

Draft recommendations on the future electoral arrangements for Trafford

February 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.

Summary

We began a review of the electoral arrangements for Trafford on 14 May 2002.

- **This report summarises the submissions we received during the first stage of the review, and makes draft recommendations for change.**

We found that the current arrangements provide unequal representation of electors in Trafford:

- **in eight of the 21 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 remain constant, with the number of electors per councillor forecast to vary by more than 10% from the average in eight wards and by more than 20% in three wards.**

Our main draft recommendations for future electoral arrangements (see Tables 1 and 2 and paragraphs 156–157) are that:

- **Trafford Borough Council should have 63 councillors, as at present;**
- **there should be 21 wards, as at present;**
- **the boundaries of 20 of the existing wards should be modified, resulting in no change to the total number of wards, and one ward should retain its existing boundaries.**

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.

- **In all of the proposed wards the number of electors per councillor would vary by no more than 9% from the borough average;**
- **This 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.**

This report sets out our draft recommendations on which comments are invited.

- **We will consult on these proposals for eight weeks from 24 February 2003. We take this consultation very seriously. We may decide to move away from our draft recommendations in the light of comments or suggestions that we receive. It is therefore important that all interested parties let us have their views and evidence, *whether or not* they agree with our draft recommendations.**
- **After considering local views, we will decide whether to modify our draft recommendations. We will then submit our final recommendations to The Electoral Commission which will be responsible for implementing change to local authority electoral arrangements.**
- **The Electoral Commission will decide whether to accept, modify or reject our final recommendations. It will also determine when any changes come into effect.**

You should express your views by writing directly to us at the address below by 22 April 2002:

**Team Leader
Trafford Review
The Boundary Committee for England
Trevelyan House
Great Peter Street
London SW1P 2HW**

Table 1: Draft recommendations: summary

	Ward name	Number of councillors	Constituent areas	Large map reference
1	Altrincham	3	Part of Altrincham ward; part of Timperley ward	3
2	Ashton upon Mersey	3	Part of Mersey St Mary's ward; part of St Martins ward	2 and 3
3	Bowdon	3	Part of Altrincham ward; part of Bowdon ward	1 and 3
4	Broadheath	3	Part of Altrincham ward; part of Broadheath ward; part of Mersey St Mary's ward	3
5	Brooklands	3	<i>Unchanged</i> ; the existing Brooklands ward	3
6	Bucklow-St Martins	3	Bucklow ward; part of St Martins ward	1, 2 and 3
7	Clifford	3	Part of Clifford ward; part of Talbot ward	2
8	Davyhulme East	3	Part of Davyhulme East ward; part of Davyhulme West ward; part of Urmston ward	2
9	Davyhulme West	3	Part of Davyhulme East ward; part of Davyhulme West ward	1 and 2
10	Flixton	3	Part of Flixton ward; part of Davyhulme West ward; part of Urmston ward	1 and 2
11	Gorse Hill	3	Part of Davyhulme East ward; part of Park ward; part of Talbot ward	2
12	Hale Barns	3	Part of Hale ward; part of Timperley ward; part of Village ward	3
13	Hale Central	3	Part of Altrincham ward; part of Bowdon ward; part of Hale ward; part of Timperley ward	3
14	Longford	3	Part of Clifford ward; part of Longford ward; part of Talbot ward	2
15	Priory	3	Part of Priory ward	2 and 3
16	Sale Moor	3	Part of Priory ward; Sale Moor ward	2 and 3
17	Stretford	3	Part of Longford ward; part of Park ward; part of Stretford ward	2
18	The Avenue	3	Part of Broadheath ward; part of Mersey St Mary's ward; part of St Martins ward	2 and 3
19	Timperley	3	Part of Broadheath ward; part of Timperley ward; part of Village ward	3
20	Urmston	3	Part of Flixton ward; part of Park ward; part of Stretford ward; part of Urmston ward	2
21	Village	3	Part of Village ward	3

Note: The wards on the above table are illustrated on Map 2 and the large maps.

Table 2: Draft recommendations for Trafford

	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	Altrincham	3	7,169	2,390	-9	7,392	2,464	-7
2	Ashton upon Mersey	3	8,031	2,677	2	8,015	2,672	0
3	Bowdon	3	7,310	2,437	-7	7,467	2,489	-6
4	Broadheath	3	8,419	2,806	7	8,385	2,795	5
5	Brooklands	3	7,878	2,626	0	8,114	2,705	2
6	Bucklow-St Martins	3	7,525	2,508	-5	7,591	2,530	-5
7	Clifford	3	8,204	2,735	4	8,271	2,757	4
8	Davyhulme East	3	8,385	2,795	6	8,341	2,780	4
9	Davyhulme West	3	7,721	2,574	-2	7,735	2,578	-3
10	Flixton	3	8,345	2,782	6	8,326	2,775	4
11	Gorse Hill	3	8,099	2,700	3	8,329	2,776	4
12	Hale Barns	3	7,509	2,503	-5	7,607	2,536	-5
13	Hale Central	3	7,377	2,459	-7	7,537	2,512	-6
14	Longford	3	8,301	2,767	5	8,444	2,815	6
15	Priory	3	7,589	2,530	-4	8,023	2,674	0
16	Sale Moor	3	7,842	2,614	-1	7,911	2,637	-1
17	Stretford	3	7,918	2,639	0	7,918	2,639	-1
18	The Avenue	3	8,089	2,696	2	8,125	2,708	2
19	Timperley	3	8,365	2,788	6	8,323	2,774	4
20	Urmston	3	8,016	2,672	2	8,041	2,680	1
21	Village	3	7,733	2,578	-2	7,762	2,587	-3
	Totals	63	165,825	-	-	167,657	-	-
	Averages	-	-	2,632	-	-	2,661	-

Source: Electorate figures are based on the Borough Council and Conservative Party submissions.

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 Trafford, on which we are now consulting. We are reviewing the eight 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 Trafford. Trafford's last review was carried out by the Local Government Boundary Commission, which reported to the Secretary of State in 1978 (Report no. 300).

3 In carrying out these metropolitan reviews we must have 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.

4 Details of the legislation under which the review of Trafford is being conducted are set out in a document entitled *Guidance and Procedural Advice for Periodic Electoral Reviews*. This *Guidance* sets out the approach to the review.

5 Our task is to make recommendations to The Electoral Commission 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, as 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, nor that changes should be made to the size of a 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 on the number of councillors which 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 result in an unacceptable dilution of accountability to the electorate and we have not, to date, prescribed any wards with more than three councillors.

9 The review is in four stages (see Table 3).

Table 3: Stages of the review

Stage	Description
One	Submission of proposals to us
Two	Our analysis and deliberation
Three	Publication of draft recommendations and consultation on them
Four	Final deliberation and report to The Electoral Commission

10 Stage One began on 14 May 2002, when we wrote to Trafford 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 Trafford Council to publicise the review further. The closing date for receipt of representations, the end of Stage One, was 16 September 2002.

11 At Stage Two we considered all the submissions received during Stage One and prepared our draft recommendations.

12 We are currently at Stage Three. This stage, which began on 25 February 2003 and will end on 22 April 2003, involves publishing the draft proposals in this report and public consultation on them. **We take this consultation very seriously and it is therefore important that all those interested in the review should let us have their views and evidence, whether or not they agree with these draft proposals.**

13 During Stage Four we will reconsider the draft recommendations in the light of the Stage Three consultation, decide whether to modify them, and submit final recommendations to The Electoral Commission. It will then be for it to accept, modify or reject our final recommendations. If The Electoral Commission accepts the recommendations, with or without modification, it will make an Order. The Electoral Commission will determine when any changes come into effect

2 Current electoral arrangements

14 The borough of Trafford is a metropolitan authority covering 10,565 hectares with a population of 230,000. It is situated in Greater Manchester to the south of the city of Manchester. Manchester International Airport, via the M56 and M60, is within a very short distance. The M60 runs through the borough and gives immediate access to the national network, and the Manchester Ship Canal forms the western boundary of the borough. The borough is also divided, north and south, by the River Mersey. Major sources of employment exist in the industrial complexes of Trafford Park, Carrington and Broadheath.

15 Trafford was last reviewed in October 1978. Following the May 2002 elections the council comprises 32 Labour, 28 Conservative and three Liberal Democrat councillors. The current borough electorate is 165,825 and this is forecast to increase to 167,657 with the increase spread throughout the borough. All wards are three-member wards.

