberal Democrats Bolton Area Party

21 The Liberal Democrats Bolton Area Party (the Liberal Democrats) commented 'on suggestions that we believe may be put forward by others in relation to boundary changes and to name changes'. They objected to amendments to the proposed Bradshaw, Bromley Cross, Crompton, Lostock with Heaton, Tonge with the Haulgh and Westhoughton North wards and to ward name changes concerning two wards.

Parish and town councils

22 Representations were received from Westhoughton Town Council and Blackrod Town Council. Westhoughton Town Council opposed the proposed parish wards of its town council, arguing that they were too large. It reiterated its Stage One submission and proposed six parish wards, to be served by 18 councillors. Blackrod Town Council suggested that the proposed Horwich & Blackrod ward be renamed Blackrod & Horwich ward.

Other representations

23 A further 10 representations were received in response to our draft recommendations from local political branches, organisations, associations, a councillor and residents. Bolton North East and Bolton South East Branches of the Liberal Democrats supported the draft recommendations for their areas. The Deane-cum-Heaton & Smithills Branch Liberal Democrats proposed a minor amendment to the proposed Smithills ward to reflect access routes.

24 Blackrod Village Association suggested that the proposed Horwich & Blackrod ward be renamed Blackrod & Horwich ward. Bolton NHS Primary Care Trust broadly supported the draft recommendations, but put forward a number of amendments to unite estates in single wards.

25 Darcy Lever Residents Association opposed the inclusion of Darcy Lever village in the proposed Little Lever ward. The Roseneath Area Residents Association objected to the transfer of the Roseneath area of Great Lever to the proposed Farnworth West ward and argued that this area should be included in an amended Great Lever ward.

26 Councillor Williamson (Harper Green ward) suggested that the proposed Farnworth West ward be renamed Townley or Harper Green ward, and a local resident supported the proposed Lostock with Heaton ward but proposed that it be renamed Heaton & Lostock ward.

27 A local resident, Mr Peacock, commented on the draft recommendations across the borough and proposed a number of amendments. He queried the projected electorate figures for 2006 and proposed five ward name changes.

5 Analysis and final recommendations

28 As described earlier, our prime objective in considering the most appropriate electoral arrangements for Bolton is to achieve electoral equality. In doing so we have regard to section 13(5) of the Local Government Act 1992 (as amended), which stipulates the need to secure effective and convenient local government, reflect the identities and interests of local communities, and secure the matters referred to in paragraph 3(2)(a) of Schedule 11 to the Local Government Act 1972 (equality of representation). Schedule 11 to the Local Government Act 1972 refers to the number of electors per councillor being 'as nearly as may be, the same in every ward of the district or borough'.

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

30 It is therefore impractical to design an electoral scheme which results in 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.

31 We accept that the achievement of absolute electoral equality for the authority as a whole is likely to be unattainable. However, we consider that, if electoral imbalances are to be minimised, the aim 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 make electoral equality their starting point, and then make adjustments to reflect relevant factors such as community identities and interests. Five-year forecasts of changes in electorate must also be considered, and we would aim to recommend a scheme which provides improved electoral equality over this five-year period.

32 The recommendations do not affect county, district or parish external boundaries, local taxes, or result in changes to postcodes. Nor is there any evidence that these recommendations will have an adverse effect on house prices, or car and house insurance premiums. Our proposals do not take account of parliamentary boundaries, and we are not, therefore, able to take into account any representations which are based on these issues.

Electorate forecasts

33 Since 1975 there has been an 8% increase in the electorate of Bolton borough. The Borough Council submitted electorate forecasts for the year 2006, projecting an increase in the electorate of 2% from 205,823 to 209,504 over the five-year period from 2001 to 2006. (Unfortunately this figure was misrepresented in our draft recommendations report but is now corrected.) It expected most of the growth to be in Halliwell ward, although a significant amount was also expected in the more rural Blackrod ward. The Liberal Democrats and the Conservatives also provided electorate projections. The Liberal Democrat Group projected an increase in electorate of 2% from 205,818 to 209,645 over the five-year period from 2001 to 2006 while the Conservative Group projected a 2% increase in the electorate from 205,907 to 210,411. In order to prepare its forecasts, the Council estimated rates and locations of housing development with regard to unitary development plans, the expected rate of building over the five-year period and assumed occupancy rates. We noted the different projected figures submitted, but recognised that forecasting electorates is difficult and, having considered the Borough Council's figures, accepted these as the best estimates that could reasonably be made at the time.

34 At Stage Three a local resident, Mr Peacock, queried the projected figures for 2006 provided by the Borough Council, stating that the growth was 'over estimated'. He argued that 'the

creation of new properties does not increase ... electorate, rather it distributes existing electorate. In my experience, ... the majority of house moves are within relatively small distances, usually within an electoral ward as the new housing acts to serve the existing local population.' The example he provided was of children moving out of their parents' house. He stated that 'at the beginning of 2003, I understand from the Local Authority that the electorate currently stands at 206,266, which represents a 0.2% increase in electorate since 2001. Based upon this growth in electorate, there is likely to be an increase of about 1%, rather than the 2% forecast.' Therefore, 'the Committee should place greater reliance upon the existing electorate numbers, rather than proposed increases'.

35 We invited the Borough Council to comment on these points. It stated that 'the original figure was based on figures drawn from the 2001 census. These figures, supplied by the Council's Environment Department, revealed an average of 2.39 people in each household. Obviously this includes children rather than simply electors and accordingly the figure was reduced to 2.2 and later to 1.8. The lowering of the figure ... reflects that the average number per household has been falling slightly. In 1981 it was 2.71; in 1991 it was 2.52.' As stated in the *Guidance*, the Boundary Committee will seek to recommend a scheme under which electoral equality will improve, rather than deteriorate, over time. Although we appreciate the difficulty involved in predicting these forecasts, we recognise the importance of recommending a warding pattern which will provide for good electoral equality in five years time and, consequently, place considerable weight on projected electorate figures.

36 Having considered the Borough Council's response to the queries regarding the electorate figures we are content that these figures do indeed represent the best estimates available at this time.

Council size

37 At Stage One the Borough Council proposed retaining the existing council of 60 members. In considering the appropriate size for the Council, the Borough Council considered the Council's structure and the variety and extent of roles that councillors are required to undertake. The Borough Council considered that the structure of the Council is currently finely balanced and that any reduction in the overall number could have an impact on the efficiency of the Council's political management processes as there would be a reduced number of members to undertake the non-executive functions of the Council. The Council also argued against a reduction in council size. It explained that, for a large number of members, Council duties will continue to be a part-time voluntary addition to their other roles and that if the Burnden is to be shared equitably it is important that it does not fall on a reduced number of volunteers.

38 All three political parties agreed that 60 is the optimum number of members for Bolton Metropolitan Borough Council to provide efficient and effective local government which is sensitive to the needs of the local community. The Liberal Democrat Group also considered the Council's structure and the variety and extent of roles that councillors are required to undertake and agreed with the Borough Council that the Council has operated fairly and effectively for the last 22 years with a council size of 60. They also argued that while the new systems of political management are still evolving, the workload of non-executive councillors has not reduced. The Liberal Democrat Group did not consider that there was enough evidence to argue that there should be an increase in council size but they also believed that there was no evidence to support a reduction in council size. The Conservative Group also supported a council size of 60, but did not submit any detailed argumentation. Having considered the representations received at Stage One, we retained the existing council size in the draft recommendations as we considered that this would provide the most effective and convenient local government for Bolton.

39 At Stage Three we received no further comments on the proposed council size. Therefore, having looked at the size and distribution of the electorate, the geography and other

characteristics of the area, together with the responses received at Stage One, we conclude that the statutory criteria would best be met by a council of 60 members and confirm this number as final.

Electoral arrangements

40 After careful consideration of all the evidence received at Stage One we based the draft recommendations on the Liberal Democrat Group's proposals, as we considered that these proposals better reflected community identities than the current arrangements or other schemes submitted at Stage One. These proposals had also received a level of local support. However, to improve electoral equality and better reflect local community identities and interests, we based our proposals on those put forward by the Borough Council in the Horwich and Blackrod area and proposed amendments to the boundaries in the proposed Bradshaw, Brightmet, Bromley Cross, Farnworth East and Little Lever wards.

41 Having given careful consideration to all 15 representations received at Stage Three, we are broadly confirming the draft recommendations as final. However, we are proposing amendments in the south-east of the borough to better reflect community identities and provide for stronger and more easily identifiable boundaries. A number of these amendments were put forward by a local resident, Mr Peacock, one was proposed by the Darcy Lever Residents Association, and we are also proposing some of our own amendments to reflect access routes and improve electoral equality. We are also adopting one minor amendment to the boundary between the proposed Astley Bridge and Smithills wards, put forward by the Deane-cum-Heaton & Smithills Branch Liberal Democrats. In addition to these, we are proposing revised parish warding arrangements for Westhoughton Town Council, as put forward by that town council, as we consider that this would provide for more effective and convenient local government for Westhoughton. Finally, we are proposing six ward name changes to better reflect the constituent parts of the respective wards.

42 At Stage Three the Conservatives stated that 'the draft recommendations have received only limited publicity in the local press' and none in the Borough Council's monthly newspaper, the *Bolton Scene*. They also pointed out that 'no debate has taken place [at Council meetings]. The only discussions have been at private meetings with a small group of councillors representing the three political parties. The Conservative Party considers this to be unacceptable on such an important issue and calls for a wider debate.'

43 We forwarded these comments to the Borough Council and invited them to comment on the issues raised. In its reply it argued that 'publicity material supplied by the Boundary Committee was distributed to libraries and copies of the draft scheme were sent to all the Council's area forums prior to the deadline for comments. With regard to the coverage by local press, the Council cannot control the amount of local press coverage the draft scheme received.' It then stated that 'prior to the commencement of the review, the Council supplied the Committee with a list of residents associations and community groups. The Committee informed the Council that all these groups would be notified of the commencement of the review and would also receive copies of the draft scheme, as outlined in Section 7.26 of the Periodic Review Guidance.' It concluded by explaining that 'the draft scheme was not debated formally within Council [because] informal meetings with members revealed no consensus response to the scheme and therefore the matter was not taken further'.

