

# Final recommendations on the future electoral arrangements for Trafford

Report to The Electoral Commission

*October 2003*

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# What is The Boundary Committee for England?

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

Members of the Committee are:

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

Archie Gall (Director)

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

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



# Summary

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

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

We found that the existing arrangements provide unequal representation of electors in 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%;**
- **by 2006 this situation is expected to remain constant.**

Our main final recommendations for future electoral arrangements (see Tables 1 and 2 and paragraphs 179-180) 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.**

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

**The Secretary  
The Electoral Commission  
Trevelyan House  
Great Peter Street  
London SW1P 2HW**

**Fax: 020 7271 0667  
Email: [implementation@electoralcommission.org.uk](mailto:implementation@electoralcommission.org.uk)  
(This address should only be used for this purpose)**

Table 1: Final 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 & 3
3	Bowdon	3	The parishes of Dunham and Warburton; part of the unparished part of Bowdon ward; part of Altrincham ward	1 & 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	The parishes of Carrington and Partington; part of St Martins ward	1, 2 & 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 & 2
10	Flixton	3	Part of Flixton ward; part of Davyhulme West ward; part of Urmston ward	1 & 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 & 3
16	St Mary's	3	Part of Broadheath ward; part of Mersey St Mary's ward; part of St Martins ward	2 & 3
17	Sale Moor	3	Part of Priory ward; Sale Moor ward	2 & 3
18	Stretford	3	Part of Longford ward; part of Park ward; part of Stretford ward	2
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

Notes: 1) The wards on the above table are illustrated on Map 2 and the large maps.

Table 2: Final 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	8,116	2,705	3	8,072	2,691	1
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	St Mary's	3	8,089	2,696	2	8,125	2,708	2
17	Sale Moor	3	7,842	2,614	-1	7,911	2,637	-1
18	Stretford	3	7,918	2,639	0	7,918	2,639	-1
19	Timperley	3	8,365	2,788	6	8,323	2,774	4
20	Urmston	3	8,285	2,762	5	8,310	2,770	4
21	Village	3	7,733	2,578	-2	7,762	2,587	-3
	<b>Totals</b>	<b>63</b>	<b>165,825</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>167,657</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>
	<b>Averages</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>2,632</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>2,661</b>	<b>-</b>

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

2 This is our first review of the electoral arrangements of Trafford. Trafford's last review was carried out by the Local Government Boundary Commission, which reported to the Secretary of State in October 1978 (Report no. 300).

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

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

4 Details of the legislation under which the review of Trafford was 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 on the number of councillors who should serve on a council, and the number, boundaries and names of wards. We can also propose changes to the electoral arrangements for parish and town councils in the borough.

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

7 We are not prescriptive on council size. However, we believe that any proposals relating to council size, whether these are for an increase, a reduction or no change, should be supported by evidence and argumentation. Given the stage now reached in the introduction of new political management structures under the provisions of the local Government Act 2000, it is important that whatever council size interested parties may propose to us they can demonstrate that their proposals have been fully thought through, and have been developed in the context of a review of internal political management and the role of councillors in the new structure. However, we have found it necessary to safeguard against upward drift in the number of councillors, and we believe that any proposal for an increase in council size will need to be fully justified. In particular, we do not accept that an increase in electorate should automatically result in an increase in the number of councillors, nor that changes should be made to the size of the council simply to make it more consistent with the size of other similar councils.

8 Under the provisions of the Local Government Act 1972 there is no limit to the number of councillors 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 lead to an unacceptable dilution of accountability to the electorate and we have not, to date, prescribed any wards with more than three councillors.

9 This review was in four stages. Stage One began on 14 May 2002, when we wrote to 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 the Borough Council to publicise the review further. The closing date for receipt of representations, the end of Stage One, was 16 September 2002. At Stage Two we considered all the representations received during Stage One and prepared our draft recommendations.

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

## 2 Current electoral arrangements

11 The borough of 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. The borough contains the four parishes of Carrington, Dunham Massey, Partington and Warburton.

12 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.

13 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 by 2006.

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

*Map 1: Existing wards in Trafford*

Table 3: 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
	<b>Totals</b>	<b>63</b>	<b>165,825</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>167,657</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>
	<b>Averages</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>2,632</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>2,661</b>	<b>-</b>

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 Draft recommendations

15 During Stage One 82 we received representations, including borough-wide schemes from Trafford Borough Council and the Conservative Party, and representations from two parish councils, five members of parliament, four borough councillors, one from a local organisation and 67 local residents. In the light of these representations and evidence available to us, we reached preliminary conclusions which were set out in our report, *Draft recommendations on the future electoral arrangements for Trafford*.

16 Our draft recommendations were based on the Conservatives' proposals, which achieved some improvement in electoral equality. However, we moved away from the Borough Council's scheme in a number of areas, using some of our own proposals. We proposed that:

- Trafford Borough Council should be served by 63 councillors, as at present, representing 21 wards;
- the boundaries of all the existing wards should be modified.

*Draft recommendation*

Trafford Borough Council should comprise 63 councillors, serving 21 wards.

17 Our proposals would have resulted in significant improvements in electoral equality, with the number of electors per councillor in all wards varying by no more than 10% from the borough average. This level of electoral equality was forecast to remain constant, with no ward varying by more than 10% from the average in 2006.



## 4 Responses to consultation

18 During the consultation on the draft recommendations report, 229 representations were received. A list of all respondents is available from us on request. All representations may be inspected at our offices and those of Trafford Borough Council.

### Trafford Borough Council

19 The Borough Council opposed the draft recommendations and stated it continued to prefer a council size of 60 members. However, it also provided two alternative options, based on the current council size of 63 members.

### Members of Parliament

20 Graham Brady, MP for Altrincham and Sale, supported the draft recommendations. Beverley Hughes, MP for Urmston & Stretford, objected to the draft recommendations and to the length of consultation time given. Paul Goggins, MP for Wythenshawe & Sale East, also objected to the length of the consultation period. David Sumberg MEP supported the proposed council size and the majority of the draft recommendations. He further proposed amendments similar to the Conservative group across the borough. Sir Robert Atkins MEP also proposed amendments to the draft proposals across the borough similar to those proposed by the Conservatives.