16 At present, each councillor represents an average of 2,632 electors, which the Borough Council forecasts will increase to 2,661 by the year 2006 if the current number of councillors is maintained. However, due to demographic and other changes over the past two decades, the number of electors per councillor in eight of the 21 wards varies by more than 10% from the borough average and three wards by more than 20%. The worst imbalance is in Bucklow ward where the councillor represents 27% fewer electors than the borough average.

17 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 Trafford

Table 4: Existing electoral arrangements

	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	Altrincham	3	8,781	2,927	11	8,977	2,992	12
2	Bowdon	3	9,388	3,129	19	9,510	3,170	19
3	Broadheath	3	8,704	2,901	10	8,661	2,887	8
4	Brooklands	3	7,878	2,626	0	8,114	2,705	2
5	Bucklow	3	5,822	1,941	-26	5,821	1,940	-27
6	Clifford	3	7,511	2,504	-5	7,492	2,497	-6
7	Davyhulme East	3	7,235	2,412	-8	7,189	2,396	-10
8	Davyhulme West	3	7,589	2,530	-4	7,597	2,532	-5
9	Flixton	3	7,607	2,536	-4	7,592	2,531	-5
10	Hale	3	8,432	2,811	7	8,541	2,847	7
11	Longford	3	7,347	2,449	-7	7,388	2,463	-7
12	Mersey St Mary's	3	9,746	3,249	23	9,734	3,245	22
13	Park	3	6,076	2,025	-23	6,064	2,021	-24
14	Priory	3	7,761	2,587	-2	8,195	2,732	3
15	St Martins	3	8,423	2,808	7	8,529	2,843	7
16	Sale Moor	3	7,670	2,557	-3	7,739	2,580	-3
17	Stretford	3	7,612	2,537	-4	7,616	2,539	-5
18	Talbot	3	6,347	2,116	-20	6,775	2,258	-15
19	Timperley	3	8,795	2,932	11	8,978	2,993	12
20	Urmston	3	7,665	2,555	-3	7,682	2,561	-4
21	Village	3	9,436	3,145	19	9,463	3,154	19
	Totals	63	165,825	–	–	167,657	–	–
	Averages	–	–	2,632	–	–	2,661	–

Source: *Electorate figures are based on information provided by Trafford 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 Bucklow ward were relatively over-represented by 27%, while electors in Mersey St Mary's ward were relatively under-represented by 22%. Figures have been rounded to the nearest whole number.*

3 Submissions received

18 At the start of the review members of the public and other interested parties were invited to write to us giving their views on the future electoral arrangements for Trafford Borough Council and its constituent parish and town councils.

19 During this initial stage of the review, officers from the BCFE visited the area and met officers and members from the Borough Council. We are grateful to all concerned for their co-operation and assistance. We received 82 representations during Stage One, including borough-wide schemes from the Borough Council and the Conservative Group, all of which may be inspected at our offices and those of the Borough Council.

Trafford Borough Council

20 The Borough Council proposed a council of 60 members, three fewer than at present, representing 20 wards. The Council looked at the current arrangements and the forecast electorate and produced a scheme, on which it consulted, changing the boundaries of all the existing wards. The Borough Council's scheme received support from the Liberal Democrat Group on the council.

21 The Borough Council considered that its scheme utilised strong boundaries including the River Mersey and the A56. Its proposals also provided excellent levels of electoral equality with no proposed ward having an electoral variance of over 5% by 2006.

Trafford Conservative Group

22 Trafford Conservative Group (hereafter referred to as the Conservatives) proposed a council of 63 members, as at present, representing 21 wards. The Conservatives sought to address the existing representational issue by proposing eight wards for the area north of the river and thirteen for the area south of the river.

23 The Conservatives considered its proposed wards to be cohesive and compact with clear boundaries so that electors could identify with the ward in which they live. Its proposals also provided excellent levels of electoral equality with no proposed ward having an electoral variance of over 5% by 2006.

24 The Conservatives provided a separate document reviewing the Borough Council's proposals, highlighting areas of objection and providing counter arguments on the Borough Council's proposed council size and proposed wards. They also proposed an alternative scheme based on 60 members, representing 20 wards, as an alternative proposal to the Borough Council should the Boundary Committee adopt a 60 member council for the borough.

Members of Parliament

25 Five submissions were received from Members of Parliament. Mr G Brady, MP, objected to the Borough Council's proposals and supported the Conservatives' proposals for the borough. Sir Robert Atkins, MEP, and David Sumberg, MEP, opposed the reduction in the number of councillors to 60, they stated that it would perpetuate the representational issue north and south of the river. Both MEPs also objected to the Borough Council's proposed Davyhulme East, Davyhulme West, Flixton, Hale, Bucklow-St Martins and Altrincham Broadheath wards. Lord Inglewood, MEP and Den Dover, MEP supported the Conservative proposals for the borough.

Parish and town councils

26 Representations were received from two parish councils. Dunham Massey Parish Council stated that the rural parishes of Dunham and Warburton had nothing in common with the town of Partington and Sale. It also considered the A56 to be a strong boundary and it outlined an alternative to allow the parishes to remain in Bowdon ward. Warburton Parish Council were concerned at the Borough Council's proposed changes for Dunham and Warburton parishes and urged us to consider keeping these two parishes within Bowdon ward.

Other representations

27 A further 73 representations were received from local political parties, local councillors, local organisations and local residents.

28 Timperley Civic Society objected to the Borough Council's proposed Timperley ward. Irwell Valley Housing Association wished to retain the status quo.

29 One local councillor stated that the Borough Council proposals were not brought to a full council meeting to give all members an opportunity to vote on them. Two local councillors considered Altrincham, Broadheath, Hale and Timperley should remain as distinct wards and that there should be minimal change in the north of the borough. They also stated that the A56 is a natural boundary in Sale.

30 Nine local residents and one local councillor objected to the Borough Council's proposals for the north of the borough. We received representations from six local residents objecting to the proposal to link Dunham/Warburton parishes with Partington considering Dunham/Warburton parishes to have more in common with Bowdon. Two local residents considered the Borough Council's proposals to be illogical and supported the Conservatives' scheme.

31 Two local residents considered the electors in the south of the borough to be under-represented with one resident disagreeing with a reduction in councillors. Another local resident also stated that they did not support a reduction in councillors. One local resident believed the borough should be represented by 63 councillors and that Clifford, Longford and Stretford wards should be retained in size.

32 We received 11 submissions from local residents supporting the Conservatives' proposals for their respective areas. Thirteen local residents objected to the Borough Council's proposals in their respective areas.

33 We received 14 submissions from local residents stressing the current electoral imbalances in the borough with two local residents wishing to retain the status quo. One local resident stated that any boundary change must adhere to natural boundaries.

34 A local resident commented on boundary changes made in 1997 not relevant to this review. Another local resident commented on the redrawing of external boundaries which is outside the remit of this review. A further two local residents commented on the need for an electoral review.

4 Analysis and draft recommendations

35 We have not finalised our conclusions on the electoral arrangements for Trafford and welcome comments from all those interested relating to the proposed ward boundaries, number of councillors, ward names, and parish and town council electoral arrangements. We will consider all the evidence submitted to us during the consultation period before preparing our final recommendations.

36 As described earlier, the prime aim in considering the most appropriate electoral arrangements for Trafford is to achieve electoral equality. In doing so we have regard to section 13(5) of the Local Government Act 1992 (as amended): 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'.

37 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 over the next five years. We must also have regard to the desirability of fixing identifiable boundaries and to maintaining local ties.

38 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.

39 We accept that the achievement of absolute electoral equality for an 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 identity 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.

Electorate forecasts

40 Since 1975 there has been a 1% decrease in the electorate of Trafford borough. The Borough Council submitted electorate forecasts for the year 2006, projecting an increase in the electorate of approximately 1% from 165,825 to 167,657 over the five-year period from 2001 to 2006. It expects the growth to be spread throughout the borough. In order to prepare these forecasts, the Council estimated rates and locations of housing development with regard to structure and local plans, the expected rate of building over the five-year period and assumed occupancy rates.

41 During Stage One both the Borough Council and the Conservatives' submitted different figures for 2006 ward projections. We acknowledged that forecasting electorates was an inexact science and noted that both sets of figures had substantial validity. As a result of receiving the conflicting figures it was deemed necessary to request additional evidence and justification for each set of figures provided. This information was duly forwarded and upon close investigation of the additional information it was decided that the Borough Council's figures provided the most accurate projection of figures for 2006.

42 The Conservatives' subsequently revised the 2006 projected figures for its proposed wards and we are grateful to them and all parties concerned in resolving this issue.

43 We know that forecasting electorates is difficult and, having considered the Borough Council's figures, accept that they are the best estimates that can reasonably be made at this time.