44 On publication of the draft recommendations we placed public notices in the *Bolton Evening News*, *Bury Journal*, *Bury Times*, *Leigh Reporter*, *Manchester Evening News*, *Manchester Metro*, *Oldham Advertiser*, *Oldham Evening Chronicle*, *Rochdale Observer*, *Salford Advertiser*, *Stockport Times Series*, *Tameside Advertiser* and *Wigan Reporter* and issued a press release to local papers. We also provided posters to the Borough Council to place in local libraries and local information points to publicise the publication of the draft recommendations. All those who submitted a representation at Stage One received a copy of the draft recommendations, as did

parish and town councils in the area and local MPs. In light of this and the Borough Council's comments we are satisfied that the draft recommendations received adequate publicity given our limited resources. We do also encourage members of the council to advertise the review as much as possible.

45 During Stage Three, Bolton NHS Primary Care Trust put forward a number of amendments to retain certain estates in single wards. These affected the proposed Bradshaw, Brightmet, Crompton, Tonge with the Haulgh, Westhoughton North and Westhoughton South wards. However, their argumentation was based upon regeneration funding for 'target estates'. This is not a factor we can take into account when preparing our recommendations and we were therefore unable to give further consideration to these proposed amendments.

46 During the preparation of our final recommendations, we noticed a number of errors in the draft recommendations report. These involved the electorate figures and four discrepancies between the text and the large maps. Consequently, we have recalculated the figures for each ward, both the initial electorate and the forecasted electorate in 2006, and have based our final recommendations on these revised figures. These figures concern a number of wards but do not significantly affect electoral equality. There were also four errors on the large maps. These were to the boundaries between the proposed Crompton and Halliwell wards, the proposed Farnworth East and Farnworth West wards, the proposed Farnworth East and Kearsley wards and the proposed Farnworth East and Little Lever wards, and are detailed in the relevant sections. These have also been corrected for the final recommendations, and we apologise for any confusion these discrepancies may have caused.

47 For borough warding purposes, the following areas, based on existing wards, are considered in turn:

- i. Blackrod, Horwich, Hulton Park and Westhoughton wards (page 24);
- ii. Astley Bridge, Bradshaw and Bromley Cross wards (page 28);
- iii. Burnden, Central, Halliwell and Tonge wards (page 30);
- iv. Brightmet, Kearsley and Little Lever wards (page 33);
- v. Daubhill, Farnworth and Harper Green wards (page 36);
- vi. Deane-cum-Heaton, Derby and Smithills wards (page 37).

48 Details of our final recommendations are set out in Tables 1 and 2, and illustrated on Map 2, in Appendix A and on the large maps.

Blackrod, Horwich, Hulton Park and Westhoughton wards

49 The existing wards of Blackrod, Horwich, Hulton Park and Westhoughton cover the western area of the borough. Blackrod borough ward comprises the parish of Blackrod, part of Horwich parish (the parish ward of Horwich South), part of Westhoughton parish (the parish ward of Westhoughton Wingates) and an unparished area. Horwich borough ward comprises the remaining parish wards of Horwich parish (Horwich Central, Horwich North and Horwich East). Hulton Park borough ward comprises part of Westhoughton parish (the parish wards of Westhoughton White Horse and Westhoughton Chequerbent) and an unparished area. Westhoughton borough ward comprises part of Westhoughton parish (the parish wards of Westhoughton Central and Westhoughton Daisy Hill). Under the current arrangements the number of electors per councillor in Blackrod, Horwich and Hulton Park wards is 2%, 12% and 28% above the borough average respectively (7%, 10% and 28% above by 2006). The number of electors per councillor in Westhoughton ward is 8% below the borough average (7% below by 2006).

50 At Stage One the Liberal Democrat Group proposed four wards in this area: Horwich North East, Horwich & Blackrod, Westhoughton North and Westhoughton South. The Liberal Democrat Group proposed slightly revised warding arrangements based on the existing wards. The

proposed Horwich North East ward would be broadly similar to the existing Horwich ward, less part of Horwich Central parish ward (the area to the east of Chorley New Road, west of Victoria Road and south of Lee Lane). The proposed Horwich & Blackrod ward would contain the parish of Blackrod, Horwich South parish ward of Horwich parish and the area to the east of Chorley New Road as described above and an unparished area south of Horwich parish. The southern boundary of this proposed ward would follow the southern boundary of the existing Blackrod parish and would then follow the M61 south before turning north-east where it would meet the southern boundary of the proposed Horwich North East ward.

51 The proposed Westhoughton North ward would comprise Westhoughton Wingate and Westhoughton White Horse parish wards and the majority of Westhoughton Chequerbent parish ward of Westhoughton parish. It would also include an unparished part of the existing Blackrod ward and an unparished area from the existing Hulton Park ward. The proposed Westhoughton South ward would comprise Westhoughton Central and Westhoughton Daisy Hill parish wards from Westhoughton parish and the remainder of Westhoughton Chequerbent parish ward of Westhoughton parish.

52 At Stage One the Borough Council also proposed four wards in this area: Blackrod, Horwich, Westhoughton North and Westhoughton South wards. The proposed Blackrod ward was similar to the Liberal Democrats' proposed Horwich & Blackrod ward but transferred the electorate around Church Lane and Wingates Lane into the proposed Westhoughton North ward. The proposed Horwich ward was identical to the Liberal Democrats' proposed Horwich North East ward. The Borough Council proposed a Westhoughton North ward using the same western boundary as the Liberal Democrats. In the south of the proposed ward the boundary would run south of Wigan Road and the rear of the houses on Southfield Drive to Pine Grove before continuing in a northerly direction to Manchester Road. The boundary would continue in an easterly direction along Manchester Road to where Newbrook Road crosses the M61. It would then continue north along the existing Hulton Park ward boundary, towards Knutshaw Bridge along to Hunger Hill, continuing along the M61 motorway before proceeding north towards Mill Bridge. It would then run west along the railway towards Lostock Lane Bridge where it would turn in a southerly direction to the M61 and run west following the same boundary as used in the Liberal Democrats' proposal. The Borough Council proposed a Westhoughton South ward with the southern and western boundaries of this proposed ward following the borough boundary. The northern boundary of this proposed ward would be the southern boundary of the proposed Westhoughton North ward, as described above. The eastern boundary of the proposed ward would follow the edge of the built-up area to the west of Newbrook Road.

53 At Stage One the Conservative Group proposed four wards in this area. We also received representations from the Bolton Liberal Democrats (Horwich & Blackrod Branch) and the Bolton West Liberal Democrats (Westhoughton & Hulton Park Branch) commenting on the Borough Council's proposals. The Horwich & Blackrod Branch supported the Council's proposals for Westhoughton North and Horwich North East wards. The Westhoughton & Hulton Park Branch agreed with the Borough Council's proposals in the Hunger Hill, Wingates and Fourgates area, but argued against the proposals in the Hulton Lane and Chew Moor areas on community identity grounds.

54 Having considered all the representations received at Stage One we adopted the Liberal Democrat Group's proposals in the proposed Horwich North East, Westhoughton North and Westhoughton South wards and also adopted a Horwich & Blackrod ward based on the Borough Council's proposed Blackrod ward. We considered that the Liberal Democrats' proposals in this area would provide improved electoral equality and strong and easily identifiable boundaries in each of the proposed wards, as well as reflecting community identity in the proposed Westhoughton wards. The Borough Council's proposals for the Blackrod ward would provide improved electoral equality. However, we amended the Borough Council's proposed ward to the west of the golf course and reservoir at Stage One to provide stronger and more easily identifiable boundaries. We also considered the representation from the Liberal Democrats

regarding the name of the proposed Blackrod ward and were persuaded that Horwich & Blackrod better reflected the constituent parts of the ward. Consequently we adopted this name at Stage One.

55 Under the draft recommendations the proposed Horwich & Blackrod, Westhoughton North and Westhoughton South wards would have electoral variances 7%, 4% and 5% below the borough average respectively (2%, 4% and 4% below by 2006). The proposed Horwich North East ward would have an electoral variance equal to the borough average, both initially and by 2006.

56 At Stage Three we received eight submissions concerning this area. The Conservatives proposed an amendment to the boundary between the proposed Lostock with Heaton and Westhoughton North wards. They argued that 'the area bounded to the east by A58, Beaumont Road and to the north by the Bolton/Wigan railway has an historic link with the Chew Moor area' and therefore should remain in a single ward. They stated that the parish churches serve this area and that adopting this proposal would allow a stronger boundary to be utilised. They also noted that, whether this amendment is adopted or not, 'a large part of the area of the proposed Westhoughton North ward is not part of Westhoughton parish [therefore] a suggested name for the new ward could perhaps include the name Chew Moor, or some other recognised area, to help distinguish the proposed ward from that of Westhoughton South'.

57 The Conservatives also proposed an amendment to the boundary between the proposed Horwich & Blackrod and Horwich North East wards. They argued that Blackrod and Horwich parishes have their own individual and historic identities and argued that 'the draft recommendations take from the Horwich ward the very heart of Old Horwich, including the former railway station, now a park, the old market and shopping areas and the Horwich RMI Cricket Club'. They argued that 'direct links between Church Street Horwich and Blackrod do not exist', therefore 'should the Committee wish to pursue any proposed link between Blackrod and Horwich it would make far more sense to include a more modern, less historic area of Horwich such as polling district QE1 at Fall Birch [as] this area is clearly identified ... and has good road access'. They also suggested that 'if the Committee wish to retain the names of Blackrod and Horwich in the ward name it would be better to reverse them to help distinguish this proposed ward from Horwich North East'.

58 The Liberal Democrats commented on the boundary between the proposed Lostock with Heaton and Westhoughton North wards. In response to the proposal to 'transfer a triangle bounded by Beaumont Road, Junction Road West and the railway into Westhoughton North' ward, they stated that 'we believe that this area is traditionally part of Lostock and should remain with that ward'. They also objected to any proposal to change the name of Horwich & Blackrod ward contained in the draft recommendations. They pointed out that 58% 'of voters in this ward live in the Horwich parish area [and therefore] we believe that "Horwich" should be quoted first in the title, while the name "Blackrod" should be retained, but in second place'. They also stated that they would 'strongly oppose' any proposal to rename this ward Middlebrook ward.