### Political Groups

21 The Conservative Group (the Conservatives) stated that it supported the draft recommendations. However, it proposed a number of amendments to the proposed Altrincham, Bucklow-St Martin's, Broadheath, Bowdon, Davyhulme East, Davyhulme West and The Avenue wards. Wythenshawe & Sale East Conservative Association stated it supported the draft recommendations. Priory Ward Liberal Democrats supported the draft recommendation, however it proposed two alternative ward names for the proposed The Avenue ward.

### Parish councils & Borough Councillors

22 Warburton Parish Council stated that it supported the draft recommendations. Partington Town Council stated that it opposed the draft recommendations and would prefer to be placed in a ward with neighbouring parishes.

23 Councillor Akins, member for Timperley ward, Councillor Eadie, member for Davyhulme East ward, Councillor Hepburn, member for Hale ward, Councillor Reilly, member for Davyhulme West ward, Councillor Reilly, member for Priory ward, Councillor Trafford, member for Hale ward and Councillor Ward, member for Flixton ward all expressed support for the majority of the draft recommendations.

24 Councillor D. Acton, Leader of the Council, objected to the draft recommendations and stated a preference for the Borough Councils Stage Three response. Councillor J. Acton, member for Urmston ward, Councillor Adshead, member for Stretford ward, Councillor Barker, member for Longford ward, Councillor Clarke member for Urmston ward, objected to the draft proposals for the Urmston town centre area. Councillor Faulkner, member for Bucklow ward objected to the draft proposals linking Partington with the Heatherway area of Sale. Councillor Ackroyd, member for Village ward, Councillor Bowker, member for Timperley ward and Councillor Fishwick, member for Village ward objected to the Conservatives proposals and proposed an alternative configuration for Village ward. Councillor Brotherton, member for Priory ward, Councillor Gray, member for St Martin's ward, Councillor Keeley, member for Priory ward and Councillor Platt,

member for Bucklow ward objected to draft proposals for the current St Martin's and Mersey St Mary's wards. Councillor Mitchell, member for Clifford ward, objected to the analysis of the draft recommendations. Councillor Lane, member for Talbot ward, Councillor Lloyd member for Longford ward objected to the draft proposals for the Old Trafford, Gorse Hill and Firwood areas. Councillor Stennet, member for Clifford ward, objected to the consultation period given after the draft recommendations. Councillor Walsh, member for Talbot ward, objected to the proposed Gorse Hill and Longford wards. Councillor Quayle objected to the draft recommendations and supported the Borough Council's Stage Three response.

## Local organisations

25 Trafford Primary Care Trusts opposed the Borough Council's electorate projections and opposed the draft recommendations. Ashton & Sale History Society supported the proposals for The Avenue ward. Lostock North Tenants and Residents Association objected to the proposed splitting of the present Park ward. Urmston Community Partnership objected to the draft recommendations for its surrounding area. Community Association Partington objected to a proposal for a new Sinderland ward and preferred to be placed in a ward with Flixton.

## Other representations

26 We received 38 submissions from local residents supporting the draft recommendations in their entirety. A further 82 submissions were received from local residents who supported the majority of the draft recommendations but proposed minor amendments. We received 77 submissions from local residents objecting to the draft recommendations.

## 5 Analysis and final recommendations

27 As described earlier, our prime objective 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”.

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

29 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.

30 We accept that the achievement of absolute electoral equality for the authority as a whole is likely to be unattainable. However, we consider that, if electoral imbalances are to be minimised, the aim of electoral equality should be the starting point in any review. We therefore strongly recommend that, in formulating electoral schemes, local authorities and other interested parties should make electoral equality their starting point, and then make adjustments to reflect relevant factors such as community identity and interests. Five-year forecasts of changes in electorate must also be considered and we would aim to recommend a scheme that provides improved electoral equality over this five-year period.

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

### Electorate forecasts

32 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.

33 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.

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

35 We know that forecasting electorates is difficult and, having considered the Borough Council's figures, we accepted that they were the best estimates that could reasonably be made at the time.

36 At Stage Three the Trafford Primary Care Trusts stated that subsequent to the results of the 2001 census it believed the forecasts to be incorrect. It stated that the population estimates for the 18 and over age range indicated a decrease of 2.4% as opposed to 2.8% increase between 1991 and 2001. It therefore stated that the forecasts were incorrect. However, it did admit that such a revision could only have been made subsequent to the initial forecast that would have been based on different data.

37 In the light of this issue we sought further clarification from the Borough Council. It stated that it was happy to continue with the population projections made at Stage One. We continue to be satisfied that the 2006 projections remain the best estimates that can therefore reasonably be made at this time.

## Council size

38 During Stage One we received two borough-wide schemes from the Borough Council and the Conservatives proposing a 60- and 63-member council 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, highlighting the need to argue the proposed council size in light of changes in internal political management. Both parties duly forwarded the requested additional information.

39 Trafford Borough Council presently has 63 members. The Borough Council proposed a council of 60, 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.

40 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 councillor activity from the committee room to the community. During this time scrutiny arrangements were also introduced, as were Area Boards.

41 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.

42 The political management roles of members 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, both with regard to the ward and 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.

43 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 with 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 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 had 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.

44 The Conservatives proposed a council size of 63 members, as at present. The Conservatives' position was initially to consider the structure, 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.

45 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.

46 The Conservatives documented the Council's function through the Executive and committees, outlined the role of each particular area and highlighted the role of councillors. 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 dissuade people from serving as councillors. In other words, they stressed, there must be enough councillors to share the workload.

47 In conclusion, the Conservatives stated that although the new political management structure had 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.

48 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. Having considered the facts and new system of internal political management carefully the Conservatives concluded that the council would best function with 63 members.

49 We received submissions from an MP, an MEP and three local residents who felt there way 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.

50 Having considered all documentation received in relation to council size and having looked at both arguments in the light of new systems of political management we considered that Trafford Borough Council would best function with 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 were content to base our draft recommendations on this particular council size. We also noted that a council of 63 members provided for the best allocation of councillors both north and south of the borough.