Council size

44 During Stage One we received two borough-wide schemes from the Borough Council and the Conservatives proposing a 60 and 63 member council size respectively. Having looked closely at the initial information received it was concluded that neither party had provided substantive argumentation or justification for each particular proposed council size. The Boundary Committee deemed it necessary to request additional information from each party in relation to council size highlighting the need to argue the proposed council size in light of the changes in internal political management. Both parties duly forwarded the requested additional information.

45 Trafford Borough Council presently has 63 members. The Borough Council proposed a council of 60 members which it considered to be the optimum amount to achieve effective and convenient local government. The Borough Council initially considered the authority's structure and the variety and extent of roles that councillors of the authority are required to undertake.

46 The Council considered the modern political management structure stating that it started to consider new structures in 1998, and this process led to the adoption of a pilot informal cabinet system in 1999, at this time the Council began moving the focus of Member activity from the committee room to the community. During this time scrutiny arrangements were also introduced as were Area Boards.

47 The Borough Council implemented its new constitution of leader and cabinet in May 2001 and stated that this constitution continues, and formalises, the basic approach adopted in 1999. Equally, the Council was concerned that non-cabinet members should continue to be able to exercise sufficient influence over input into policy and scrutiny.

48 Members' roles in political management were highlighted by the Council and it outlined members' roles on the Executive, Overview and Scrutinising Committees and Sub-Committees. It further outlined members' representative role, highlighting their ward representational role and their representing the Authority in its relationships with other bodies. The Area Boards, created in 1999, are still very much a part of Trafford Borough Council and the aim has been to develop them as the main focus for democratic engagement between members and the community on local issues.

49 In its conclusion the Borough Council considered the workload of members on committees and boards and the implications of the implementation of the new system of internal political management before concluding that the council would function best under a council of 60 members. The Council stated that there was a widespread assumption that a move from the committee system would radically reduce the number of councillors required to run the council but also stated that this was not entirely justified in Trafford due to the increased demands on councillors' times through area boards and scrutiny. The Council did, however, find that there has been an overall net reduction in such demands. The Council finally concluded that the reduction in the number of formal meetings enables councillors to spend more time engaging with individuals, groups and communities. It felt that the system which the Council operates could continue to work and deliver effective and convenient local government with a slightly smaller number of councillors, 60 instead of 63.

50 The Conservatives proposed a council size of 63 members, as at present. The Conservatives' position was to initially to consider the structure and the variety and extent of roles that councillors of the authority are required to undertake. From here, they stated, it would be possible to assess the optimum council size to deliver effective and convenient local government in the borough.

51 The Conservatives outlined the current position of the Council highlighting the Leader and Cabinet model, the new system of internal political management adopted in 2001. The Conservatives went on to explain the Council's workings through the Executive Cabinet and committees, highlighting the number of members on each. They then outlined the scrutiny function and explained its workings within the council. As with the Borough Council, the Conservatives acknowledged the importance of the Area Boards and their role within local communities.

52 The Conservatives documented the Council's function through the Executive and committees and outlined the role of each particular area and highlighted the role of councillors in each area, they then emphasised the external roles of councillors on, for example, Primary Health Care Trust Boards and school governorships and stated that these make significant demands on councillors' time. They also stated that the workload of councillors must not become excessive so as to exclude people serving as councillors, in other words, they stressed, there must be enough councillors to share the workload.

53 In conclusion, the Conservatives stated that although the new political management structure has reduced the number of full council meetings the workload of individual members has not changed significantly, indeed for many, it has increased as a result of the new very demanding scrutiny requirements. Participation in scrutiny may increase as it is more likely to expand than decrease. The individual participation of councillors in their wards' affairs and local partnerships is a continuing if not increasing function and highlights the fact that councillors' workloads are not decreasing.

54 They also emphasised that the participation in external and regional bodies is a necessary function of the council particularly as there is a need to maintain the development of Trafford and its infrastructure; this would be a significant burden on the councillors' time. It was also stated that there is a need to attract good younger councillors and this would not be possible with an over-burdening workload. Finally, the Conservatives considered that there is a need to improve the degree of scrutiny provided by existing arrangements which will result in more councillors becoming involved in this activity and having considered the facts and new system of internal political management carefully the Conservatives concluded that the council would best function under a council size of 63 members.

55 We received submissions from an MP, an MEP and three local residents considering there to be no justification for a reduction in the number of councillors. Another local resident considered that the borough should be represented by 63 members. One resident considered that the proposed reduction in councillors would make it much harder for voters to meet and talk with their representatives.

56 Having considered all documentation received in relation to council size and looked at both council size arguments in light of the new systems of political management carefully we consider that Trafford Borough Council would best function under a council size of 63 members, as at present. We noted the argument put forward by the Borough Council and considered it to have merit but in the light of the analysis and justification provided by the Conservatives along with the local support received we were convinced that the achievement of electoral equality and the statutory criteria would best be met by a council of 63 members. Therefore, we are content to base our draft recommendations on this particular council size. We also noted that a council size of 63 members provided for the best allocation of councillors both north and south of the borough.

Electoral arrangements

57 After careful consideration of all the evidence received at Stage One, we deem the Conservatives proposals would represent a better balance between the statutory criteria than the current arrangements or other schemes submitted at Stage One and we are content to substantially endorse these proposals.

58 We considered the Borough Council's scheme to have merit but upon adopting a council size of 63 members and in light of the local support for the Conservatives' scheme we consider their scheme to best satisfy the statutory criteria; however, we were able to consider the Borough Council's scheme in areas due to the minimal difference in proposed council size. We therefore were able to adopt its proposed boundaries in areas where they were similar to those proposed by the Conservatives, we particularly noted this in the eastern area of the borough.

59 The Conservatives also submitted, as part of their overall submission, an alternative 60-member scheme. This scheme was submitted for Boundary Committee consideration should a council size of 60 members be adopted and in light of adopting a council size of 63 members we did not consider this alternative scheme further.

60 In the north of the borough, north of the River Mersey, we propose adopting the Conservatives' proposals subject to seven amendments in order to improve electoral equality, include similar communities in single wards or in order to utilise a more suitable boundary. We noted the local support for the Conservatives' proposals for this area, in particular the Davyhulme area. We noted the Borough Council scheme in this area but did not consider it to respect local community identities, such as the Davyhulme area, and in light of local opposition to its scheme we did not consider it to better satisfy the statutory criteria than the scheme provided by the Conservatives.

61 In the south of the borough, south of the River Mersey, we propose adopting the Conservatives' proposals subject to nine amendments. We propose amendments in order to group similar communities in single wards, in particular the proposed Altrincham, Bowdon and Broadheath wards, and also in order to utilise better boundaries. We considered the Borough Council scheme to have merit in this southern area and noted the similarity between the schemes in certain areas but in light of the degree of local support for the Conservatives' scheme and local objection to the Borough Council's proposals, in particular in the Bowdon area, we consider the Conservatives' proposals to best satisfy the statutory criteria.

62 During Stage One we received 14 submissions highlighting the existing imbalances and the under/over-representation north and south of the River Mersey in Trafford borough and in viewing each borough-wide submission it is our consideration that the Conservatives' scheme has best addressed the current imbalances and existing representational issue. We also received submissions from local residents and local councillors objecting to the Borough Council's proposals stating that its proposals appeared to be politically motivated, however, we cannot consider any party political implications of any boundary amendment for the purposes of this review.

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

- i. Davyhulme East, Davyhulme West, Flixton and Urmston wards;
- ii. Clifford, Longford, Park, Stretford and Talbot wards;
- iii. Brooklands, Priory and Sale Moor wards;
- iv. Bucklow, Mersey St Mary's and St Martins wards;
- v. Altrincham, Bowden and Broadheath wards;
- vi. Hale, Timperley and Village wards.

64 Details of our draft recommendations are set out in Tables 1 and 2, and illustrated on Map 2, in Appendix A.

Davyhulme East, Davyhulme West, Flixton and Urmston wards

65 The existing wards of Davyhulme East, Davyhulme West, Flixton and Urmston cover the north-western area of the borough and each ward is represented by three members. Under the current arrangements of a 63-member council, the number of electors per councillor in the four wards varies from the borough average by 8%, 4%, 4% and 3% respectively. This level of electoral equality is projected to deteriorate in all wards to vary from the borough average by 10%, 5%, 5% and 4% respectively by 2006.

66 The Borough Council proposed that this area be covered by four wards with the proposed Davyhulme East, Davyhulme West, Flixton and Urmston wards being represented by three councillors each.