59 We received two submissions from Westhoughton Town Council, proposing amendments to the warding arrangements for Westhoughton parish. These are detailed in the parishing section of this report.

60 Blackrod Town Council argued that the proposed Horwich & Blackrod ward should be renamed Blackrod & Horwich. It argued that 'some confusion would arise as there would be a ward commencing with Horwich i.e. "Horwich North East" and secondly as Blackrod would in fact be "taking in" part of the Horwich ward that Blackrod should come first'. It also stated that 'this would ... keep the names of the towns in alphabetical order'. Blackrod Village Association proposed the same change as it considered that 'if Blackrod ward is to encompass part of Horwich, and this is to be reflected in the title, then the name Blackrod should come first'. It was

argued that ‘the people of Blackrod ... are proud of their independence and there is a Horwich ward already’.

61 Bolton NHS Primary Care Trust’s submission proposed that the Washacre estate fall in the proposed Westhoughton South ward, ‘rather than a section falling into Westhoughton North [ward]’. However, their argumentation was based upon regeneration funding for ‘target estates’. This is not a factor we can take into account when preparing our recommendations and we were therefore unable to give further consideration to these proposed amendments.

62 A local resident, Mr Peacock, also put forward amendments in this area. He considered that the electorate for these wards ‘should be much closer to the average’. To achieve this, he proposed ‘to include part of Lostock with Heaton ward into Horwich & Blackrod ward’. He suggested that the boundary should continue ‘along the M61 to a point where the Wigan Railway crosses the motorway, running in a north-east direction to Lostock railway station, diverting to a point on Rumworth Road and onto Regent Road. Therefore the boundary would form the rear gardens between Sudbury Drive and Bessy Brook Close, to a point where the existing Bessy Brook stream runs northwards across Chorley New Road, up to a point where the existing Horwich North East ward is positioned, thereafter the boundary would continue westwards along the existing southern boundary of Horwich North East ward.’ He argued that ‘Bessy Brook is the historical boundary between Heaton and Lostock’, and stated that under his proposals the ‘historical area of Lostock would be included within the proposed Horwich & Blackrod ward’. Mr Peacock recognised that any amendment to the proposed Westhoughton wards would ‘create a “knock-on” effect to the other adjoining wards’ and therefore supported the proposed Westhoughton North and Westhoughton South wards.

63 Mr Peacock stated that his ‘preference would be to rename Horwich & Blackrod ward simply as Blackrod, as Blackrod is the dominant community in this proposed ward area. However, acknowledging the representation to refer to any part of Horwich parish district as Horwich, I would suggest the name change to Horwich South West [to] remove any confusion between one ward containing the word Horwich, without any reference to it being part of Horwich.’

64 Having carefully considered all representations received at Stage Three, we are endorsing the draft recommendations as final subject to revised parish warding arrangements for Westhoughton Town and one ward name change. We consider that dividing Westhoughton Town Council into six parish wards, as proposed by the Town Council, would provide for more effective and convenient local government, and this is discussed in the parishing section at the end of this report. We have also been persuaded that the name Westhoughton North & Chew Moor would better reflect the constituent parts of the proposed Westhoughton North ward, encompassing as it does part of Westhoughton parish and the unparished Chew Moor community. We are therefore adopting this name change as part of our final recommendations.

65 We are not adopting the Conservatives’ proposed amendment to the proposed Lostock with Heaton and Westhoughton North & Chew Moor wards as we consider that the Lostock Junction area’s proximity to and links with Lostock should be maintained. We also noted Mr Peacock’s broad support for these two wards. Neither are we adopting the Conservatives’ amendments to the proposed Horwich & Blackrod and Horwich North East wards as we consider that insufficient argumentation had been provided for such significant modifications at this stage. Although we recognise some merit in the argument that the Old Horwich area should remain in Horwich North East ward, we also noted that this area has excellent transport links with the rest of the proposed Horwich & Blackrod ward and that it would remain in a ward with Horwich in the title. We noted the Liberal Democrats’ support for the draft recommendations for this area and consider that the Fall Birch area proposed to be transferred has poorer links with the Blackrod community and would be somewhat isolated in the amended ward. Consequently, we are confirming the draft recommendations for these two wards as final. We are also not adopting the proposal that the proposed Horwich & Blackrod ward be renamed Blackrod & Horwich ward, as put forward by the Conservatives, Blackrod Town Council and Blackrod Village Association. The Liberal Democrats

pointed out that the larger of the two communities encompassed by this ward is Horwich and we consider that Horwich & Blackrod provides the better reflection of the constituent parts of the proposed ward.

66 We carefully considered Mr Peacock's proposed amendment to the boundary between the proposed Horwich & Blackrod and Lostock with Heaton wards but have not been persuaded to move away from the draft recommendations. We consider that his proposal would divide the Lostock community and would also provide for a weaker boundary than the draft recommendations. Neither do we consider that his proposed names of Blackrod or Horwich South West would better reflect the communities encompassed by the proposed Horwich & Blackrod ward. We consider that both Horwich and Blackrod should appear in the ward name and are of the opinion that they should appear in the order of Horwich & Blackrod to reflect the size of the electorate in each community.

67 Under the final recommendations the proposed Horwich & Blackrod (comprising the proposed Horwich South West parish ward), Westhoughton North & Chew Moor (comprising the proposed Chequerbent, Wingates and White Horse parish wards) and Westhoughton South (comprising the proposed Central, Daisy Hill and Hoskers & Hart Common parish wards) wards would have electoral variances 7%, 4% and 5% below the borough average respectively (2%, 4% and 4% below by 2006). The proposed Horwich North East ward (comprising the proposed Horwich North East parish ward) would have an electoral variance equal to the borough average, both initially and by 2006.

Astley Bridge, Bradshaw and Bromley Cross wards

68 The existing wards of Astley Bridge, Bradshaw and Bromley Cross cover the north-eastern area of the borough. Under the current arrangements the number of electors per councillor in the Astley Bridge, Bradshaw and Bromley Cross wards is 10%, 7% and 8% above the borough average respectively (9%, 5% and 13% above by 2006). This area is unparished.

69 At Stage One the Liberal Democrat Group proposed that this area should be covered by three wards retaining the same names. They proposed slightly revised warding arrangements based on the existing wards. In the proposed Astley Bridge ward the boundary would follow Astley Brook generally west, then north-west to Scout Road. It would then continue along the boundary of the existing Astley Bridge ward to the borough boundary, where it would continue north-east towards Eagley Brook. From Eagley Brook the boundary would continue in a south-easterly direction until it crossed Crompton Way and continue towards Blackburn Road.

70 The boundary of the proposed Bradshaw ward would start where Thicketford Road crosses Bradshaw Brook before following Bradshaw Brook generally northwards until it reached a point east of Scope o' th' Lane. The boundary would then continue east to Bradshaw Brow, north-east to Turton Road, then north-west to a point opposite Turton Heights. The boundary would then continue south-east to rejoin Bradshaw Brook which it would follow north to the Jumbles Reservoir. It would then follow the west bank of the reservoir to the borough boundary, where it would proceed north, east and then south to just east of Dry Hillock. The boundary would then continue in a north-westerly direction to Stitch-mi-Lane, before proceeding west past the Christ Church CE School and Earls Farm to meet Greenroyd Avenue. The boundary would then continue south along Greenroyd Avenue and Rochester Avenue to Winchester Way.

71 The proposed Bromley Cross ward would comprise the existing Bromley Cross ward with a slight amendment in the south of the ward. The proposed boundary would leave the existing boundary to follow a footpath just south of Oaks Lane, run across the playing fields, across the railway where it would rejoin the existing boundary.

72 At Stage One the Borough Council proposed that this area should be covered by three wards retaining the same names. The Conservative Group also proposed that this area should

be covered by three wards: the proposed Bradshaw, Bromley Cross and Sharples wards. We also received a submission from Bolton North East Liberal Democrats, who opposed the Borough Council's proposals in Astley Bridge, Bradshaw and Bromley Cross wards for reasons of community identity.

73 Having considered all the representations received at Stage One, we adopted the Liberal Democrat Group's proposals for this area subject to boundary amendments in the proposed Bradshaw and Bromley Cross wards. In the south of the proposed Bradshaw ward we proposed that the boundary follow Stitch-mi-Lane and continue behind the houses on Rusland Drive to meet with the existing boundary, and in the proposed Bromley Cross ward we proposed that in the south-east of the ward the boundary follow Bradshaw Brook behind Rigby Lane and the cricket ground to meet the existing boundary on Bradshaw Brow south of Canon Slade school, it would then continue west to the north of the properties on Danesbury Road and The Stray. We considered that these amendments would provide stronger and more clearly identifiable boundaries.

74 Under the draft recommendations the proposed Astley Bridge and Bromley Cross wards would have electoral variances 1% and 3% above the borough average respectively (equal to and 7% above by 2006). The proposed Bradshaw ward would have an electoral variance 6% below the borough average (7% below by 2006).

75 At Stage Three we received five submissions relating to this area. The Conservatives put forward amendments to the boundary between the proposed Bradshaw and Bromley Cross wards. They argued that 'the area generally to the east of Bradshaw Brow has always been linked with the proposed Bradshaw ward. Historically it is part of the former Turton UDC and as the naming of Bradshaw Brow suggests is clearly defined as being Bradshaw'. They therefore suggested an amendment that 'would create a boundary from the mid-point of Bradshaw Brow, at Danesbury Road, in a generally northerly direction to the junction of Turton Road at the Royal Oak. This retains the current boundary'. They went on to comment that 'by retaining the current boundary from the Royal Oak Junction at Bradshaw Brow, thence along the mid-point of Turton Road the historic links of Bradshaw would be retained'. The Conservatives considered that the draft recommendations 'would in effect split the historic [area known as] Bradshaw Chapel into two wards'. Therefore they proposed that 'the present boundary, along Turton Road to Printers Lane, should be retained'. They concluded by stating that 'the Conservative Party currently and generally has all six councillors in Bradshaw and Bromley Cross wards and can thus claim to speak for the electors of this area'.