51 At Stage Three the Borough Council objected to the draft recommendations and stated that it continued to support the reduction in council size to 60 members. It argued that the purpose of the modernised internal political structure was to streamline and reduce the workload on members. It also argued that in determining the appropriate council size, the number of councillors in the other Greater Manchester councils should be taken into account and that the ratio of electors to members needs to be linked to the issues of social exclusion and regeneration. Beverley Hughes MP stated that within other boroughs in Greater Manchester the Commission had endorsed ward proposals based on 20 wards patterns, yet adopted an 'a priori position against the reduction' of wards in Trafford. Councillors Baker, Lane and Mitchell also expressed objection to the proposed council size.

52 The Conservative Group and Wythenshawe & Sale East Conservative Association both stated support for the draft recommendations in respect of the retention of a council size of 63 members. Graham Brady MP also supported the draft recommendations and stated that the retention of the present 21 wards was appropriate in terms of councillor workload and in respect of the new structures of local governance. Councillors Atkins, Eadie, Hepburn, Reilly, J. Reilly, Trafford and Ward also stated support for a council size of 63 members. We received a further 71 local submissions specifically stating support for this proposal.

53 We have given careful consideration to the views received at Stage Three. As stated above, we considered the arguments received from the Borough Council had merit in respect of council size. However, in determining the council size, as we mention in our *Guidance*, comparisons with neighbouring boroughs do not provide suitable evidence. We also cannot take into account the possible effect of ward changes in respect of social deprivation, urban/rural development and the political consequences in determining the appropriate council size. In respect of council size, as mentioned above, and in our *Guidance* from the Electoral Commission, we consider each local authority area on its merits, and do not take into account council sizes between authorities of similar types and populations. In determining the appropriate ward patterns we also do not take into account the likely effects on political representation,

54 We therefore remain persuaded that the proposals of the Conservative Group provided the best evidence as to how the council would operate with its proposal for 63 members. We also note that the proposals for 63 members received substantial support. Having considered the submissions received, we remain of the view that the council size of 63 members is the most appropriate for Trafford.

## Electoral arrangements

55 We noted that this had been a particularly contentious review with two different council sizes being proposed from locally generated schemes. We would like to place on record our appreciation for all those who have contributed to this process. However, after careful consideration of all the evidence received at Stage One, we considered 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 were content to substantially endorse these proposals.

56 We considered the Borough Council's scheme to have merit but upon adopting a council size of 63 members and in the light of the local support for the Conservatives' scheme we considered their scheme to best satisfy the statutory criteria. However, we were able to consider the Borough Council's scheme in some areas due to the minimal difference in proposed council size. This was particularly helpful in the eastern area of the borough.

57 The Conservatives also submitted, as part of their overall proposals, an alternative 60-member scheme should a council size of 60 members be adopted. Because we adopted a council size of 63 members we did not consider this alternative scheme further.

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

59 In the south of the borough, south of the River Mersey, we proposed adopting the Conservatives' proposals subject to nine amendments. We proposed these 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 some similarity between the schemes. However, due to 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 considered the Conservatives' proposals to better satisfy the statutory criteria.

60 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. In viewing each borough-wide submission it is our consideration that the Conservatives' scheme 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 and stating that appeared to be politically motivated. However, in the context of a review, we cannot take into consideration the political implications of any boundary amendments.

61 At Stage Three the Borough Council objected to the draft recommendations. As mentioned earlier, the Borough Council stated that it continued to support a reduction in council size to 60 members. However, it also proposed two alternative borough-wide schemes based on a council size of 63 members, called the Meadows and Sinderland options. It stated that in the Meadows proposal it sought to deal with community identity issues in Urmston with the integration of the Lostock and Urmston areas within a proposed Urmston ward. Within this option it proposed that the area between Moss Vale Road and Ripon Road be transferred from the proposed Gorse Hill ward to its proposed Urmston ward. It also proposed a new Bucklow ward with Partington and Carrington parishes being linked with part of the Flixton area straddling across the River Mersey. Along the rest of the borough it proposed amendments to the draft recommendations that substantially amended the draft recommendations, so as affect a total revision.

62 It alternatively proposed a Sinderland option that it argued addressed the community boundaries in Urmston and Flixton and proposed that Partington and Carrington be linked to part of the Broadheath and Woodhouses areas towards the south of the borough. The Borough Council based this option on linking Partington parish with that part of the Broadheath area generally west of Craven Road. It proposed the link between these areas be along Sinderland Lane through another proposed ward. Again, along the rest of the borough it proposed amendments to the draft recommendations that substantially made this option another total revision of the draft recommendations.

63 The Borough Council argued that these options both ensured continuity for electors and minimised change and disruption to present ward boundaries. It also stated that these proposals sought to respect parish council and natural community boundaries.

64 We have carefully considered the Borough Council's proposals for amendment to the draft recommendations. We note that both the Meadows and Sinderland options provided good levels of electoral equality. However both options were total revisions of the draft recommendations, based on the amendments to the west of the borough. Within the Meadows option the Borough Council proposed uniting a part of the Flixton area north of the Mersey with Carrington and Partington parishes that are south of the river Mersey. We did not consider that uniting part of the Flixton area across the River Mersey with Carrington and Partington parishes provided a more defined ward boundary for the area from that proposed in the draft recommendations.

65 Within the Sinderland option the Borough Council proposed uniting parts of the Broadheath and Woodhouses areas with Partington parish in a new Sinderland ward, with the only access between these areas being through another new Bowdon ward. The team considered that these proposals would not provide for a better balance of the statutory criteria and did not provide a viable ward pattern in the west and north of the borough. In the light of responses we received at Stage One and Stage Three we do not consider that this amendment reflects community identity or provides clearly definable ward boundaries. We further noted that our draft proposals had received support in the west of the borough, did not require any parish warding and continued to secure good levels of electoral equality. We therefore do not propose any major departure from the ward pattern proposed in our draft recommendations.

66 Beverley Hughes MP and Paul Goggin MP both expressed objection to the consultation time given after the publication of the draft recommendations. Beverley Hughes MP commented on the possible disruption the draft recommendations could have on the political balance of the council. She further objected to the draft recommendations on the grounds that the proposals altered the balance of electors between the northern and southern areas of the borough and the proposals cut across devolved Area Boards. Beverley Hughes MP also objected to the proposals for the Urmston Town Centre area stating it should remain totally within an Urmston ward. She supported for the proposals of Partington Town Council and also the Sinderland option from the Borough Council linking Partington with Flixton.