67 The Borough Council's proposed Davyhulme East ward boundary would follow Bridgewater Canal, south along Crofts Bank Road and eastward to the rear of properties on the south side of Winchester Road. The boundary would then follow the railway line, north along Rowsley Road and Winster Avenue until it reaches the Manchester Ship Canal Railway. The boundary would follow the Ship Canal Railway until it reaches Moss Road where the proposed boundary would turn north and follow Main Avenue and Third Avenue until it reaches the existing boundary. Its proposed Davyhulme West ward would be bounded by the borough boundary and share its remaining boundaries with the proposed Davyhulme East ward and the proposed Flixton and Urmston wards as detailed later.

68 The proposed Flixton ward would be bounded west and south by the borough boundary and the River Mersey. Its proposed north and eastern boundary would follow the rear of properties on Lambourn Road, Valley Road, south on Woodsend Road, east on Moorside Road, south along Marlborough Road before running to the rear of properties on Overdale Crescent and joining Flixton Road via Irlam Road. The proposed boundary would then cross the golf course and run eastward along Church Road until it reaches the existing ward boundary. The Borough Council's proposed Urmston ward would follow the existing ward boundary but would include that area bounded by Crofts Bank Road, Canterbury Road and Hayeswater Road, to the north of the existing ward, and also that area bounded by the railway line, golf course and Church Road, to the west of the existing ward. The proposed north-eastern boundary would follow Bowfell Road instead of Moorside Road and Malvern Avenue as existing.

69 Under the Borough Council's proposals for a 60-member council, the number of electors per councillor would vary from the borough average in the proposed Davyhulme East, Davyhulme West, Flixton and Urmston wards by 0%, 3%, 3% and 1% respectively. This level of electoral equality is projected to deteriorate in all wards to vary from the borough average by 1%, 4%, 5% and 2% by 2006.

70 The Conservatives proposed that this area be covered by four wards with the proposed Davyhulme East, Davyhulme West, Flixton and Urmston wards being represented by three councillors each.

71 The Conservatives' proposed Davyhulme East ward boundary would follow Bridgewater Canal before joining the existing boundary on the A5081 until it reaches the railway line. Its southern boundary would follow the railway line westward and north along Crofts Bank Road, joining the existing boundary on Moorside Road until it reaches Hayeswater Road. The proposed ward would share its western boundary with the proposed Davyhulme West ward. Their proposed Davyhulme West ward would follow the existing ward boundary but would

depart from the existing boundary in the east. The proposed eastern boundary would follow Moorside Road, Hayeswater Road, Bedford Road and Davyhulme Road before rejoining the original boundary at Patterdale Avenue.

72 The proposed Flixton ward would follow the existing ward boundary but would depart from the existing boundary in the east. The proposed eastern boundary would follow the existing Malvern Avenue, Chassen Road boundary until it reaches the railway line where it would run eastward until it reaches the rear of properties west of Longfield Avenue. From here, the proposed boundary would run south to the rear of properties on Longfield Avenue and to the rear of properties on Cumberland Road then on to the river. The Conservatives' proposed Urmston ward would be bounded by the river in the south and would share its western boundary with the proposed Flixton ward. Its proposed northern boundary would be shared with the proposed Davyhulme East ward but it would extend along the railway line eastward until it reaches Barkway Road. The boundary would then run to the rear of properties on the west side of Barkway Road and Lesley Road, to the west of allotment gardens and the cricket ground before joining the river.

73 Under the Conservatives' proposals for a 63-member council, the number of electors per councillor would vary from the borough average in the proposed Davyhulme East, Davyhulme West, Flixton and Urmston wards by 3%, 3%, 4% and 1% respectively. This level of electoral equality is projected to improve in all wards to vary from the borough average by 1%, 2%, 3% and 0% by 2006.

74 Two local councillors considered existing wards in this area to be natural wards and any change should be minimal. Two MEPs objected to the Borough Council's proposed changes in this area and supported the Conservatives' scheme. One local resident considered the Council's scheme for this area to be illogical with another nine local residents objecting to the Borough Council's proposals in this area. Another local resident considered there to be no link between Lostock and Davyhulme and supported the Conservatives' proposals. Five local residents and a local councillor considered the Borough Council's proposals to be politically motivated in this area.

75 Having considered all the representations received at Stage One we propose adopting the Conservatives' proposals substantially in this area subject to five amendments in order to group similar communities in single wards or to tie boundaries to better ground detail. We propose that the boundary between the proposed Davyhulme East and Davyhulme West wards should follow the rear of properties on Amersham Close and Bexley Close and along Broadway until it reaches the existing boundary, the proposed boundary should also run to the rear of properties on the west side of Patterdale Avenue. We consider both these amendments to better respect local community identities as we consider the Amersham Close and Bexley Close area to look eastward on a community basis as it is bounded by open ground to the west, north and south; the second proposed boundary change would include Patterdale Avenue in a single ward.

76 We propose that the boundary between the proposed Davyhulme West and Flixton wards should follow the rear of properties on Bishop Road and Franklin Avenue, we consider these properties to look eastward and propose to include them in the proposed Flixton ward into which they have access. The boundary between the proposed Flixton and Urmston wards should follow the rear of properties on the Westside of Malvern Avenue as it would include all properties on Malvern Avenue in a single ward. We also propose two amendments in this area between the proposed Flixton and Urmston wards and the proposed Stretford and Urmston wards in order to tie boundaries to better ground detail, these changes do not affect any electors.

77 We note the local support for the Conservatives' scheme in this area and the objections submitted in relation to the Borough Council's proposals, in light of this and the fact that the Conservatives' scheme proposes minimal change in the area while respecting local

communities we are content to substantially adopt the Conservatives' scheme as part of our draft recommendations in this area. We consider the Conservatives' scheme, subject to our amendments, to respect local community identities, in particular the Davyhulme area, and utilise good boundaries while achieving good levels of electoral equality.

78 Under our draft recommendations for a 63-member council, the number of electors per councillor would vary from the borough average in the proposed Davyhulme East, Davyhulme West, Flixton and Urmston wards by 6%, 2%, 6% and 2% respectively. This level of electoral equality is projected to improve in Davyhulme East, Flixton and Urmston wards while deteriorating in Davyhulme West ward to vary from the borough average by 4%, 4%, 1% and 3% by 2006.

Clifford, Longford, Park, Stretford and Talbot wards

79 The existing wards of Clifford, Longford, Park, Stretford and Talbot wards cover the north-eastern area of the borough and each ward is represented by three members. Under the current arrangements of a 63-member council, the number of electors per councillor in the five wards varies from the borough average by 5%, 7%, 23%, 4% and 20% respectively. This level of electoral equality is projected to improve in Talbot ward while deteriorating slightly in Clifford, Park and Stretford wards to vary from the borough average by 15%, 6%, 24% and 5% respectively by 2006. The electoral variance for the existing Longford ward is expected to remain constant over the next five years.

80 The Borough Council proposed that this area be represented by four wards with the proposed Clifford, Manor, Stretford and Talbot wards being represented by three councillors each.

81 The Borough Council's proposed Clifford ward boundary would cross Longford Park, Cromwell Road, Kings Road and the Metrolink before running north along Milton Road, east on Talbot Road and south on Great Stone Road before running along the Metrolink and Ayres Road and south on Chorlton Road until it reaches the borough boundary. Its proposed Manor ward would be bounded by the river in the south and its western boundary would follow the M60. Its northern boundary would be shared with the proposed Davyhulme East ward and its eastern boundary would follow Park Road, west on the railway line and south on Barton Road until it reaches the River Mersey.

82 The Borough Council's proposed Stretford ward would be bounded south and east by the river and the borough boundary. It would share its northern boundary with the proposed Clifford, Davyhulme East and Talbot wards and its western boundary with the proposed Manor ward, as detailed earlier. Its proposed Talbot ward would be bounded north and east by the borough boundary. It would share its southern boundary with the proposed Clifford, Manor and Stretford wards and its western boundary with the proposed Davyhulme East ward, as detailed earlier.

83 Under the Borough Council's proposals for a 60-member council, the number of electors per councillor would vary from the borough average in the proposed Clifford, Manor, Stretford and Talbot wards by 3%, 1%, 3% and 2% respectively. This level of electoral equality is projected to improve in Stretford and Talbot wards while deteriorating slightly in Clifford and Manor wards to vary from the borough average by 1%, 0%, 4% and 2% by 2006.

84 The Conservatives proposed that this area be represented by four wards with the proposed Clifford, Gorse Hill, Longford and Stretford wards being represented by three councillors each.