76 The Liberal Democrats commented on the proposal to transfer the Timberbottom area back into Bradshaw ward. They stated that 'there is some merit in the proposal, but it would produce a poorer boundary. On balance, we prefer the boundary in the draft proposals'. Furthermore, they commented on the additional proposal to transfer an area 'which is an integral part of Bromley Cross, back into Bradshaw. We believe this would both produce a poorer boundary and split a community. We would strongly oppose this proposal'.

77 The Liberal Democrats Bolton North East Branch supported the draft recommendations for this area. They commented on 'the proposed boundary between Bradshaw and Bromley Cross wards, where the draft proposals shows it following Bradshaw Brook' and considered that 'this provides a clearer boundary and better reflects communities'. They stated that 'we wish to express our strong support for the draft proposals'.

78 Bolton NHS Primary Care Trust's submission proposed 'that the New Lane estate should join Withins estate in the Brightmet ward rather than much of it sitting in Bradshaw [ward]'. However, their argumentation was based upon regeneration funding for 'target estates'. This is not a factor we can take into account when preparing our recommendations and we were therefore unable to give further consideration to these proposed amendments. Mr Peacock stated that he 'support[s] the Committee's proposed boundaries for all three wards'.

79 Having carefully considered all representations received at Stage Three, we are confirming the draft recommendations for this area as final with one minor amendment. This is to the boundary between the proposed Astley Bridge and Smithills wards and is detailed a later section. We gave careful consideration to the Conservatives' proposed amendments to the boundary between the proposed Bradshaw and Bromley Cross wards, but concluded that the Bradshaw Brook formed the best boundary in this area, as proposed in the draft recommendations. We also noted the strong support provided by the Liberal Democrats, the Liberal Democrats Bolton North East Branch and Mr Peacock for the draft recommendations in this area. We concur with the Liberal Democrats that there is some 'merit' in the Conservatives' proposal to include the Timberbottom area in an amended Bradshaw ward. However, we concluded that the transport links in this area are stronger with the proposed Bromley Cross ward than the proposed Bradshaw ward and consider that the draft recommendations provide a good reflection of community identities and interests in the area. They also utilise strong boundaries.

80 Under the final recommendations the proposed Astley Bridge and Bromley Cross wards would have electoral variances 1% above and 3% above the borough average respectively (equal to and 7% above by 2006). The proposed Bradshaw ward would have an electoral variance 6% below the borough average (7% below by 2006).

Burnden, Central, Halliwell and Tonge wards

81 These four wards are situated in the centre of the borough. Under the current arrangements the number of electors per councillor in Burnden, Central, Halliwell and Tonge wards is 4%, 18%, 6% and 22% below the borough average respectively (2% and 18% below, 1% above and 23% below by 2006). This area is unparished.

82 At Stage One the Liberal Democrat Group proposed four wards in this area: the proposed Crompton, Great Lever, Halliwell and Tonge with the Haulgh wards. They proposed slightly revised warding arrangements based predominantly on the existing warding arrangements. The proposed Halliwell ward would comprise parts of the existing Halliwell and Central wards. The boundary of the proposed ward would follow Deansgate westwards from where Bridge Street meets Deansgate to the junction with Oxford Street. It would then run south along Oxford Street, Victoria Square and Newport Street to Great Moor Street, before continuing south-west to the railway. The boundary would then continue to a point south of Cemetery Lodge, before running north to Gilnow Road. The boundary would then continue generally north-west along Tudor Avenue to Chorley New Road, east to Mornington Road, north to Chorley Old Road and north-west to Ivy Road. The boundary would continue northwards to Vallets Lane and the junction with Elgin Street, and then eastwards to Eskrick Street and the junction with Tennyson Street. The boundary would then follow Brownlow Way north to Halliwell Road towards Higher Bridge Street and Bridge Street.

83 The boundary of the proposed Crompton ward would follow Crompton Way westwards to Blackburn Road, before running south to Astley Brook and west to Moss Bank Way. The boundary would then continue south-west along Moss Bank Way before following Harpers Lane and Bennets Lane South to Elgin Street. From Elgin Street the boundary would continue east to Eskrick Street, south towards Tennyson Street and along Tennyson Street to Brownlow Way before proceeding north to Halliwell Road. It would then follow Halliwell Road to Higher Bridge Street and Bridge Street southwards to Deansgate. The boundary would then continue east along Deansgate, Churchgate and Churchbank to St Peters Way until it met the railway line. The boundary would follow the railway line north-east to where a path crosses it north of Castle Hill School, then follow the path to Glaisdale Road. At the end of Glaisdale Road it would continue east to the rear boundaries of the houses on the east side of Le Gendre Street, following on to St Bees Road and Crompton Way. The boundary would continue south-east, then east along the footpath to the south of Firwood school. It would then run north along another footpath until it

reached Bradshaw Brook where it would follow the southern boundary of the proposed Bromley Cross ward, detailed above.

84 The boundary of the proposed Great Lever ward would run south-east along St Peters Way before continuing south across Manchester Road to the railway line west of Ivanhoe Street and south-east along the railway line to the southern boundary of the existing Burnden ward. It would then follow that boundary in a westerly direction to Bradford Road, before running north to Green Lane and west to the southern boundary of the existing Derby ward. It would then continue west and north along that boundary to Bridgeman Street, north-east along Bridgeman Street to High Street, north-west to Derby Street, then north-west along College Way and Mayor Street to the railway line. The boundary would continue east along the railway line to Great Moor Street, east to Newport Street, and north along Newport Street, Victoria Square and Oxford Street to Deansgate, before running east along Deansgate, Churchgate and Churchbank.

85 The boundary of the proposed Tonge with the Haulgh ward would follow the A666 (St Peters Way) north-west to where the railway crosses it near Castle Street. It would then continue north and north-east along the railway to where a path crosses it to the north of Castle Hill School. The boundary would follow this path eastwards to Tonge Moor Road and east along Glaisdale Road. At the end of Glaisdale Road it would continue east to the rear boundaries of the houses on the east side of Le Gendre Street, following on to St Bees Road and Crompton Way. The boundary would continue south-east, then east along the footpath to the south of Firwood school, then north along another footpath until it reached Bradshaw Brook. The boundary would follow Bradshaw Brook southwards to the River Tonge, before running south along the River Tonge to the River Croal and then south along the River Croal.

86 At Stage One the Borough Council proposed that this area should be covered by four wards: the proposed Burnden, Central, Halliwell and Tonge wards. The Conservative Group also proposed that this area should be covered by four wards: the proposed Gilnow, Great Lever, Halliwell and Tonge with the Haulgh wards. We received a representation from the Liberal Democrats Bolton South-East Branch which opposed the Borough Council's proposals in the Burnden area as they considered that the areas proposed to be included had little in common. We also received a representation from the Liberal Democrats Bolton North-East Branch who considered that the Borough Council's proposals in the Halliwell ward would split communities.

87 Having carefully considered the representations received at Stage One and having visited the area ourselves and identified areas of community interest referred to by the Liberal Democrats, we adopted the Liberal Democrats' proposals in this area as we considered that their proposed wards would meet the need to reflect local communities while providing good levels of electoral equality and strong and easily identifiable boundaries.

88 Under the draft recommendations the proposed Crompton, Halliwell and Tonge with the Haulgh wards would have electoral variances 1% above, equal to and 3% above the borough average respectively (1% below, 1% and 1% above by 2006). The proposed Great Lever ward would have an electoral variance 2% below the borough average (1% below by 2006).

89 At Stage Three we received six submissions with regard to this area. The Conservatives noted that 'the historic and acknowledged geographical centre of Halliwell was close to Moss Bank, north of the A58, Moss Bank Way'. They argued that 'the proposed Halliwell ward has no connections with the true Halliwell. It is better described as being based on the historic Victory and Gilnow areas'. As the proposed ward stretches 'into the town centre the proposed ward should more accurately include a reference to these areas or simply be called Central ward'.

90 The Liberal Democrats objected to any proposal to 'transfer the Firwood Estate from Crompton [ward] to Tonge with the Haulgh [ward]'. This is because 'Firwood Fold was where Samuel Crompton was born, and he gives his name to the proposed ward [and] we do not

believe that there are any community links between this area and Tonge sufficiently strong to justify this change, and would oppose it.'

91 Bolton NHS Primary Care Trust proposed that 'the whole of the Tonge Moor estate ... fit within Tonge with the Haulgh ward rather than the northern section falling into Crompton ward'. However, their argumentation was based upon regeneration funding for 'target estates'. This is not a factor we can take into account when preparing our recommendations and we were therefore unable to give further consideration to these proposed amendments. We received two submissions from The Roseneath Area Residents Association, objecting to the proposal to transfer the Roseneath area of Great Lever into the proposed Farnworth West ward. The Association stated that it 'wishes it to be known that they wish to be included in the Great Lever ward boundary and not the proposed [Farnworth West ward] and a petition will follow backing this objection'. However, its second submission stated 'that due to ill health and other commitments, we have not been in a position to collect and forward the petition. However ... be assured it was requested by a large majority at our last public meeting of the Association ... that our members and surrounding residents wishes it to be known that they wish to be included in the Great Lever boundary'.

92 Mr Peacock commented on 'the community known as the Haulgh'. He described the area around the Bolton Institute for Higher Education as a place where 'the properties are now converted into bedsits for student use [and] there is a large amount of asylum seekers in the area'. He argued that 'there is no community link between the residents around St Stephens Church and the area now predominantly utilised for bedsit purposes'. He therefore put forward an amendment to the south of the proposed Tonge with the Haulgh ward which 'reflects this distinction in communities and improves upon the variance from the average' by transferring the properties surrounding the Darcy Lever viaduct to the proposed Little Lever ward. This is because he considered the community of Darcy Lever, in the proposed Little Lever ward, 'is centred around the River Croal, with the community being situated to either side of the River Croal'. For example, 'the local primary school, St Stephens and All Martyrs, together with the adjoining parish church, [all] serve this single community, on both sides of the river'. His proposed boundary would 'run southwest from the point where the River Tonge and Bradshaw Brook merge, to create the River Croal. The boundary runs south of Whiston Drive, running along the south of 221 Radcliffe Road. The boundary then runs behind the rear boundaries of the properties of Wheatfield Street, including Wheatfield Street in the proposed Little Lever ward, across the junction of Wardle Street and Bromwich Street, there running behind the rear boundaries of Kirkwall Drive, including Kirkwall Drive within the proposed Little Lever ward, down the line of the disused railway and westwards back to the River Croal, where the boundary then runs along the river back to its original line.'