67 Councillor Acton objected to the draft recommendations for making not mentioning submissions that were submitted solely to the Borough Council and also the length of the consultation time. He also supported for the Borough Council's Stage Three proposals. We received 17 submissions from residents who objected generally to the review.

68 We have noted the concerns regarding the length of period for the public consultation of the draft recommendations. However, this is the standard period of time given at Stage Three of the process in all our reviews. Also, details of the review timetable were given at our initial briefing meetings with chief officers, Group Leaders and members at the start of the review process. In respect of council size, as mentioned above, and in our *Guidance* from the Electoral Commission, we consider each local authority area on its merits, and do not take into account council sizes between authorities of similar types and populations. In determining the appropriate ward patterns we do not take into account the likely effects on political representation, we do however seek to provide the correct allocation of the electors.

69 The Conservatives generally supported our draft recommendations. However, they proposed amendments across the borough, citing the need to adjust the number of electors in view of future building developments to be completed up to ten years from 2001. We received support for these various amendments in the submissions of two MEPs, David Sumberg and Sir Robert Atkins, and 82 local residents who also stated that they generally supported the draft recommendations.

70 The Conservatives stated that they considered the proposed Davyhulme East and Bucklow-St Martins wards to be too small in the light of possible future building developments. They therefore proposed boundary amendments with the proposed Davyhulme West and The Avenue wards respectively.

71 The Conservatives also proposed amendments to the new Altrincham, Bowdon and Timperley wards, arguing these proposed wards were too small in comparison to the rest of the borough.

72 Our recommendations are based on achieving a balance between the statutory criteria through the five-year period from 2001 up to 2006. Only developments within this period can be considered for the purpose of this review. We therefore have not been convinced by arguments in respect of proposed wards being too small or the Conservative arguments regarding community identity. We therefore do not propose adopting these amendments.

73 We also considered the representations concerning the proposed Hale Barns and Village wards. We noted the representations of the three Liberal Democrat councillors proposing an amended Village ward that would include the area south of Ridgeway road along to Timperley Brook in the south. However we considered that this proposal would not provide a good balance of the statutory criteria within the neighbouring wards and therefore we do not propose to adopt it. We also looked at other similar proposals supplied for this area in the Borough Council's two options. However, having considered all these variations, we are of the view that our draft recommendations for the south east of the borough provides the best ward pattern available and therefore we propose confirming our draft recommendations as final.

74 The draft recommendations have been reviewed in the light of further evidence and the representations received during Stage Three. In the light of all the submissions received during Stage Three and the support for our draft recommendations in various areas, we propose confirming the majority of our draft recommendations as final, with two modifications in the light of the representation we received. We noted the opposition to the proposals for the boundary between the proposed Davyhulme East and Urmston wards and therefore propose modifying the ward boundary between the new Davyhulme East and Urmston wards to better reflect grounds community identity. In the light of four submissions received in respect of renaming The Avenue ward, we also propose renaming this ward St Mary's ward to better reflect community identity.

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

- a) Davyhulme East, Davyhulme West, Flixton and Urmston wards (page 27)
- b) Clifford, Longford, Park, Stretford and Talbot wards (page 30)
- c) Brooklands, Priory and Sale Moor wards (pages 32)
- d) Bucklow, Mersey St Mary's and St Martins wards (page 34)
- e) Altrincham, Bowdon and Broadheath wards (page 36)
- f) Hale, Timperley and Village wards (pages 39)

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

## Davyhulme East, Davyhulme West, Flixton and Urmston wards

77 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.

78 At Stage One the Borough Council proposed that this area be covered by four wards with the proposed Davyhulme East, Davyhulme West, Flixton and Urmston wards.

79 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.

80 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.

81 The Conservatives proposed that this area be covered by the proposed Davyhulme East, Davyhulme West, Flixton and Urmston wards. Their proposed Davyhulme East ward boundary followed Bridgewater Canal before joining the existing boundary on the A5081 until it reached 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 reached Hayeswater Road. The proposed ward would share its western boundary with the proposed Davyhulme West ward. Their proposed Davyhulme West ward followed the existing ward boundary but departed from the existing boundary in the east. The proposed eastern boundary followed Moorside Road, Hayeswater Road, Bedford Road and Davyhulme Road before rejoining the original boundary at Patterdale Avenue.

82 The proposed Flixton ward followed the existing ward boundary but departed from the existing boundary in the east. The proposed eastern boundary followed the existing Malvern Avenue/ Chassen Road boundary until it reached the railway line where it ran eastward until it reached the rear of properties west of Longfield Avenue. From here, the proposed boundary ran south to the rear of properties on Longfield Avenue and to the rear of properties on Cumberland Road then on to Old Eea Brook. 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.

83 Two local councillors considered existing wards in this area to be natural wards that 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.

84 Having considered all the representations received at Stage One, we proposed substantially adopting the Conservatives proposals 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 proposed 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 reached the existing boundary. The proposed boundary should also run to the rear of properties on the west side of Patterdale Avenue. We considered both these amendments to better respect local community identities because the Amersham Close and Bexley Close area looks eastward on a community basis as it is bounded by open ground to the west, north and south; the second proposed boundary change included Patterdale Avenue in a single ward.

85 We proposed 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 proposed 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 west side of Malvern Avenue as it would include all properties on Malvern Avenue in a single ward. We also proposed 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.

86 We considered 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.

87 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.

88 At Stage Three the Borough Council objected to the draft recommendations. As mentioned previously, it proposed two alternative ward patterns with the Meadows and Sinderland options. These were both substantially different from the ward pattern we proposed. However having carefully considered these options we do not propose adopting either of them.

89 The Conservatives expressed support for the draft proposals for the Flixton and Urmston areas. However, they proposed transferring Bexley Close and Amersham Close from the proposed Davyhulme West ward to the proposed Davyhulme East ward on the basis of electorate projections beyond 2006. This proposal was supported by Councillor Reilly. As stated earlier, we are unable to consider any forecast electorates other than those five years from the existing electorate at 2001. Therefore we do not accept argumentation in respect of making amendments to offset a future possible developments beyond 2006.