85 The Conservatives' proposed Clifford ward would be bounded by the borough boundary while its western boundary would follow Chester Road, A5067, Northumberland Road, B5224 and Seymour Grove until it reaches the borough boundary. Their proposed Gorse Hill ward would follow the borough boundary in the north, its southern boundary would follow the railway

line, to the rear of properties on the west side of Ravenswood Road and to the rear of properties east of Great Stone Road until it reaches Talbot Road. The proposed boundary would then follow Talbot Road, Chester Road, Davyhulme Road, Lyndhurst Road and Derbyshire Lane until it reaches the rear of properties on Barkway Road. The boundary would then run westward along the railway line and turn north along the M60 and A5081 before following Bridgewater Canal until it reaches the borough boundary.

86 The Conservatives' proposed Longford ward would share its northern and eastern boundaries with the proposed Gorse Hill and Clifford wards and it would also be bounded in the east by the borough boundary. The proposed west and southern boundaries would follow Chester Road and Edge Lane respectively. The proposed Stretford ward would share its proposed boundaries with the proposed Gorse Hill, Longford and Urmston wards while being bounded by the river in the south.

87 Under the Conservatives' proposals for a 63-member council, the number of electors per councillor would vary from the borough average in the proposed Clifford, Gorse Hill, Longford and Stretford wards by 4%, 0%, 4% and 4% respectively. This level of electoral equality is projected to improve in Stretford ward while deteriorating slightly in Gorse Hill ward to vary from the borough average by 3% and 2% by 2006. The electoral variance for the proposed Clifford and Longford wards are expected to remain constant over the next five years.

88 Two local residents objected to the Borough Council's proposed Longford ward. One local resident would like to see the existing wards in this area retained in size.

89 Having considered all the representations received at Stage One we propose adopting the Conservatives' proposals substantially in this area subject to four amendments in order to improve electoral equality or include similar communities in single wards.

90 We propose that the boundary between the proposed Gorse Hill and Longford wards should follow Sir Matt Busby Way and Warwick Road and Talbot Road. We consider this amendment to include the entire residential area west of Sir Matt Busby Way in a single ward. We also propose that the boundary between the proposed Longford and Stretford wards should follow the Bridgewater Canal from the river to Edge Lane, we consider this proposal further respects local communities as it includes all properties east of the canal in a single ward.

91 We propose one further amendment between the proposed Gorse Hill and Stretford wards. This amended boundary would transfer those properties south of the railway line, north of Derbyshire Lane and west of those on Barton Road from the proposed Gorse Hill Road to the proposed Stretford ward. We consider this to better reflect local communities and it also balances electoral variances owing to the other amendments made in adjoining wards. We have made one further amendment in this area between the proposed Stretford and Urmston wards in order to tie a boundary to better ground detail, this change does not affect any electors.

92 We acknowledge the difficulty in formulating a warding arrangement in this northern area given the position of the river, canal, motorway and railway lines but in light of these difficulties we consider the Conservatives' proposals, subject to our amendments, to respect local community identities and utilise good boundaries in this area. We note the Borough Council's proposals in the area and consider them to have merit but in light of the local support for the Conservatives' proposals and objections towards the Borough Council's proposals, we are content to substantially endorse the Conservatives proposals as part of our draft recommendations.

93 Under our draft recommendations for a 63-member council, the number of electors per councillor would vary from the borough average in the proposed Clifford, Gorse Hill, Longford and Stretford wards by 4%, 3%, 5% and 0% respectively. This level of electoral equality is

projected to deteriorate in Gorse Hill, Longford and Stretford wards to vary from the borough average by 4%, 6% and 1% by 2006. The electoral variance for the proposed Clifford ward is expected to remain constant over the next five years.

Brooklands, Priory and Sale Moor wards

94 The existing wards of Brooklands, Priory and Sale Moor cover the eastern area of the borough and each ward is represented by three members. Under the current arrangements of a 63-member council, the number of electors per councillor in the three wards varies from the borough average by 0%, 2% and 3% respectively. This level of electoral equality is projected to deteriorate in Brooklands and Priory wards to vary from the borough average by 2% and 3% respectively by 2006. The electoral variance for the existing Sale Moor ward is expected to remain constant over the next five years.

95 The Borough Council proposed that this area be represented by three wards with the proposed Brooklands, Priory and Sale Moor wards being represented by three councillors each.

96 The Borough Council's proposed Brooklands ward would follow the existing ward boundary but its southern boundary would be amended to follow Fairywell Brook and run to the rear of properties on the south side of Wood Road and Waylands Avenue until it reaches the borough boundary. Its proposed Priory ward would be bounded south and east by the proposed Brooklands and Sale Moor wards while it would be bounded by the River Mersey in the north. Its proposed western boundary would follow Little Ees Lane, Glebelands Road, Park Road, Merton Road and Atkinson Road until it reaches the A56. The proposed boundary would finally follow the A56 until it reaches the A6144.

97 The Borough Council's proposed Sale Moor ward would follow the existing ward boundary but its western boundary would be amended so that it would follow the rear of properties north of the B5166 and Holly Grove and Clarendon Road. The proposed boundary would then follow Clarendon Crescent and north across open ground and Sale Water Park until it reaches the borough boundary.

98 Under the Borough Council's proposals for a 60-member council, the number of electors per councillor would vary from the borough average in the proposed Brooklands, Priory and Sale Moor wards by 1%, 1% and 2% respectively. This level of electoral equality is projected to deteriorate in Brooklands and Priory wards to vary from the borough average by 3% and 5% by 2006. The electoral variance for the proposed Sale Moor ward is expected to remain constant over the next five years.

99 The Conservatives proposed that this area be represented by three wards with the proposed Brooklands, Priory and Sale Moor being represented by three councillors each.

100 The Conservatives' proposed Sale Moor ward would follow the existing ward boundary but its western boundary would be amended to follow the rear of properties north of the B5166, Holly Grove and Clarendon Road until it reaches the existing boundary. Their proposed Priory ward would follow the existing ward boundary apart from one amendment to its eastern boundary, the proposed boundary would follow the rear of properties north of the B5166, Holly Grove and Clarendon Road until it reaches the existing boundary. The Conservatives proposed retaining Brooklands ward on its existing boundaries.

101 Under the Conservatives' proposals for a 63-member council, the number of electors per councillor would vary from the borough average in the proposed Brooklands, Priory and Sale Moor wards by 0%, 4% and 1% respectively. This level of electoral equality is projected to improve in Priory ward while deteriorating in Brooklands ward to vary from the borough average by 0% and 2% by 2006. The electoral variance for the proposed Sale Moor ward is expected to remain constant over the next five years.

102 Two local councillors highlighted the fact that wards in the Sale area have a natural boundary in the A56. Two local residents stated that they are content with the status quo in this area.

103 Having considered all the representations received at Stage One we propose adopting the Conservatives' proposals in this area without amendment. We consider its proposals to offer good levels of electoral equality, utilise good boundaries, such as the A56, and respect local community identities in this area. We noted the similarity between both borough wide schemes in this area, we considered the Borough Council's scheme to have merit and adopted its proposed boundaries where similar to that proposed by the Conservatives. We investigated the possibility of adopting the Borough Council's proposals in this area; however, its proposed wards resulted in poor electoral variances due to adopting a 63-member council and its proposals did not facilitate a suitable warding arrangement in the surrounding area. We also considered the continual utilisation of the A56 as an identifiable strong boundary, this was proposed by the Conservatives and supported by local residents while the Borough Council only partially used this boundary.

104 The Conservatives proposed minimal change in this area which reflected local opinion with its changes respecting the local community and we did not consider the Borough Council's proposed Priory ward to respect the local community by breaching the A56.

105 Under our draft recommendations for a 63-member council, the number of electors per councillor would vary from the borough average in the proposed Brooklands, Priory and Sale Moor wards by 0%, 4% and 1% respectively. This level of electoral equality is projected to improve in Priory ward while deteriorating in Brooklands ward to vary from the borough average by 0% and 2% by 2006. The electoral variance for the proposed Sale Moor ward is expected to remain constant over the next five years.

Bucklow, Mersey St Mary's and St Martins wards

106 The existing wards of Bucklow, Mersey St Mary's and St Martins cover the western area of the borough and each ward is represented by three members. Under the current arrangements of a 63-member council, the number of electors per councillor in the three wards varies from the borough average by 26%, 23% and 7% respectively. This level of electoral equality is projected to improve in Mersey St Mary's ward while deteriorating slightly in Bucklow ward to vary from the borough average by 22% and 27% respectively by 2006. The electoral variance for the existing St Martins ward is expected to remain constant over the next five years.