93 Mr Peacock also put forward an amendment to the boundary between the proposed Crompton and Tonge with the Haulgh wards. His proposed boundary 'would run northwards along Tonge Moor Road, to the junction with Crompton Way and then south-east along Crompton Way, to the proposed boundary point behind Bees Road. This boundary creates a better defined identification along two major roads and includes all properties between Tonge Moor Road and Crompton Way in one ward.'

94 Mr Peacock supported the proposed Great Lever ward, but stated that the proposed 'Halliwell ward does not include the area generally referred to as Halliwell locally'. He considered that the proposed ward would include the areas of Victory, Gilnow and part of the town centre, before concluding that 'it would be more accurate to describe this area of the town as West ward'.

95 Having carefully considered all representations received at Stage Three, we are adopting Mr Peacock's proposed amendment to the boundary between the proposed Little Lever and Tonge with the Haulgh wards. This involves the transfer of the community immediately surrounding the dismantled railway, in the south of the proposed Tonge with the Haulgh ward, to an amended

Little Lever ward as detailed above. We consider that this amendment would unite the Darcy Lever community in a single ward. We also note that the links between the Darcy Lever and Little Lever areas are strong and that this amendment would improve electoral equality given our proposed amendments to the proposed Farnworth East and Little Lever wards, discussed in the next section. We propose that the industrial estate to the west of the River Croal be transferred to the proposed Great Lever ward to provide for a stronger and more easily identifiable boundary between Great Lever and Tonge with the Haulgh wards. We also propose that Moses Gate Country Park be transferred from the proposed Tonge with the Haulgh ward to an amended Farnworth East ward, again to provide for a stronger boundary and to tie in with the proposed amendments detailed in the following section.

96 We propose a final amendment in this area to the boundary between the proposed Great Lever and Farnworth East wards. This is in addition to the proposal to use the River Croal as a boundary between the proposed Farnworth East and Little Lever wards detailed later on in the report. As proposed by Mr Peacock we are uniting the Moses Gate community in a single ward. To achieve this and to reflect access routes in this area we propose that Ashby Close and Brentwood Drive be transferred to an amended Farnworth East ward to better reflect community identities and provide for a stronger boundary between the two wards.

97 We have also been persuaded by the Conservatives and Mr Peacock that the proposed Halliwell ward should be renamed Central ward. The proposed ward encompasses part of the town centre and lies in the centre of the borough and we therefore consider that this name would provide a good reflection of the constituent parts of the ward.

98 We carefully considered both representations received from The Roseneath Area Residents Association. However, we are unable to consider any single area in isolation when putting forward proposals for new warding arrangements, and any proposal to transfer this area to the proposed Great Lever ward would have knock-on effects. We also noted the lack of argumentation and that no specific alternative warding arrangement for the area came forward. Consequently, we have not been persuaded to move away from the draft recommendations for the Roseneath area. We also noted the support for the proposed Great Lever ward from Mr Peacock.

99 We also considered Mr Peacock's proposed amendment to the boundary between the proposed Crompton and Tonge with the Haulgh wards. However, we consider that this modification would isolate the Firwood area and consider that insufficient argumentation was provided to persuade us to move away from the draft recommendations. We are therefore endorsing the draft recommendations as final in this area, subject to the amendments outlined above.

100 In our final recommendations we have also corrected a discrepancy between the text and the large map in the draft recommendations. In the text we stated that we had based the draft recommendations on the Liberal Democrats' proposed Crompton and Halliwell wards. Part of the proposed boundary followed Brownlow Way, before running south-east along Halliwell Road. This detail was not shown on the relevant large map, but this has been corrected in the final recommendations mapping.

101 Under the final recommendations the proposed Central, Crompton and Tonge with the Haulgh wards would have electoral variances equal to, 1% above and 1% below the borough average respectively (1% above, 1% below and 3% below by 2006). The proposed Great Lever ward would have an electoral variance 4% below the borough average (3% below by 2006).

Brightmet, Kearsley and Little Lever wards

102 Brightmet, Kearsley and Little Lever wards are situated in the east of the borough. Under the current arrangements the number of electors per councillor in Brightmet and

Kearsley wards is equal to the borough average in both (1% below in both by 2006). The number of electors per councillor in Little Lever ward is 9% below the borough average (7% below by 2006). This area is unparished.

103 At Stage One the Liberal Democrat Group proposed that this area should be covered by three wards, retaining the present ward names. They proposed slightly revised warding arrangements based predominantly on the existing warding arrangements. The boundary of the proposed Brightmet ward would run north along the borough boundary from the dismantled railway south of Willand Drive. It would leave the boundary just east of Dry Hillock to run north-west along a path to Stitch-mi-Lane which it would follow in a westerly direction. The proposed boundary would then run to the east of properties on Rusland Drive, Greenburn Drive and Stockley Avenue before running south along Greenroyd Avenue and Rochester Avenue. It would then run north-west along Winchester Way and south along Bradshaw Brook before following a path north-east by Leverhulme Park and other paths generally east to Long Lane. The proposed boundary would then cross Long Lane and run in a southerly direction to the east of properties on Beechcroft Avenue and Hollycroft Avenue before running east along the dismantled railway to the borough boundary.

104 The proposed Kearsley ward would comprise the existing Kearsley ward, with one amendment to include properties to the north of Church Road (numbers 19–71). The boundary of the proposed Little Lever ward would follow the boundary of the existing Little Lever ward west and north-west along the Rivers Irwell and Croal to the northern boundary of the existing Farnworth ward. It would then follow that boundary westwards to the Bolton to Manchester railway line, which it would follow in a north-westerly direction. The proposed boundary would then run generally north-east to the north of properties on John Boste Court and Wood Edge Close to rejoin the River Croal. It would continue north along the River Croal, River Tonge and Bradshaw Brook before following a path north-east through Leverhulme Park and other paths generally east to Long Lane. The proposed boundary would then cross Long Lane and run in a southerly direction to the east of properties on Beechcroft Avenue and Hollycroft Avenue before running east along the dismantled railway to the borough boundary.

105 At Stage One the Borough Council proposed that this area should be covered by the three proposed wards of Brightmet, Kearsley and Little Lever. The Conservative Group also proposed that this area should be covered by the three proposed wards of Brightmet, Kearsley and Little Lever. We also received a representation from the Bolton South-East Branch of the Liberal Democrats, who commented on the Borough Council's proposals for the proposed Kearsley and Little Lever wards.

106 Having carefully considered the representations received at Stage One we adopted the Liberal Democrat Group's proposals subject to a modification to the proposed Brightmet and Little Lever wards. We proposed that the boundary in the south of the proposed Brightmet ward follow the existing boundary, to include the area of Darcy Lever within Little Lever ward. Having visited the area, we considered that this modification would better reflect community identity. We considered that these revised wards would balance the need to reflect local communities while providing good electoral equality and using strong and easily identifiable boundaries.

107 Under the draft recommendations the proposed Brightmet ward would have an electoral variance of 5% above the borough average (3% above by 2006). The proposed Kearsley and Little Lever wards would have electoral variances equal to and 9% below the borough average respectively (1% and 8% below by 2006).

108 At Stage Three we received three submissions regarding this area. The Bolton South East Branch of the Liberal Democrats drew our attention to a 'slight discrepancy between the proposals contained in the [draft recommendations] and the boundary shown on large map four' between the proposed Farnworth East and Kearsley wards. They considered that 'numbers 19 to 71 Church Road [should] be included within Kearsley [ward]'. They also stated that 'we wish

to register our strong support for the proposals in the draft recommendations – both as they affect Bolton South East and Bolton as a whole. We believe they are eminently sensible’.

109 Darcy Lever Residents Association objected to the village of Darcy Lever being included in the proposed Little Lever ward, from which they ‘are separated by at least half a mile of fields, and [with which they have] nothing in common’. It also pointed out that ‘Top o’th’Gorses and Gorses Mount use Darcy Lever as their postal address, as does Woodside Place. The residents there are members of our Association [and] they have a large park between the houses and Brightmet into which ... they are placed.’ The Association stressed the historic political links the village has with the Haulgh and the Brightmet areas.

110 Mr Peacock also proposed amendments to this area. He argued that ‘to the southwest corner of the proposed Little Lever ward, the streets to the north of Hall Lane, form part of the Moses Gate community, with the local school being in the Farnworth East ward, ... the school being All Saints CE Primary School’. He considered that ‘this community is isolated from the main Little Lever area due to the large valley along the River Croal and it associates with the Farnworth area’. He therefore suggested that the River Croal would ‘form a more identifiable boundary and improve community identity’. We did in fact propose this amendment to the Liberal Democrats’ proposals in our draft recommendations, but unfortunately this amendment was not reflected on the relevant large map. Mr Peacock’s proposed amendment to the boundary between the proposed Little Lever and Tonge with the Haulgh wards has been discussed in the previous section. He also stated that ‘the proposed boundaries for the Brightmet and Kearsley wards I am in agreement with, these areas representing generally well defined communities to the east and south-east of the borough’.

111 Having carefully considered all submissions received at Stage Three, we propose two amendments to these wards, in addition to those detailed in previous sections. We are grateful to the Bolton South East Branch of the Liberal Democrats for pointing out a discrepancy between the draft recommendations report and the maps in this area. We can confirm that Church Street should indeed be included in the proposed Kearsley ward, and our final recommendations correct this discrepancy.