90 Councillor Barker objected to the proposals for the boundary between the proposed Davyhulme West and Urmston wards. Councillor Adshead objected to the draft proposals for the Old Trafford, Firswood and Gorse Hill areas on grounds of community identity. He also objected to the proposed boundary between Davyhulme West and Urmston wards and proposed that the new Gorse Hill ward be renamed Park ward. Councillors Barker, Lloyd, Jarman and Stennet all objected to the proposals for the Firswood, Old Trafford, Urmston and Gorsehill areas. Councillor Clarke objected to the proposed boundary between Davyhulme West and

Urmston wards. We received 29 objections from local residents to the proposed boundary of the new Davyhulme West and Urmston wards, one of which contained a petition numbering 163 signatures objecting to the transfer of the area around Urmston Market out of the present Urmston ward. Two residents stated that they objected to the proposed Gorse Hill and Stretford wards. Three residents supported the draft recommendations but objected to the boundary between the proposed Davyhulme East and Urmston wards.

91 The Urmston Partnership objected to the proposed boundary between the new Davyhulme East and Urmston wards, stating that the proposed wards would have a detrimental effect on local businesses. We received a further 27 submissions objecting to the proposed boundary between these wards, including one petition numbering 163 signatures.

92 Having carefully noted the submissions relating to this area we have decided to endorse the majority of the draft recommendation for Davyhulme West and Flixton wards as we consider this would achieve reasonable electoral equality and has received some local support. However, in light of local objection to the division of the Urmston town centre area, we have decided to move away from our draft recommendations and modify the proposed boundary between Davyhulme East and Urmston wards to better reflect local identity. We propose that the boundary be amended to transfer that area bounded by Derby Road to the north, Railway Road to the south, Westbourne Road to the east and Crofts Bank Road to the west, from the new Davyhulme East ward to the new Urmston ward. This would involve the transfer of 269 electors and would retain good levels of electoral equality while still maintaining a viable ward pattern for the area.

93 Under our final 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 3%, 2%, 6% and 5% 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 1%, 4%, 4% and 3% by 2006.

## Clifford, Longford, Park, Stretford and Talbot wards

94 The existing wards of Clifford, Longford, Park, Stretford and Talbot 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.

95 The Borough Council proposed that this area be represented by four wards, namely Clifford, Manor, Stretford and Talbot wards.

96 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.

97 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.

98 The Conservatives proposed that this area be represented by four wards, Clifford, Gorse Hill, Longford and Stretford. They proposed that 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 reached the borough boundary. Their proposed Gorse Hill ward would followed the borough boundary in the north, its southern boundary followed 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 reached Talbot Road. The proposed boundary then followed Talbot Road, Chester Road, Davyhulme Road, Lyndhurst Road and Derbyshire Lane until it reached the rear of properties on Barkway Road. The boundary then ran westward along the railway line and turned north along the M60 and A5081 before following Bridgewater Canal until it reached the borough boundary.

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

100 Having considered all the representations received at Stage One we proposed 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.

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

102 We proposed 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 considered this to better reflect local communities and it also balance electoral variances owing to the other amendments made in adjoining wards. We 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 did not affect any electors.

103 We considered the Conservatives' proposals, subject to our amendments, respected local community identities and utilised good boundaries in this area. We noted the Borough Council's proposals in the area and considered them to have merit but in the light of local support for the Conservatives proposals and objections towards the Borough Council's proposals, we were content to substantially endorse the Conservatives' proposals as part of our draft recommendations.

104 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.

105 In response to the draft recommendations the Borough Council stated it supported the draft recommendations for this area in its Sinderland options, however it proposed that the new Gorse Hill ward be renamed Park ward.

106 The Conservatives stated they fully supported the draft proposals for the proposed Clifford, Longford, Stretford and Gorsehill wards.

107 Councillor Walsh opposed the draft recommendations for the proposed Gorse Hill ward. He stated that the regeneration needs of the Talbot and Clifford areas were quite specific from those of the Davyhulme area. He proposed that amendments should be made within the south of the borough and that the wards within the Stretford Area Board area should be treated separately. Lostock North Tenants and Residents Association objected to the splitting of the present Park ward; however it provided no alternative options. Six local residents stated they supported the draft recommendations for the proposed Longford ward. One resident stated support for the draft for this area generally.

108 We note that our proposals may have consequential effects on organisations around the borough. However we cannot look at areas in isolation and must conduct our review of local electoral arrangements in the light of our *Guidance* and balancing the statutory criteria. We have given careful consideration to the evidence and representations received for this area. However, we take the view that the draft recommendations retain the best balance between the statutory criteria. We noted objections to the proposed split of the current Park ward, but we consider that our draft proposals provided the most viable ward pattern for the north of the borough. We have therefore decided to endorse the draft recommendation for this area as final.

109 Under our final recommendations the number of electors per councillor would remain the same as at draft recommendations

## Brooklands, Priory and Sale Moor wards

110 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.

111 The Borough Council proposed that this area be represented by three wards; the proposed Brooklands, Priory and Sale Moor wards. 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 and then on to the A6144. 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.

112 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.

113 The Conservatives proposed that this area be represented by three wards the proposed Brooklands, Priory and Sale Moor. Their proposed Sale Moor ward followed 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 reached the existing boundary. Their proposed Priory ward followed the existing ward boundary apart from one amendment to its eastern boundary. The proposed boundary followed the rear of properties north of the B5166, Holly Grove and Clarendon Road until it reached the existing boundary. The Conservatives proposed retaining Brooklands ward on its existing boundaries. 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 were content with the status quo in this area.

114 Having considered all the representations received at Stage One we proposed adopting the Conservatives' proposals in this area without amendment. We considered these 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. We considered the Borough Council's scheme to have merit and adopted its proposed boundaries where similar to those 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 being based on a 60-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.

115 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.

116 In response to the draft recommendations, the Borough Council supported the draft recommendations for this area within its second option.

117 The Conservatives stated that they fully supported the draft proposals for Brooklands, Priory and Sale Moor wards.

118 Wythenshawe & Sale East Conservative Association expressed support for the draft recommendations. It particularly supported the retention of the A56 road as the boundary between the proposed Priory and Brooklands wards and the proposed Ashton-on Mersey and Avenue wards. It also supported the retention of the proposed Brooklands ward within its present boundaries.