107 The Borough Council proposed that this area be represented by three wards with the proposed Avenue, Bucklow-St Martins and Sale West wards being represented by three councillors each.

108 The Borough Council's proposed Avenue ward boundary would follow the A56, as far as School Road, in the east and Sinderland Brook in the south. Its western boundary would follow Woodhouse Lane, Cherry Lane and Manor Avenue. The proposed northern boundary would run to the south of Firs City Primary School and to the rear of properties on the south side of Dorrington Road, then along Kenilworth Road, Harboro Road, Hillington Road and the B5166 until it reaches the A56. Its proposed Bucklow-St Martins ward would contain the parishes of Carrington, Dunham Massey, Partington and Warburton. The proposed ward would also include the urban area bounded by Carrington Lane, rear of properties on Monmouth Avenue and Barnfield Crescent, Grosvenor Road, Glebelands Road and Little Ees Lane until it reaches the borough boundary, formerly in St Martins ward.

109 The Borough Council's proposed Sale West ward would share its boundary with the proposed Avenue, Bucklow-St. Martins and Priory wards. Its proposed western boundary would

follow Carrington parish boundary from Carrington Lane to Moss Lane and it would continue along Moss Lane and to the rear of properties on Haydock Avenue and Lingfield Avenue until it reaches Woodhouse Lane.

110 Under the Borough Council's proposals for a 60-member council, the number of electors per councillor would vary from the borough average in the proposed Avenue, Bucklow-St Martins and Sale West wards by 2%, 2% and 5% respectively. This level of electoral equality is projected to improve in Avenue and Bucklow-St Martins wards to vary from the borough average by 0% and 1% by 2006. The electoral variance for the proposed Sale West ward is expected to remain constant over the next five years.

111 The Conservatives proposed that this area be represented by three wards with the proposed Ashton upon Mersey, Bucklow-St Martins and The Avenue wards being represented by three councillors each.

112 The Conservatives' proposed Ashton upon Mersey ward would be bounded by the River Mersey in the north and the A56 to the east. Its proposed southern boundary would follow Harboro Way, Harboro Road and Carrington Lane while its western boundary would follow Hawthorn Lane and north on the A6144 (M) until it reaches the river.

113 Their proposed Bucklow-St Martins ward would contain the parishes of Carrington and Partington and also that urban part of Trafford bounded by Firs Way, Manor Avenue, Tavistock Road, to the rear of properties on Manor Avenue and Bodmin Road until it reaches Brayton Avenue. The boundary would then run north on Brayton Avenue and the A6144 (M) until it reaches the river. The Conservatives proposed The Avenue ward would share its north and eastern boundary with the proposed Ashton upon Mersey and Bucklow-St. Martins wards, as previously detailed. The proposed ward's southern boundary would follow Sinderland Brook, to the rear of properties on the western side of Kenmore Road and Rothesay Crescent and east along Cherry Lane. The proposed boundary would then follow Manor Avenue and Woodhouse Lane until it reaches the A56. Its eastern boundary would follow the A56.

114 Under the Conservative's proposals for a 63-member council, the number of electors per councillor would vary from the borough average in the proposed Ashton upon Mersey, Bucklow-St Martins and The Avenue wards by 2%, 2% and 1% respectively. This level of electoral equality is projected to improve in Ashton upon Mersey ward to vary from the borough average 0% by 2006. The electoral variance for the proposed Bucklow-St Martins and The Avenue wards are expected to remain constant over the next five years.

115 We received six submissions from local residents objecting to the Borough Council's proposal to link Dunham and Warburton parishes with Partington parish considering the aforementioned parishes to have more common and historical links with Bowdon. One local resident objected to the proposed Avenue ward name.

116 Having considered all the representations received at Stage One we propose adopting the Conservatives' proposals substantially in this area subject to three amendments in order to group similar communities in single wards or improve electoral equality.

117 We propose that the boundary between the proposed Bucklow-St Martins and The Avenue ward should follow Brayton Avenue and Tavistock Road until it reaches Manor Avenue, as we consider this to be a more identifiable boundary. The area west of Manor Avenue and Firs Way including the school should be transferred from the proposed Bucklow-St Martins ward to the proposed The Avenue ward as we consider this to better reflect local community identities as the urban area transferred looks eastward and has its access into the proposed The Avenue ward.

118 We propose that the boundary between the proposed The Avenue and Broadheath ward should follow the rear of properties on Sapling Grove, Silverbirch Close and Cranmere Road. We consider this to better reflect local community identities and improves electoral equality given the amendments made to adjoining wards.

119 We noted the local support for the Conservatives' proposals in this area and consider the continual utilisation of the A56, as proposed by the Conservatives, as a strong boundary. We also note the local support for the use of the A56 as a natural ward boundary. We consider the Conservatives' proposed Bucklow-St Martins ward, subject to our amendments, to provide the best balance between the statutory criteria as it achieves good electoral equality and separates the rural parishes, which reflects local opinion. We did not consider the Borough Council's proposed Bucklow-St Martins ward to offer a better alternative as it was almost detached between the urban and rural areas and we noted the local objection to the linking of the rural parishes, as detailed later. For the remainder of this area we considered the Conservatives' scheme to respect local community identities, utilise good boundaries and provide good levels of electoral equality, in particular Ashton upon Mersey ward that respects the community west of the A56 and utilises strong boundaries in the A56 and the river. We also noted the local objection from the rural parishes and local residents toward the proposed linking of the rural parishes, as discussed later.

120 Under our draft recommendations for a 63-member council, the number of electors per councillor would vary from the borough average in Ashton upon Mersey, Bucklow-St Martins and The Avenue wards by 2%, 5% and 2% respectively. This level of electoral equality is projected to improve in Ashton upon Mersey ward to vary from the borough average by 0% by 2006. The electoral variance for the proposed Bucklow-St Martins and The Avenue wards are expected to remain constant over the next five years.

Altrincham, Bowdon and Broadheath wards

121 The existing wards of Altrincham, Bowdon and Broadheath cover the south-western area of the borough and each ward is represented by three members. Under the current arrangements of a 63-member council, the number of electors per councillor in the three wards varies from the borough average by 11%, 19% and 10% respectively. This level of electoral equality is projected to improve in Broadheath ward while deteriorating in Altrincham ward to vary from the borough average by 8% and 12% respectively by 2006. The electoral variance for the existing Bowdon ward is expected to remain constant over the next five years.

122 The Borough Council proposed that this area be represented by two wards with the proposed Altrincham-Broadheath and Bowdon wards being represented by three councillors each.

123 The Borough Council's proposed Altrincham-Broadheath ward northern boundary would follow Sinderland Brook while its western boundary would cross open ground and then follow Dunham Massey parish eastern boundary as far as Oldfield Lane. Its southern boundary would follow Oldfield Lane, Oldfield Road, Hartley Road, Regent Road, Railway Street and Lloyd Street until it reaches the railway line. The proposed ward boundary would then run north along the railway line, to the rear of Brentwood School and Houldsworth Avenue, west along a dismantled railway, along the eastern side of a playing field and to the south of Claremont Avenue until it reaches the A56. The boundary would finally follow the A56 until it reaches Sinderland Brook.

124 The proposed Bowdon ward would share its northern boundary with the proposed Altrincham-Broadheath ward while its western boundary would cross Dunham Park until it reaches the borough boundary. Its southern boundary would be formed by the borough boundary. The proposed ward's eastern boundary would follow the railway line, run west along

the B5163 and south along Marlborough Road and South Downs Road. The proposed boundary would finally run from South Downs Road to the borough boundary to the east side of the convent.

125 Under the Borough Council's proposals for a 60-member council, the number of electors per councillor would vary from the borough average in the proposed Altrincham-Broadheath and Bowdon wards by 0% and 0% respectively. This level of electoral equality is projected to deteriorate slightly in Altrincham-Broadheath ward to vary from the borough average by 1% by 2006. The electoral variance for the proposed Bowdon ward is expected to remain constant over the next five years.

126 The Conservatives proposed that this area be represented by three wards with the proposed Altrincham, Broadheath and Bowdon wards being represented by three councillors each.

127 The Conservatives' proposed Altrincham ward northern boundary would follow the Bridgewater Canal. Its proposed western boundary would follow Seamon's Road, Gorse Lane, Highgate Road and Dunham Road until it reaches Altrincham Grammar School grounds. The boundary would cross the school grounds and follow the existing ward boundary until it reaches Delamer Road where it would then follow St John's Road and Hale Road until it reaches the railway line. The proposed eastern boundary would follow the railway line, Moss Lane, across the golf course, along Stockport Road, Timperley Brook, Brook Close, Brook Lane, to the rear of properties on Haddon Grove and Bradley Close until it reaches the railway line.