112 We propose to transfer Ashby Close and Brentwood Drive, as detailed previously, into an amended Farnworth East ward. However, this would result in this amended ward being significantly under-represented, and to address this imbalance we propose the consequential transfer of the properties to the south of King Street and Church Street from the proposed Farnworth East ward to the proposed Kearsley ward. This is an urban area, with the properties to be transferred adjoining those in Kearsley ward, and we consider the transport links between them to be good. We also note that this proposed boundary provides for a stronger and more easily identifiable boundary than that put forward in the draft recommendations, as well as improving electoral equality in light of our amendments in the north-east of the proposed Farnworth East ward.

113 Darcy Lever Residents Association argued that the properties in the south-west of the proposed Brightmet ward are part of Darcy Lever village, situated in the proposed Little Lever ward. We concur that Darcy Lever village should be united in a single ward. However, while Darcy Lever Residents Association argued that this area should be included in Brightmet or Tonge with the Haulgh wards, to improve electoral equality we propose uniting this area but including it in a revised Little Lever ward. This would also reflect access routes in the area. We therefore propose that the boundary run around Leverhulme Park, following the path in a north-westerly direction through the playing fields. Together with amendments adopted to the boundary between the proposed Little Lever and Tonge with the Haulgh wards outlined earlier, this results in the entire Darcy Lever community lying within the amended Little Lever ward. As a result of this, we consider that the resulting ward should be renamed to better reflect its constituent parts. Consequently, we propose that it be named Little Lever & Darcy Lever ward.

114 Under the final recommendations the proposed Brightmet ward would have an electoral variance 4% above the borough average (2% above by 2006). The proposed Little Lever & Darcy Lever ward would have an electoral variance 5% below the borough average (3% below by 2006). The proposed Kearsley ward would have an electoral variance 4% above the borough average, both initially and by 2006.

Daubhill, Farnworth and Harper Green wards

115 These three wards are situated in the south of the borough. Under the current arrangements the number of electors per councillor in Harper Green ward is 2% above the borough average (7% below by 2006). The number of electors per councillor in Daubhill and Farnworth wards is 12% and 5% below the borough average respectively (14% and 4% below by 2006). This area is unparished.

116 At Stage One the Liberal Democrat Group proposed that this area should be covered by three wards: the proposed Hulton, Farnworth East and Farnworth West wards. They proposed slightly revised warding arrangements based predominantly on the existing ward arrangements. The boundary of the proposed Hulton ward would follow the borough boundary from the M61 in a south-westerly and westerly direction before running north along the western edge of New Park Wood, the western edge of Dog Kennel Wood, field boundaries and the western edge of Back o' th' Lawn Wood. The proposed boundary would continue east and north along a track to Manchester Road and north along Punch Lane to the M61. It would then run north-east along the disused railway line and Knutshaw Brook to Wigan Road before running east along Wigan Road and south-east along Deane Church Lane to St Helens Road. The proposed boundary would then run east along the disused railway to the eastern boundary of the existing Daubhill ward which it would follow in a southerly direction to the borough boundary.

117 The proposed Farnworth East ward would comprise the existing Farnworth ward, subject to the transfer of Church Road to a revised Kearsley ward and the addition of the part of the existing Harper Green ward bounded by Plodder Lane and Marsh Lane.

118 The proposed Farnworth West ward would comprise the existing Harper Green ward, subject to the transfer of the area to the east of Marsh Lane and the south of Plodder Lane to the proposed Farnworth East ward, and the addition of the area west of Bradford Road and south of Green Lane from the existing Burnden ward.

119 At Stage One the Borough Council proposed that this area should be covered by the two proposed wards of Farnworth and Morris Green. The Conservative Group proposed that this area should be represented by the three proposed wards of Daubhill, Farnworth and Harper Green. We also received a representation from the Bolton South-East Branch of the Liberal Democrats, who commented on the Borough Council's proposals for the proposed Farnworth and Morris Green wards.

120 Having considered all the representations received at Stage One and having visited the area and identified the areas of community interest within these proposed wards, we adopted the Liberal Democrat Group's proposals in this area with one modification. This was that the boundary between the proposed Farnworth East and Little Lever wards should follow the River Croal to better reflect community identities and to provide for a stronger boundary in the area. As previously mentioned, unfortunately this amendment was not reflected on the relevant large map in the draft recommendations. This has been corrected for the final recommendations. We considered that these revised wards would balance the need to reflect local communities while providing good electoral equality and utilising strong and easily identifiable boundaries.

121 Under the draft recommendations the electoral variances in the proposed Farnworth East and Hulton wards would be 8% and 3% above the borough average respectively (8% and 2%

above by 2006). In the proposed Farnworth West ward the electoral variance would be equal to the borough average (1% below by 2006).

122 At Stage Three we received two submissions concerning this area. Councillor Williamson (Harper Green ward) argued that the proposed Farnworth West ward 'is almost entirely the former Harper Green ward, ... a significant part of the proposed ward is not Farnworth and the residents are unhappy with that name'. He therefore proposed that the ward be renamed Townley ward, 'after the original name for the hospital which is at the centre of the ward', or that we 'leave the name as Harper Green'.

123 The amendment proposed by Mr Peacock to the boundary between the proposed Farnworth East and Little Lever wards has been discussed in the previous section. He stated that he is 'in agreement with the Committee's proposals for the boundaries proposed for Farnworth West' ward and also provided support for the proposed Hulton ward.

124 Having carefully considered the representations received regarding this area, and with the exception of the amendment to the northern boundary of the proposed Farnworth East ward discussed previously, we are confirming the draft recommendations in this area as final. We have noted the support provided by Mr Peacock for these wards. However, in light of Councillor Williamson's comments, we propose that the proposed Farnworth West ward be renamed Harper Green ward. We note that the proposed ward remains largely unchanged from the existing Harper Green ward and consider that this name would be more easily recognisable and would better reflect the constituent parts of the ward. As a consequence of this, we also propose that the proposed Farnworth East ward be renamed Farnworth ward.

125 In our final recommendations we have also corrected a discrepancy between the text and the large map in the draft recommendations. In the text we stated that we had based the draft recommendations on the Liberal Democrats' proposed Farnworth East and Farnworth West wards. Part of the proposed boundary followed Marsh Lane, before running east along Plodder Lane. This detail was not shown on the relevant large map, but this has been corrected in the final recommendations mapping.

126 Under the final recommendations the electoral variances in the proposed Farnworth and Hulton wards would be 6% and 3% above the borough average respectively (6% and 2% above by 2006). In the proposed Harper Green ward the electoral variance would be equal to the borough average (1% below by 2006).

Deane-cum-Heaton, Derby and Smithills wards

127 Deane-cum-Heaton, Derby and Smithills wards are situated in the centre of the borough. Under the current arrangements the number of electors per councillor in Deane-cum-Heaton ward is 33% above the borough average (32% by 2006). The number of electors per councillor in Derby and Smithills wards is 3% and 16% below the borough average respectively (5% and 17% below by 2006). This area is unparished.

128 At Stage One the Liberal Democrat Group proposed that this area should be covered by three wards: the proposed Lostock with Heaton, Rumworth and Smithills wards. They proposed slightly revised warding arrangements based predominantly on the existing warding arrangements. The boundary of the proposed Lostock with Heaton ward would run generally east along Chorley Old Road, Old Kiln Lane, Markland Hill Lane and Whitcroft Road to rejoin Chorley Old Road. It would then run along Chorley Old Road, Devonshire Road, Chorley New Road and Tudor Avenue to just east of Cemetery Lodge. The proposed boundary would then run south to the Bolton to Preston railway line which it would follow west before running in a southerly direction to the west of properties on Grange Road to meet Wigan Road. It would follow Wigan Road south-west before running north-west along Knutshaw Brook and along the eastern edge of Rumworth Lodge Reservoir to the Lostock to Westhoughton railway line. The

proposed boundary would then follow this railway line east before running west along the Bolton to Preston railway line and then generally north-east along Mill Lane and field boundaries to Chorley New Road. It would then follow the Horwich Town Council boundary east and north to return to Chorley Old Road.

129 The boundary of the proposed Rumworth ward would run generally south along Mayor Street, College Way, Derby Street and High Street. The proposed boundary would then run south-west along Bridgeman Street and generally south-west along the western boundary of the existing Derby ward to the disused railway line. It would then run west along the disused railway line to St Helens Road where it would run north-west along Deane Church Lane, east along Wigan Road and north to the west of properties on Grange Road to the Bolton to Preston railway line. The proposed boundary would then follow this railway line east to Mayor Street.

130 The boundary of the proposed Smithills ward would follow Chorley Old Road, Old Kiln Lane, Markland Hill Lane and Whitecroft Road to rejoin Chorley Old Road. It would then run south along Devonshire Road, east along Chorley New Road and north along Mornington Road. The proposed boundary would continue west along Chorley Old Road before running generally north along Ivy Road, Valletts Lane and Bennetts Lane to Harpers Lane. It would then run north-east along Moss Bank Way before running north-west along Astley and Raveden Brooks to the borough boundary. The proposed boundary would then follow the borough boundary west before following the eastern boundary of Horwich Town Council to Chorley Old Road.

131 At Stage One the Borough Council proposed that this area should be covered by the four proposed wards of Daubhill, Derby, Doffcocker and Lostock with Ladybridge. The Conservative Group proposed that this area should be covered by the three proposed wards of Deane with Middle Hulton, Heaton and Smithills. We also received a representation from the Bolton Liberal Democrats Deane-cum-Heaton & Smithills Branch who objected to the Borough Council's proposals in the proposed Doffcocker, Lostock with Ladybridge and Smithills wards on community identity grounds.

132 Having considered all the representations received at Stage One and having visited this area of Bolton ourselves and identified what we consider to be the areas of community interest within these proposed wards, we adopted the Liberal Democrats' proposals in this area without modification. We considered that the revised wards would provide a good balance between the need to reflect local communities, the need to provide good electoral equality and the need to provide strong and easily identifiable boundaries.

133 Under the draft recommendations the electoral variance in the proposed Lostock with Heaton, Rumworth and Smithills wards would be 5%, 2% and 4% above the borough average respectively (4% above, equal to and 3% above by 2006).