119 We have given careful consideration to the evidence and representations received for this area, given the level of support for the draft recommendations, we are confirming them as final.

120 Under our final recommendations the number of electors per councillor would remain the same as at draft recommendations.

## Bucklow, Mersey St Mary's and St Martins wards

121 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.

122 The Borough Council proposed that this area be represented by three wards; the proposed Avenue, Bucklow-St Martins and Sale West wards. The Borough Council's proposed Avenue ward boundary would follow the A56, 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 the A56. Its proposed Bucklow-St Martins ward would contain the parishes of Carrington, Dunham Massey, Partington and Warburton and 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.

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

124 The Conservatives proposed that this area be represented by three wards; the proposed Ashton upon Mersey, Bucklow-St Martins and The Avenue wards. The 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 followed Harboro Way, Harboro Road and Carrington Lane while its western boundary followed Hawthorn Lane and north on the A6144 (M) until it reached the river.

125 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 reached Brayton Avenue. The boundary then ran north on Brayton Avenue and the A6144 (M) until it reached the river. The Conservatives proposed The Avenue ward share its northern and eastern boundary with the proposed Ashton upon Mersey and Bucklow-St Martins wards, as previously detailed. The proposed ward's southern boundary followed 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 then followed Manor Avenue and Woodhouse Lane until it reached the A56. Its eastern boundary followed the A56.

126 We received six submissions from local residents objecting to the Borough Council's proposal to link Dunham and Warburton parishes with Partington parish. They considered aforementioned parishes to have more common and historical links with Bowdon. One local resident objected to the proposed The Avenue ward name. Having considered all the representations received at Stage One we proposed 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.

127 We proposed that the boundary between the new Bucklow-St Martins and The Avenue ward should follow Brayton Avenue and Tavistock Road until it reached Manor Avenue, as we considered 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. We considered this to better reflect local community identities

as the urban area transferred looks eastward and has its access into the proposed The Avenue ward.

128 We proposed 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 considered this improved electoral equality given the amendments made to adjoining wards and provided a better reflection of local community identities.

129 We considered the Conservatives' proposed Bucklow-St Martins ward, subject to our amendments, to provide the best balance between the statutory criteria as it achieved good electoral equality and separated the rural parishes, which reflected local opinion. We did not consider that the Borough Council's proposed Bucklow-St Martins ward offered a better alternative, 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.

130 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 is expected to remain constant over the next five years.

131 As stated above, the Borough Council proposed two alternative borough-wide schemes based on a council size of 63 members called the Meadows and Sinderland options for the west of the borough. In the first instance, we take the view that the Mersey provides a strong boundary, and are not convinced that placing part of the Flixton area with the Bucklow area south of the Mersey provides a better ward pattern than the draft recommendations. In the second instance we have not been convinced that the links between Broadheath and the Woodhouses areas and Partington parish, particularly along Sinderland Lane through a proposed Bowdon ward would provide suitable ward pattern. We have therefore taken the view that these proposals would not secure a better balance of the statutory criteria than the draft proposals. We therefore do not propose adopting these amendments.

132 The Conservatives supported the draft proposals for Ashton upon Mersey. However, they expressed concern that the population in the Partington area is in decline and that the variance of 5% may worsen. They proposed transferring part of the Heatherway Estate, an area around Firtree Avenue, into the new Bucklow-St Martins ward. Due to this loss of electors the Conservatives further proposed the retention of the area around Cranmere Drive and Blachthorn Drive in the proposed The Avenue ward. We noted this proposal received some local support. However, as stated above, we could not consider amendments that are based on forecasts of electorate figures beyond the five-year period from 2001. We therefore do not propose adopting these amendments.

133 Councillors Platt and Keeley objected to the draft proposals for the proposed Bucklow-St Martins ward, stating that the Bucklow area shared more affinity with the Flixton area. Councillor Keeley further stated she preferred the Borough Council's initial proposals. Councillor Gray and Councillor Brotherton objected to the draft proposals for Bucklow-St Martin's ward, stating that transferring part of the Sale estates would have a detrimental effect on regeneration in the area. Councillor Brotherton supported proposals linking Partington and Carrington parishes with the Flixton area.

134 Ashton & Sale History Society proposed two alternative names for the proposed The Avenue ward, either St Mary's or Ashton Upon Mersey South. Three residents proposed that wards around the present Ashton-on-Mersey area be named Ashton-on-Mersey North and Ashton-on-Mersey South. Priory Ward Liberal Democrats made identical proposals.

135 One resident objected to the proposed transfer of part of the present Ashton on Mersey ward into the new Bucklow-St Martins ward. Two residents objected to the proposal for Woodhouse Farm on Woodhouse Lane being placed in the proposed The Avenue ward.

136 Having carefully considered all the proposed amendments for this area, we do not consider that they provide a better reflection of the statutory criteria than our draft proposals. We therefore do not propose making any boundary changes to the draft recommendations in this area. However, in light of local responses we do propose renaming The Avenue ward St Mary's ward to better reflect community identity.

137 Under our final 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 St Mary's 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 St Mary's wards is expected to remain constant over the next five years.

## Altrincham, Bowdon and Broadheath wards

138 The existing wards of Altrincham, Bowdon and Broadheath cover the south-western area of the borough and each ward. 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 that includes the parishes of Dunham Massey and Warburton is expected to remain constant over the next five years.

139 The Borough Council proposed that this area be represented the proposed Altrincham-Broadheath and Bowdon wards. It proposed that the proposed Altrincham-Broadheath and Bowden wards share a northern boundary.

140 The Conservatives proposed that this area be represented by three wards; the proposed Altrincham, Broadheath and Bowdon wards. Their proposed Altrincham ward's 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 reached Altrincham Grammar School grounds. The boundary cross would the school grounds and follow the existing ward boundary until it reaches Delamer Road where it then follows 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.

141 The Conservatives' proposed Broadheath ward shared its southern boundary with the proposed Altrincham ward while its western boundary would be that of Dunham Massey parish. Its northern boundary partially followed Carrington parish boundary until it reached Moss Road. The boundary then followed Moss Road, to the rear of properties on Haydock Avenue, until it reached 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, and the A56 before rejoining Sinderland Brook. The proposed eastern boundary followed the existing

ward boundary but excluded the area bounded by Brookway, Brook Lane and Moss Lane which was to be transferred to the proposed Timperley ward.