128 The Conservatives' proposed Broadheath ward would share its southern boundary with the proposed Altrincham ward while its western boundary would be that of Dunham Massey parish. Its northern boundary partially follows Carrington parish boundary until it reaches Moss Road. The boundary would then follow Moss Road, to the rear of properties on Haydock Avenue until it reaches Sinderland Brook where the boundary would run eastward on Sinderland Brook, to the rear of properties on Little Brook Road, Cherry Lane, Manor Avenue, Woodhouse Lane, the A56 before rejoining Sinderland Brook. The proposed eastern boundary would follow the existing ward boundary but would exclude the area bounded by Brookway, Brook Lane and Moss Lane which is to be transferred to the proposed Timperley ward.

129 The proposed Bowdon ward would include the parishes of Dunham Massey and Warburton, it would also contain an urban part of Trafford. Its eastern boundary would follow Byron Street, Marlborough Road and South Downs Road. The boundary would finally run to the borough boundary from South Downs Road to the east of the convent. The proposed ward would be bounded to the south by the borough boundary while its northern boundary would be shared with the proposed Altrincham ward.

130 Under the Conservatives' proposals for a 63-member council, the number of electors per councillor would vary from the borough average in the proposed Altrincham, Broadheath and Bowdon wards by 4%, 1% and 5% respectively. This level of electoral equality is projected to improve in Altrincham ward to vary from the borough average by 3% by 2006. The electoral variance for the proposed Broadheath and Bowdon wards are expected to remain constant over the next five years.

131 Dunham Massey Parish Council considered there to be no links between Dunham/Warburton parishes and Partington parish. The Parish Council stated that there were good links between Dunham/Warburton parishes and Bowdon and wished to remain in a ward with Bowdon. Warburton Parish Council expressed its concern at the Borough Council's proposed changes for Dunham and Warburton parishes and urged us to keep them with Bowdon ward.

132 We received submissions from six local residents objecting to the Borough Council's proposal to link Dunham and Warburton parishes with Partington parish considering Dunham and Warburton parishes to have more common and historical links with Bowdon, as previously mentioned. One MEP and an MP objected to the Borough Council's proposed Altrincham-Broadheath and Hale wards. Five local residents objected to the Borough Council's proposals for the south of the borough and two local councillors stated that Altrincham should have a distinct ward of its own. One local resident considered that Altrincham should retain its existing boundaries.

133 Having considered all the representations received at Stage One we propose adopting the Conservatives' proposals in this area subject to seven amendments in order to group similar communities in single wards, improve electoral equality or tie boundaries to better ground detail.

134 We propose that the boundary between the proposed Broadheath and Timperley wards should follow the railway line west of Whalley Close and eastward on the railway line until it reaches the existing boundary. We consider this boundary to be more identifiable and better respects local community identities as it includes that area east of the railway line in a single ward. The boundary between the proposed Altrincham and Broadheath wards should follow the existing boundary in the north-east of the proposed Altrincham ward, we consider this amendment to better reflect local communities and it improves internal links and access routes within the proposed Broadheath ward.

135 The proposed amendment between the proposed Altrincham and Bowdon wards would see the area bounded by Oldfield Lane, Oldfield Road, Bridgewater Canal and Seamon's Road transferred from Bowdon ward to Altrincham ward as we consider that this area would look eastward on a community basis.

136 We propose one major amendment in this area between the proposed Altrincham and Broadheath wards. The boundary would now follow Oldfield Lane, Oldfield Road, Gorse Lane, St Margaret's Road, Woodville Road, The Downs and Lloyd Street until it reaches the railway line. We consider this proposed amendment to better reflect the local community, utilise good boundaries and achieve an acceptable electoral variance in consideration of other amendments in surrounding wards.

137 We propose that the boundary between the proposed Bowdon and Hale Central wards should follow the rear of properties west of Byrom Street and the rear of properties on Blenheim Close and Pheasant Rise. We consider these amendments to include similar communities in single wards. We also propose that the boundary between the proposed Altrincham and Hale Central wards should follow Mayor's Road before rejoining Moss Lane, again we consider this to better reflect local communities. We propose an amendment between the proposed Broadheath and The Avenue wards, as detailed earlier.

138 We noted the local support for the Conservatives' proposals to retain the links between Dunham Massey/Warburton parishes and the Bowdon area. We also noted the local objection to the Borough Council's proposed Altrincham-Broadheath ward and, subject to our amendments, consider the Conservatives' proposals to provide the best balance between the statutory criteria in this area. We considered the Borough Council's scheme to have merit; however, in light of the local support for the Conservatives' proposals we propose to substantially adopt these proposals as part of our draft recommendations.

139 We consider the proposed Broadheath ward to best reflect local communities as it would be centred on the Broadheath area and would retain Broadheath in a distinctive ward of its own which reflects local opinion. We also consider the proposed Altrincham ward to be centred on the Altrincham area, respecting the local community, which also reflects local opinion.

140 Under our draft recommendations for a 63-member council, the number of electors per councillor would vary from the borough average in the proposed Altrincham, Broadheath and Bowdon wards by 9%, 7% and 7% respectively. This level of electoral equality is projected to improve in all wards to vary from the borough average by 7%, 5% and 6% by 2006.

Hale, Timperley and Village wards

141 The existing wards of Hale, Timperley and Village cover the south-eastern area of the borough and each ward is represented by three members. Under the current arrangements of a 63-member council, the number of electors per councillor in the three wards varies from the borough average by 7%, 11% and 19% respectively. This level of electoral equality is projected to deteriorate in Timperley ward to vary from the borough average 12% by 2006. The electoral variance for the existing Hale and Village wards are expected to remain constant over the next five years.

142 The Borough Council proposed that this area be represented by four wards with the proposed Hale, Hale Barns, Timperley and Village wards being represented by three councillors each.

143 The Borough Council's proposed Hale ward would share its western boundary with the proposed Altrincham-Broadheath and Bowdon wards while its southern boundary would be made up of the borough boundary. The proposed northern boundary would follow Wellington Road, Brook Lane, Moss Lane and Grove Lane until it reaches Ayfield Road. The proposed eastern boundary would follow the existing Village ward boundary from Ayfield Road to Timperley Brook, it would then follow Golf Road, Grove Lane, Clarence Road and Chiltern Drive until it reaches Harrop Road. The proposed boundary would then run west along Harrop Road, along Bower Road, Park Road, Tolland Lane, Bankhall Lane and the railway line until it reaches the borough boundary.

144 Its proposed Hale Barns ward would be bounded east and south by the borough boundary. Its proposed western boundary would be shared with the proposed Hale ward while its northern boundary would follow the existing Village ward southern boundary. The Borough Council's proposed Village ward would follow the existing ward boundary with one amendment. Its proposed northern boundary would now follow the rear of properties north of Esher Drive, the boundary would then cross the recreation ground until it reaches Langham Grove where it would run to the rear of properties west of Ladybrook Avenue and Grange Road until it reaches the existing boundary. The Borough Council's proposed Timperley ward would share its northern boundary with the proposed Brooklands ward, its eastern boundary with the proposed Village ward, its southern boundary with the proposed Hale ward and its western boundary with the proposed Altrincham-Broadheath ward, as outlined earlier.

145 Under the Borough Council's proposals for a 60-member council, the number of electors per councillor would vary from the borough average in the Hale, Hale Barns, Timperley and Village wards by 1%, 3%, 0% and 0% respectively. This level of electoral equality is projected to deteriorate in Hale and Timperley wards to vary from the borough average by 2% and 2% by 2006. The electoral variance for the proposed Hale Barns and Village wards are expected to remain constant over the next five years.

146 The Conservatives' proposed that this area be represented by four wards with the proposed Hale Barns, Hale Central, Timperley and Village wards being represented by three councillors each.

147 The Conservative's proposed Hale Barns ward would be bounded east and south by the borough boundary. The proposed northern boundary would follow Wood Lane, Green Lane, to the rear of properties on the east side of Thorneycroft Road and the rear of properties on Cherry Tree Close until it reaches Shaftesbury Avenue. The proposed boundary would then follow

Shaftesbury Avenue, the A5144, Mainwood Road, Nethercroft Road, Chatsworth Close, Ridgeway Road, Norwood Drive, Brooks Drive and a path until it reaches the borough boundary. The proposed western boundary would cross Altrincham Golf Course, allotment gardens and Grove Park before running to the rear of properties on the north side of Kenmore Drive. The boundary would then follow Delahays Road, Park Road, Tolland Lane and to the west of Bankhall Farm until it reaches the borough boundary.