134 At Stage Three we received five submissions in relation to this area. The Conservatives proposed an amendment to the boundary between the proposed Lostock with Heaton and Westhoughton North wards which has been discussed previously. The Liberal Democrats stated that they 'understand there may be a proposal to rename [Lostock with Heaton ward] Heaton with Lostock ward'. They pointed out that nearly 50% of the electorate live in Heaton, but concluded that they 'have no strong feelings on this proposal'.

135 The Deane-cum-Heaton & Smithills Branch of the Bolton Liberal Democrats stated that they 'support the draft proposals as they affect our area, and are particularly pleased that [we] have been able to retain a Smithills ward'. However, they proposed an amendment to the boundary between the proposed Astley Bridge and Smithills wards, affecting two electors. They argued that 'if the boundary followed the more easterly of [the] two streams [from Bryan Hey Reservoir], [then] Tippett House and the Smithills Garden Centre would be located in Smithills ward. As the only vehicular access to both is via Smithills Dean Road, and the former Garden Centre is part of the Smithills Estate, this would seem a more sensible situation.'

136 The amendment put forward by Mr Peacock to the boundary between the proposed Horwich & Blackrod and Lostock with Heaton wards has been discussed in a previous section. He proposed a further amendment to the 'southern part of the proposed Lostock with Heaton boundary'. He suggested that 'it continue along Wigan Road and deviate along the eastern boundary of Haslam Park. There is a natural break between the communities to the east and west of Haslam Park, due to the size of this recreational area.'

137 Mr Peacock also proposed a 'slight boundary change between the proposed Lostock with Heaton ward and Smithills ward. At the point where the proposed boundary off Chorley New Road runs down Old Kiln Lane, I propose that it runs down along Chorley Old Road to the junction with Moss Bank Way, where it then turns to continue along Old Kiln Road, in an easterly direction. This proposal will have the result of including properties situated along one side of Chorley Old Road and the cul-de-sacs off this road ... within the proposed Lostock with Heaton ward.' He stated that, as these proposed changes 'would include more of the historic Deane area and as the Lostock area has been removed, I propose that the existing ward name of Deane-cum-Heaton be retained'. He also proposed that the proposed Rumworth ward be renamed South ward, as the 'community [within the proposed ward] considers themselves to be in Bolton, rather than any particular part of Bolton'.

138 A local resident stated that the proposal for a Lostock with Heaton ward 'seems to make a great deal of geographic and "community" sense'. However, he proposed that the ward be renamed Heaton & Lostock, because 'Heaton will be the largest part of the new ward and I strongly believe that this should be reflected in the name'. He also pointed out that this would be in alphabetical order.

139 After careful consideration of all submissions received at Stage Three, we propose one minor amendment and one ward name change in this area. We concur with the Deane-cum-Heaton & Smithills Branch of the Bolton Liberal Democrats that the boundary between the proposed Astley Bridge and Smithills wards should follow the more easterly of the two streams, as this would better reflect community identities by reflecting the affected properties' access routes. We have considered all comments on the most appropriate ward name for the proposed Lostock with Heaton ward, and have concluded that it should be renamed Heaton & Lostock ward. Electors living in the Heaton area of this proposed ward represent the larger community and we therefore consider that the name Heaton & Lostock would better reflect the constituent parts of the proposed ward.

140 We considered the amendment put forward by Mr Peacock to the boundary between the proposed Heaton & Lostock and Rumworth wards, but consider that the boundary proposed in the draft recommendations is the stronger one. Although we concur that Haslam Park forms a 'natural break', we also consider that the properties on both sides of the park have good links across Wigan Road to the rest of the proposed Rumworth ward and that links through the north of the park are poor. Similarly, we are not adopting his proposed amendment to the boundary between the proposed Heaton & Lostock and Smithills wards. Again we consider the boundary detailed in the draft recommendations to be the stronger one and are of the opinion that the properties along Chorley Old Road would be isolated from the rest of the proposed Heaton & Lostock ward under his proposal. We are not therefore adopting his proposed amendment.

141 Under the final recommendations the electoral variances in the proposed Heaton & Lostock, Rumworth and Smithills wards would be 5%, 2% and 4% above the borough average respectively (4% above, equal to and 3% above by 2006).

Electoral cycle

142 Under section 7(3) of the Local Government Act 1972, all metropolitan authorities have a system of elections by thirds.

Conclusions

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

- We propose amendments to the proposed Brightmet, Farnworth East, Great Lever, Kearsley, Little Lever and Tonge with the Haulgh wards in the south-east of the borough to better reflect community identities and provide for stronger and more easily identifiable boundaries.
- We propose one minor amendment to the boundary between the proposed Astley Bridge and Smithills wards to reflect access routes.
- We propose new warding arrangements for Westhoughton Town Council.
- We propose six ward name changes to better reflect the constituent parts of the respective wards.

144 We conclude that, in Bolton:

- the size of the council should be 60 members, the same as at present;
- there should be 20 wards, the same as at present;
- the boundaries of all of the existing wards should be modified.

145 Table 4 shows the impact of our final recommendations on electoral equality, comparing them with the current arrangements, based on 2001 and 2006 electorate figures.

Table 4: Comparison of current and recommended electoral arrangements

	2001 electorate		2006 electorate	
	Current arrangements	Final recommendations	Current arrangements	Final recommendations
Number of councillors	60	60	60	60
Number of wards	20	20	20	20
Average number of electors per councillor	3,430	3,430	3,492	3,492
Number of wards with a variance of more than 10% from the average	7	0	7	0
Number of wards with a variance of more than 20% from the average	3	0	3	0

146 As Table 4 shows, our recommendations would result in a reduction in the number of wards with an electoral variance of more than 10% from seven to none. This improved level of electoral equality would continue by 2006, with no ward varying by more than 7% from the average. We conclude that our recommendations would best meet the statutory criteria.

Final recommendation

Bolton Borough Council should comprise 60 councillors serving 20 wards, as detailed and named in Tables 1 and 2, and illustrated on Map 2 and in Appendix A and the large maps.

Parish and town council electoral arrangements

147 When reviewing electoral arrangements, we are required to comply as far as possible with the rules set out in Schedule 11 to the 1972 Local Government 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, we propose consequential warding arrangements for the parishes of Horwich and Westhoughton to reflect the proposed borough wards.

148 The parish of Horwich is currently served by 12 councillors representing four wards: North, East, Central and South. At Stage One, Horwich Town Council proposed that the parish should be served by 12 or 14 councillors representing six wards. However, it provided little argumentation to support this view. It also objected strongly to any part of Horwich being represented by a ward that did not include the word Horwich in its title. As a result of our adoption of the Liberal Democrats' proposals in the proposed Horwich North East ward and the Borough Council's proposals for the proposed Horwich & Blackrod ward, we proposed new warding arrangements for the parish of Horwich. We proposed two parish wards for the parish of Horwich, represented by 14 councillors. The proposed Horwich North East parish ward, comprising the proposed Horwich North East borough ward, should be represented by nine parish councillors. Horwich South West parish ward, part of the proposed Horwich & Blackrod borough ward, should be represented by five parish councillors.

149 At Stage Three we did not receive any further comments on Horwich parish and so are confirming the draft recommendations as final.

Final recommendation

Horwich Town Council should comprise 14 councillors, representing two wards: Horwich North East (returning nine parish councillors) and Horwich South West (returning five parish councillors). The parish ward boundaries should reflect the proposed borough ward boundaries in the area, as illustrated and named on Map A1 and the large maps in Appendix A.

150 The parish of Westhoughton is currently served by 12 councillors representing five wards: Wingates, Central, Cherquerbent, White Horse and Daisy Hill. At Stage One, Westhoughton Town Council supported the proposal put forward by the political parties on Bolton MBC to consolidate the Westhoughton Town Council area within two Bolton wards rather than three. It also wished to increase the number of councillors serving the parish to 18. As a result of our adoption of the Liberal Democrats' proposals in the Westhoughton area as part of our draft recommendations, we proposed new warding arrangements for the parish of Westhoughton. We proposed two parish wards for the parish of Westhoughton, represented by 18 councillors. We proposed that Westhoughton North parish ward, part of the proposed Westhoughton North borough ward, should be represented by eight councillors. Westhoughton South parish ward, comprising the proposed Westhoughton South borough ward, should be represented by 10 councillors.

151 At Stage Three, Westhoughton Town Council submitted two representations, the first of which stated 'that it supports the increase in the number of councillors for Westhoughton parish, but objects to only two parish wards'. In its second submission it provided argumentation to support this objection. It considered that the proposed parish wards would be 'too large for a town council' and that their administration would prove to be difficult. It therefore proposed six new parish wards: the proposed Central, Chequerbent, Daisy Hill, Hoskers & Hart Common,

White Horse and Wingates parish wards, to be represented by 18 parish councillors in total. We note that these parish wards would fall within our two proposed borough wards in this area and consider that they would provide for more effective and convenient local government for Westhoughton. We are therefore adopting them as part of our final recommendations.

Final recommendation

Westhoughton Town Council should comprise 18 councillors, representing six wards: Central (returning four parish councillors), Chequerbent (returning two parish councillors), Daisy Hill (returning three parish councillors), Hoskers & Hart Common (returning three parish councillors), White Horse (returning four parish councillors) and Wingates (returning two parish councillors). The boundaries between the six parish wards should reflect the proposed borough ward boundaries, as illustrated and named on Map A1 and the large maps in Appendix A.

Map 2: Final recommendations for Bolton

6 What happens next?

152 Having completed our review of electoral arrangements in Bolton and submitted our final recommendations to The Electoral Commission, we have fulfilled our statutory obligation under the Local Government Act 1992 (as amended by SI 2001 No. 3692).

153 It is now up to The Electoral Commission to decide whether to endorse our recommendations, with or without modification, and to implement them by means of an Order. Such an Order will not be made before 25 November 2003, and The Electoral Commission will normally consider all written representations made to them by that date. They particularly welcome any comments on the first draft of the Order, which will implement the new arrangements.

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

**The Secretary
The Electoral Commission
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Appendix A

Final recommendations for Bolton: detailed mapping

The following maps illustrate our proposed ward boundaries for the Bolton area.