142 The proposed Bowdon ward included the parishes of Dunham Massey and Warburton and also contained an unparished part of Trafford. Its eastern boundary followed Byron Street, Marlborough Road and South Downs Road. The boundary finally ran 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.

143 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.

144 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.

145 Having considered all the representations received at Stage One we proposed 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. We proposed 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 reached the existing boundary. We considered this boundary to be more identifiable and better respect 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 considered this amendment to better reflect local communities and improve internal links and access routes within the proposed Broadheath ward.

146 The proposed amendment between the proposed Altrincham and Bowdon wards saw the area bounded by Oldfield Lane, Oldfield Road, Bridgewater Canal and Seamon's Road transferred from Bowdon ward to Altrincham ward as we considered that this area would look eastward for community issues.

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

148 We noted 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, considered the Conservatives' proposals to provide the best balance between the statutory criteria in this area. In light of the local support for the Conservatives' proposals we proposed to substantially adopt these proposals as part of our draft recommendations.

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

150 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 (containing the parishes of Dunham Massey and Warburton) 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.

151 As stated previously, the Borough Council proposed two alternative borough-wide schemes based on a council size of 63 members. These were the Meadows and Sinderland options for the west of the borough. We have taken the view that these proposals do not secure a better balance of the statutory criteria than the draft proposals. Having considered all the representations received at Stage Three we do not propose adopting these amendments.

152 The Conservatives stated that in terms of community identity they were concerned about the placement of the Ash Grove area in the proposed Broadheath ward. They proposed transferring that area around Park Road and Beresford Close to the new Broadheath ward. The Conservatives proposed that these amendments would be offset by the proposed Brookside Farm development.

153 The Conservatives also considered the Altrincham and Bowdon wards too small in terms of the number of electorate. They therefore proposed transferring part of the Broadheath area into the proposed Altrincham ward and the Oldfield Brow estate into the new Bowdon ward. We noted the support for these amendments from other submissions. However, we were not convinced by the argumentation in terms of community identity and as mentioned previously we do not take into account forecasts beyond the five-year period from 2001. We therefore do not intend to adopt these amendments.

154 Graham Brady MP supported the Conservatives' proposals for this area. He also commented on results of this year's local election results. However, this is a matter we cannot take into consideration during the course of this review.

155 Warburton Parish Council expressed support for the draft recommendations to keep the parish within the new Bowdon ward. Partington Town Council objected to the draft recommendations and stated that it would prefer to be placed in a ward with the Flixton area. Alternatively it stated it preferred to be placed with the Broadheath and Altrincham areas along the Sinderland Road. Councillor Faulkner objected to the draft recommendations and submitted a petition of 333 signatures objecting to the placement of part of the Sale area with Partington parish in the proposed Bowdon ward. We received a further eight objections from local residents to the linking of Partington with parts of the Sale area.

156 The Community Association Partington objected to proposals for a new Sinderland ward. It did however support proposals linking the Flixton area with the parishes of Partington and Carrington.

157 Four residents expressed support for the retention of Dunham Massey and Warburton parishes within the proposed Bowdon ward. One resident expressed support for the proposed Timperley ward. Two residents stated that they approved of the transfer of the Oldfield Brow estate into the proposed Bowdon ward. Two residents stated that they considered the proposed Altrincham and Bowden wards to be too small.

158 Having carefully considered all the proposed amendments for this area we do not consider that they provide a better reflection than our proposals. We therefore propose confirming our draft recommendations for this area as final.

159 Under our final recommendations the number of electors per councillor would remain the same as at draft recommendations.

## Hale, Timperley and Village wards

160 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.

161 The Borough Council proposed that this area be represented by four wards the proposed Hale, Hale Barns, Timperley and Village wards. It 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.

162 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 generally follow the existing ward 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.

163 The Conservatives' proposed that this area be represented by four wards the proposed Hale Barns, Hale Central, Timperley and Village wards. They 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 ran to the west of Bankhall Farm until it reaches the borough boundary.

164 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's 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. 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.

165 Five local residents objected to the Borough Council's proposals for the 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.

166 Having considered all the representations received at Stage One we proposed substantially adopting the Conservatives' proposals 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.

167 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. We considered the Conservatives' scheme to respect local communities because their proposed wards centred around the natural communities such as Hale and Timperley.

168 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.

169 In response to the draft recommendations the Borough Council proposed two alternative ward patterns based on the Meadows and Sinderland options in the west of the borough. In the Sinderland option it proposed that the boundary for the new Timperley ward follow the current ward except that the southern end be absorbed into a new Hale Central ward. Having carefully considered these options we do not consider that they provide a better balance of the statutory criteria than the draft proposals, we therefore do not propose adopting either of these proposals.

170 The Conservatives stated they supported the proposed Hale Barns, Hale Central and Village wards, particularly in terms of community identity. They expressed support for the proposed Timperley ward, but proposed that in light of their own proposals for Broadheath that a pre-emptive amendment should be made, transferring the area bounded by the railway line in the north and Deansgate Lane to the southwest, to the new Timperley ward to prevent it becoming too small. As stated above, we do not take into account forecasts beyond the five-year period from 2001. We therefore do not intend to adopt this amendment.

171 Councillors Atkins, Hepburn and Trafford stated they supported the draft recommendations. Councillor Fishwick objected to the transfer of electors from the present Timperley Village, around Timperley Parish Church, Cloverley Primary School and the Broomwood Estate to the new Hale ward. He also submitted a petition of 59 signatures supporting this objection. We also received a further petition containing 83 similar objections to the draft proposals for this area.

172 Timperley Brook District Residents Association objected to the draft proposals for the Timperley Brook area. It stated it had more affinity with Timperley ward than the proposed Hales Barns ward. It further stated that Timperley Brook was a natural boundary.

173 Eight residents expressed support for the proposed Hale Barns and Hale Central wards. One resident expressed support for the proposed Village ward.

174 As stated above three Liberal Democrat members, Councillors Ackroyd, Bowker and Fishwick submitted identical proposals for an amended Village ward. They proposed the west of the ward be bounded by Cloverley Drive, Stockport Road and Meyes Lane, while in the south they proposed Timperley Brook be used as the boundary with a new Hales Barns ward.