148 The Conservatives' proposed Hale Central ward would share its northern boundary with the proposed Altrincham ward, its western boundary with the proposed Bowdon ward and its eastern boundary with the proposed Hale Barns ward. It would be bounded to the south by the borough boundary. Their proposed Timperley ward southern boundary would follow Stockport Road while its eastern boundary would follow the existing boundary apart from one amendment with the properties west of Beccles Wood and Fairywell Brook as far as Fairbourne Drive being transferred from the existing Village ward. Its proposed northern boundary would follow Baguley Brook while its western boundary would follow the existing boundary apart from along the entire length of Brookway and running to the rear of properties on the east side of Brook Close, Prestbury Avenue, Royce Avenue and Linden Avenue until it reaches Stockport Road.

149 The Conservatives' proposed Village ward would share its southern boundary with the proposed Hale Barns ward. It would follow the existing boundary for the remainder of the ward as far as Fairbourne Drive where the properties west of Beccles Wood and Fairywell Brook would be transferred to the proposed Timperley ward, as outlined earlier.

150 Under the Conservative's proposals for a 63-member council, the number of electors per councillor would vary from the borough average in the proposed Hale Barns, Hale Central, Timperley and Village wards by 5%, 5%, 1% and 2% respectively. This level of electoral equality is projected to improve in Hale Central ward while deteriorating in Timperley and Village wards to vary from the borough average by 4%, 3% and 3% by 2006. The electoral variance for the proposed Hale Barns ward is expected to remain constant over the next five years.

151 Five local residents objected to the Borough Council's proposals for south of the borough with two local councillors stating that Altrincham should have a distinct ward of its own, as should Timperley and Hale. One MEP and an MP objected to the Borough Council's proposed Altrincham-Broadheath and Hale wards. One local Hale resident objected to the Borough Council's proposals and considered them to be politically motivated. Three local residents supported the Conservatives' proposals in the south of the borough.

152 Having considered all the representations received at Stage One we propose adopting the Conservatives' proposals substantially in this area subject to four amendments in order to group similar communities in single wards, improve electoral equality or tie boundaries to better ground detail. We propose amendments between the proposed Broadheath and Timperley wards, Altrincham and Hale Central wards and two amendments between the proposed Bowdon and Hale Central wards as detailed earlier.

153 We considered the Borough Council's scheme in this area to have merit but concurred with local residents that its proposed Hale ward would be geographically unwieldy and to combine several separate communities. We also noted the local objection to the Borough Council's proposals in this southern area and are content that the Conservatives' scheme, subject to our amendments, would provide the best balance between the statutory criteria as it respects local communities and utilises good boundaries in the area. We considered the Conservatives' scheme to respect local communities by centering their proposed wards round the natural communities such as Hale and Timperley.

154 Under our draft recommendations for a 63-member council, the number of electors per councillor would vary from the borough average in the proposed Hale Barns, Hale Central, Timperley and Village wards by 5%, 7%, 6% and 2% respectively. This level of electoral

equality is projected to improve in Hale Central and Timperley wards while deteriorating in Village ward to vary from the borough average by 6%, 4% and 3% by 2006. The electoral variance for the proposed Hale Barns ward is expected to remain constant over the next five years.

Electoral cycle

155 Under section 7(3) of the Local Government Act 1972, all Metropolitan boroughs have a system of elections by thirds.

Conclusions

156 Having considered all the evidence and representations received during the initial stage of the review, we propose that:

- a council of 63 members should be retained;
- there should be 21 wards;
- the boundaries of 20 of the existing wards should be modified, resulting in no change to the total number of wards, and only one ward, Brooklands, should retain its existing boundaries.

157 As already indicated, we have based our draft recommendations on the Conservatives proposals, but propose to depart from them in the following areas:

- North of the River Mersey we propose amending the boundaries between the Conservatives' proposed Davyhulme East and Davyhulme West wards, Gorse Hill and Longford wards, Gorse Hill and Stretford wards, Longford and Stretford wards, Davyhulme West and Flixton wards and between their proposed Flixton and Urmston wards;
- South of the River Mersey we propose amending the boundaries between the Conservatives' proposed Bowdon and Altrincham wards, Broadheath and The Avenue wards, Bowdon and Hale Central wards, Broadheath and Timperley wards, Altrincham and Broadheath wards, Altrincham and Hale Central wards and between their proposed Bucklow-St Martins and The Avenue wards.

158 Table 5 shows how our draft recommendations will affect electoral equality, comparing them with the current arrangements (based on 2001 electorate figures) and with forecast electorates for the year 2006.

Table 5: Comparison of current and recommended electoral arrangements

	2001 electorate		2006 electorate	
	Current arrangements	Draft recommendations	Current arrangements	Draft recommendations
Number of councillors	63	63	63	63
Number of wards	21	21	21	21
Average number of electors per councillor	2,632	2,661	2,632	2,661
Number of wards with a variance more than 10 per cent from the average	8	0	8	0
Number of wards with a variance more than 20 per cent from the average	3	0	3	0

159 As shown in Table 5, our draft recommendations for Trafford Borough Council would result in a reduction in the number of wards with an electoral variance of more than 10% from eight to zero. By 2006 no wards are forecast to have an electoral variance of more than 7%.

Draft recommendation

Trafford Borough Council should comprise 63 councillors serving 21 wards, as detailed and named in Tables 1 and 2, and illustrated on Map 2 and in Appendix A and on the large maps.

Parish and town council electoral arrangements

160 There would be no changes to the current parish and town council electoral arrangements in Trafford as a result of our draft recommendations.

Map 2: Draft recommendations for Trafford

5 What happens next?

161 There will now be a consultation period, during which everyone is invited to comment on the draft recommendations on future electoral arrangements for Trafford contained in this report. We will take fully into account all submissions received by 22 April 2003. Any received *after* this date may not be taken into account. All responses may be inspected at our offices and those of the Borough Council. A list of respondents will be available from us on request after the end of the consultation period.

162 Express your views by writing directly to us:

**Team Leader
Trafford Review
The Boundary Committee for England
Trevelyan House
Great Peter Street
London SW1P 2HW**

163 In the light of representations received, we will review our draft recommendations to consider whether they should be altered. As indicated earlier, it is therefore important that all interested parties let us have their views and evidence, ***whether or not*** they agree with our draft recommendations. We will then submit our final recommendations to The Electoral Commission. After the publication of our final recommendations, all further correspondence should be sent to The Electoral Commission, which cannot make the Order giving effect to our recommendations until six weeks after it receives them.

Appendix A

Draft recommendations for Trafford: detailed mapping

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

Map A1 illustrates, in outline form, the proposed ward boundaries within the borough and indicates the areas which are shown in more detail on the large maps.

The **large maps** illustrate the existing and proposed warding arrangements for Trafford.

Map A1: Draft recommendations for Trafford: Key map

Appendix B

Code of practice on written consultation

The Cabinet Office's November 2000 *Code of Practice on Written Consultation*, www.cabinet-office.gov.uk/servicefirst/index/consultation.htm, requires all Government Departments and Agencies to adhere to certain criteria, set out below, on the conduct of public consultations. Public bodies, such as The Boundary Committee for England, are encouraged to follow the code.

The code of practice applies to consultation documents published after 1 January 2001, which should reproduce the criteria, give explanations of any departures, and confirm that the criteria have otherwise been followed.

Table B1: Boundary Committee for England's compliance with Code criteria

Criteria	Compliance/departure
Timing of consultation should be built into the planning process for a policy (including legislation) or service from the start, so that it has the best prospect of improving the proposals concerned, and so that sufficient time is left for it at each stage.	We comply with this requirement.
It should be clear who is being consulted, about what questions, in what timescale and for what purpose.	We comply with this requirement.
A consultation document should be as simple and concise as possible. It should include a summary, in two pages at most, of the main questions it seeks views on. It should make it as easy as possible for readers to respond, make contact or complain.	We comply with this requirement.
Documents should be made widely available, with the fullest use of electronic means (though not to the exclusion of others), and effectively drawn to the attention of all interested groups and individuals.	We comply with this requirement.
Sufficient time should be allowed for considered responses from all groups with an interest. Twelve weeks should be the standard minimum period for a consultation.	We consult on draft recommendations for a minimum of eight weeks, but may extend the period if consultations take place over holiday periods.
Responses should be carefully and open-mindedly analysed, and the results made widely available, with an account of the views expressed, and reasons for decisions finally taken.	We comply with this requirement.
Departments should monitor and evaluate consultations, designating a consultation coordinator who will ensure the lessons are disseminated.	We comply with this requirement.