Map A1 illustrates, in outline form, the proposed wards for Bolton.

The **large maps** illustrate the proposed warding arrangements for Bolton.

Map A1: Final recommendations for Bolton: key map

Appendix B

Guide to interpreting the first draft of the Electoral Change Order

Preamble

This describes the process by which the Statutory Instrument will be made, and under which powers. Text in square brackets will be removed if The Electoral Commission decides not to modify the Final Recommendations.

Citation and Commencement

This defines the name of the Statutory Instrument and sets the dates on which it will come into force.

Interpretation

This defines terms that are used in the Statutory Instrument.

Wards of the Borough of Bolton

This abolishes the existing wards, and defines the names and areas of the new wards, in conjunction with the map and the Schedule.

Elections of the council of the Borough of Bolton

This sets the date on which a whole council election will be held to implement the new wards, and the dates on which councillors will retire.

Maps

This requires Bolton Metropolitan Borough Council to make a print of the map available for public inspection.

Electoral Registers

This requires Bolton Metropolitan Borough Council to adapt the electoral register to reflect the new wards.

Revocation

This revokes the Statutory Instrument that defines the existing wards, with the exception of any articles that established the system of election by thirds.

Explanatory Note

This explains the purpose of each article. Text in square brackets will be removed if The Electoral Commission decides not to modify the Final Recommendations.

Appendix C

First draft of the Electoral Change Order for Bolton

STATUTORY INSTRUMENTS

2003 No.

LOCAL GOVERNMENT, ENGLAND

The Borough of Bolton (Electoral Changes) Order 2003

Made - - - - - *2003*

Coming into force in accordance with article 1(2) and 1(3)

Whereas the Boundary Committee for England(a), acting pursuant to section 15(4) of the Local Government Act 1992(b), has submitted to the Electoral Commission(c) recommendations dated October 2003 on its review of the borough(d) of Bolton:

And whereas the Electoral Commission have decided to give effect [with modifications] to those recommendations:

And whereas a period of not less than six weeks has expired since the receipt of those recommendations:

Now, therefore, the Electoral Commission, in exercise of the powers conferred on them by sections 17(e) and 26(f) of the Local Government Act 1992, and of all other powers enabling them in that behalf, hereby make the following Order:

Citation and commencement

1.—(1) This Order may be cited as the Borough of Bolton (Electoral Changes) Order 2003.

(2) This Order, with the exception of articles 5 and 6, shall come into force –

(a) The Boundary Committee for England is a committee of the Electoral Commission, established by the Electoral Commission in accordance with section 14 of the Political Parties, Elections and Referendums Act 2000 (c.41). The Local Government Commission for England (Transfer of Functions) Order 2001 (S.I. 2001/3962) transferred to the Electoral Commission the functions of the Local Government Commission for England.

(b) 1992 c.19. This section has been amended by S.I. 2001/3962.

(c) The Electoral Commission was established by the Political Parties, Elections and Referendums Act 2000 (c.41). The functions of the Secretary of State, under sections 13 to 15 and 17 of the Local Government Act 1992 (c.19), to the extent that they relate to electoral changes within the meaning of that Act, were transferred with modifications to the Electoral Commission on 1st April 2002 (S.I. 2001/3962).

(d) The metropolitan district of Bolton has the status of a borough..

(e) This section has been amended by S.I. 2001/3962 and also otherwise in ways not relevant to this Order.

(f) This section has been amended by S.I. 2001/3962.

- (a) for the purpose of proceedings preliminary or relating to any election to be held on the ordinary day of election of councillors in 2004, on the day after that on which it is made;
 - (b) for all other purposes, on the ordinary day of election of councillors in 2004.
- (3) Articles 5 and 6 shall come into force –
- (a) for the purpose of proceedings preliminary or relating to the election of a parish councillor for the parishes of Horwich and Westhoughton to be held on the ordinary day of elections in 2007, on 15th October 2006;
 - (b) for all other purposes, on the ordinary day of elections in 2007.

Interpretation

2. In this Order –

“borough” means the borough of Bolton;

“existing”, in relation to a ward, means the ward as it exists on the date this Order is made; and

any reference to the map is a reference to the map marked “Map referred to in the Borough of Bolton (Electoral Changes) Order 2003”, of which prints are available for inspection at –

- (a) the principal office of the Electoral Commission; and
- (b) the offices of Bolton Metropolitan Borough Council; and

any reference to a numbered sheet is a reference to the sheet of the map which bears that number.

Wards of the borough of Bolton

3.—(1) The existing wards of the borough(a) shall be abolished.

(2) The borough shall be divided into twenty wards which shall bear the names set out in column (1) of the Schedule.

(3) Each ward shall comprise the area designated on the map by reference to the name of the ward and demarcated by red lines; and the number of councillors to be elected for each ward shall be three.

(4) Where a boundary is shown on the map as running along a road, railway line, footway, watercourse or similar geographical feature, it shall be treated as running along the centre line of the feature.

Elections of the council of the borough of Bolton

4.—(1) Elections of all councillors for all wards of the borough shall be held simultaneously on the ordinary day of election of councillors in 2004(b)(c).

(2) The councillors holding office for any ward of the borough immediately before the fourth day after the ordinary day of election of councillors in 2004 shall retire on that date and the newly elected councillors for those wards shall come into office on that date.

(3) Of the councillors elected in 2004 one shall retire in 2006, one in 2007 and one in 2008.

(4) Of the councillors elected in 2004 –

- (a) the first to retire shall, subject to paragraphs (6) and (7), be the councillor elected by the smallest number of votes; and

(a) See the Borough of Bolton (Electoral Arrangements) Order 1979 (S.I. 1979/1321).

(b) Article 4 provides for a single election of all the councillors and for reversion to the system of election by thirds, as established by section 7 of the Local Government Act 1972 (c.70).

(c) For the ordinary day of election of councillors of local government areas, see section 37 of the Representation of the People Act 1983 (c.2), amended by section 18(2) of the Representation of the People Act 1985 (c.50) and section 17 of, and paragraphs 1 and 5 of Schedule 3 to, the Greater London Authority Act 1999 (c.29).

(b) the second to retire shall, subject to those paragraphs, be the councillor elected by the next smallest number of votes.

(5) In the case of an equality of votes between any persons elected which makes it uncertain which of them is to retire in any year, the person to retire in that year shall be determined by lot.

(6) If an election of councillors for any ward is not contested, the person to retire in each year shall be determined by lot.

(7) Where under this article any question is to be determined by lot, the lot shall be drawn at the next practicable meeting of the council after the question has arisen and the drawing shall be conducted under the direction of the person presiding at the meeting.

Wards of the parish of Horwich

5.—(1) The existing wards of the parish of Horwich shall be abolished.

(2) The parish shall be divided into two parish wards which shall bear the names Horwich North East and Horwich South West; the parish ward of Horwich North East shall be coterminous with the borough ward of the same name, and the parish ward of Horwich South West shall consist of the rest of the parish.

(3) The number of councillors to be elected for the parish ward of Horwich North East shall be nine, and for the parish ward of Horwich South West shall be five.

Wards of the parish of Westhoughton

6.—(1) The existing wards of the parish of Westhoughton shall be abolished.

(2) The parish shall be divided into six parish wards which shall bear the names Central, Chequerbent, Daisy Hill, Hoskers and Hart Common, White Horse and Wingates; and the wards shall comprise the areas designated on sheets 1 and 3 by reference to the name of the ward and demarcated by orange lines.

(3) The number of councillors to be elected for the parish wards of Central and White Horse shall be four, for the parish wards of Daisy Hill and Hoskers and Hart Common shall be three, and for the parish wards of Chequerbent and Wingates shall be two.

Maps

7. Bolton Metropolitan Borough Council shall make a print of the map marked “Map referred to in the Borough of Bolton (Electoral Changes) Order 2003” available for inspection at its offices by any member of the public at any reasonable time.

Electoral registers

8. The Electoral Registration Officer^(a) for the borough shall make such rearrangement of, or adaptation of, the register of local government electors as may be necessary for the purposes of, and in consequence of, this Order.

Revocation

9. The Borough of Bolton (Electoral Changes) Order 1979^(b) is revoked, save for articles 8 and 9 (7)

(a) As to electoral registration officers and the register of local government electors, *see* sections 8 to 13 of the Representation of the People Act 1983 (c.2).

(b) S.I.1979/1321.

Sealed with the seal of the Electoral Commission on the day of 2003

Chairman of the Commission

Secretary to the Commission

SCHEDULE

article 3

NAMES OF WARDS

Astley Bridge	Horwich and Blackrod
Bradshaw	Horwich North East
Brightmet	Hulton
Bromley Cross	Kearsley
Central	Little Lever and Darcy Lever
Crompton	Rumworth
Farnworth	Smithills
Great Lever	Tonge with the Haulgh
Harper Green	Westhoughton North and Chew Moor
Heaton and Lostock	Westhoughton South

EXPLANATORY NOTE

(This note is not part of the Order)

This Order gives effect, [with modifications], to recommendations by the Boundary Committee for England, a committee of the Electoral Commission, for electoral changes in the borough of Bolton.

The modifications are *indicate the modifications*.

The changes have effect in relation to local government elections to be held on and after the ordinary day of election of councillors in 2004.

Article 3 abolishes the existing wards of the borough and provides for the creation of twenty new wards. That article and the Schedule also make provision for the names and areas of, and numbers of councillors for, the new wards.

Article 4 makes provision for a whole council election in 2004 and for reversion to the established system of election by thirds in subsequent years.

Articles 5 and 6 make electoral changes in the parishes of Horwich and Westhoughton.

Article 8 obliges the Electoral Registration Officer to make any necessary amendments to the electoral register to reflect the new electoral arrangements.

Article 9 revokes the Borough of Bolton (Electoral Arrangements) Order 1979, with the exception of articles 8 and 9(7).

The areas of the new borough and parish wards are demarcated on the map described in article 2. Prints of the map may be inspected at all reasonable times at the offices of Bolton Metropolitan Borough Council and at the principal office of the Electoral Commission at Trevelyan House, Great Peter Street, London SW1P 2HW.