175 However we cannot look at an area in isolation. In considering that this proposal we noted that while the level of electoral equality in the proposed Village ward would be good, it would have an adverse effect on the proposed Hale Barns ward with its electoral variance being 13% by 2006. In the light of the need to provide an effective ward pattern at the south-eastern edge of the borough, we remain of the view that the proposed pattern of Hale Barns, Hale Central and Village wards provides the best balance of the statutory criteria available. We also looked at other similar proposals for this area supplied in the Borough Council's two options. However, having considered all these variations, we are of the view that our draft recommendations for the south east of the borough still provides the best ward pattern available.

176 Having carefully considered all the proposed amendments for this area we do not consider that they provide a better reflection of the draft recommendations than our draft proposals. We therefore do not propose moving away from our draft recommendations in this area.

177 Under our final recommendations the number of electors per councillor would remain the same as at draft recommendations.

## Electoral cycle

178 Under section 7(3) of the Local Government Act 1972, all Metropolitan borough/cities have a system of elections by thirds.

## Conclusions

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

- we propose amending the boundary between the proposed Davyhumle East and Urmston ward;
- we propose renaming The Avenue ward St Mary's ward.

180 We conclude that in Trafford:

- a council of 63 members should be retained;
- 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 only one ward, Brooklands, should retain its existing boundaries.

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

Table 4: Comparison of current and recommended electoral arrangements

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

182 As Table 4 shows, our recommendations would result in a reduction in the number of wards with an electoral variance of more than 10% from eight to zero, with no wards varying by more than 20% from the borough average. This level of electoral equality would improve further by 2006, with no wards forecast to have an electoral variance of more than 7%.

*Final 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 the large maps.

## Parish and town council electoral arrangements

183 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: Final recommendations for Trafford*



## 6 What happens next?

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

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

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

**The Secretary  
The Electoral Commission  
Trevelyan House  
Great Peter Street  
London SW1P 2HW**

**Fax: 020 7271 0667**

**Email: [implementation@electoralcommission.org.uk](mailto:implementation@electoralcommission.org.uk)  
(This address should only be used for this purpose)**



# Appendix A

## Final 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 wards for Trafford.

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

*Map A1: Final recommendations for Trafford: Key map*

## Appendix B

# Guide to interpreting the first draft of the electoral change Order

### **Preamble**

This describes the process by which the Order will be made, and under which powers. Text in square brackets will be removed if The Electoral Commission decide not to modify the Final recommendations.

### **Citation and commencement**

This establishes the name of the Order and when it will come into force.

### **Interpretation**

This defines terms that are used in the Order.

### **Wards of the borough of Trafford**

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

### **Elections of the council of the borough of Trafford**

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

### **Maps**

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

### **Electoral registers**

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

### **Revocation**

This revokes the Order that defines the existing wards, with the exception of the article that established the system of election by thirds.

### **Explanatory Note**

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



# Appendix C

## First draft of electoral change Order for Trafford

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### STATUTORY INSTRUMENTS

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**2003 No.**

## **LOCAL GOVERNMENT, ENGLAND**

### **The Borough of Trafford (Electoral Changes) Order 2003**

*Made* - - - - *2003*

*Coming into force in accordance with article 1(2)*

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

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

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

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

#### **Citation and commencement**

- 1.—(1) This Order may be cited as the Borough of Trafford (Electoral Changes) Order 2003.
- (2) This Order shall come into force –
  - (a) for the purpose of proceedings preliminary or relating to any election to be held on the ordinary day of election of councillors in 2004, on the day after that on which it is made;

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- (a) The Boundary Committee for England is a committee of the Electoral Commission, established by the Electoral Commission in accordance with section 14 of the Political Parties, Elections and Referendums Act 2000 (c.41). The Local Government Commission for England (Transfer of Functions) Order 2001 (S.I. 2001/3962) transferred to the Electoral Commission the functions of the Local Government Commission for England.
- (b) 1992 c.19. This section has been amended by S.I. 2001/3962.
- (c) The Electoral Commission was established by the Political Parties, Elections and Referendums Act 2000 (c.41). The functions of the Secretary of State, under sections 13 to 15 and 17 of the Local Government Act 1992 (c.19), to the extent that they relate to electoral changes within the meaning of that Act, were transferred with modifications to the Electoral Commission on 1st April 2002 (S.I. 2001/3962).
- (d) The metropolitan district of Trafford has the status of a borough.
- (e) This section has been amended by S.I. 2001/3962 and also otherwise in ways not relevant to this Order.
- (f) This section has been amended by S.I. 2001/3962.

(b) for all other purposes, on the ordinary day of election of councillors in 2004.

## **Interpretation**

2. In this Order –

“borough” means the borough of Trafford;

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

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

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

## **Wards of the borough of Trafford**

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

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

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

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

## **Elections of the council of the borough of Trafford**

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

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

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

(4) Of the councillors elected in 2004 –

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

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

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

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

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

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(a) See the Borough of Trafford (Electoral Arrangements) Order 1979 (S.I. 1979/1028).

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

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

## Maps

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

## Electoral registers

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

## Revocation

7. The Borough of Trafford (Electoral Arrangements) Order 1979(b) is revoked, save for article 8.

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

Chairman of the Commission

Secretary to the Commission

## SCHEDULE

article 3

### NAMES OF WARDS

Altrincham	Davyhulme East	Priory
Ashton upon Mersey	Davyhulme West	St Mary's
Bowdon	Flixton	Sale Moor
Broadheath	Gorse Hill	Stretford
Brooklands	Hale Barns	Timperley
Bucklow-St Martins	Hale Central	Urmston
Clifford	Longford	Village

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

(b) S.I.1979/1028.

## **EXPLANATORY NOTE**

*(This note is not part of the Order)*

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

The modifications are *indicate the modifications*.

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

Article 3 abolishes the existing wards of the borough and provides for the creation of 21 new wards. That article and the Schedule also make provision for the names and areas of, and numbers of councillors for, the new wards.

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

Article 6 obliges the Electoral Registration Officer to make any necessary amendments to the electoral register to reflect the new electoral arrangements.

Article 7 revokes the Borough of Trafford (Electoral Arrangements) Order 1979, with the exception of article 8.

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