

LOCAL  
GOVERNMENT  
COMMISSION  
FOR ENGLAND

FINAL  
RECOMMENDATIONS  
ON THE FUTURE  
ELECTORAL  
ARRANGEMENTS FOR  
GREENWICH

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

*January 2000*

# LOCAL GOVERNMENT COMMISSION FOR ENGLAND

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

Members of the Commission are:

Professor Malcolm Grant (Chairman)

Professor Michael Clarke (Deputy Chairman)

Peter Brokenshire

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Barbara Stephens (Chief Executive)

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# CONTENTS

	page
LETTER TO THE SECRETARY OF STATE	<i>v</i>
SUMMARY	<i>vii</i>
1 INTRODUCTION	<i>1</i>
2 CURRENT ELECTORAL ARRANGEMENTS	<i>3</i>
3 DRAFT RECOMMENDATIONS	<i>7</i>
4 RESPONSES TO CONSULTATION	<i>9</i>
5 ANALYSIS AND FINAL RECOMMENDATIONS	<i>11</i>
6 NEXT STEPS	<i>29</i>
APPENDIX	
A Draft Recommendations for Greenwich (August 1999)	<i>31</i>

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





## Local Government Commission for England

25 January 2000

Dear Secretary of State

On 9 February 1999 the Commission began a periodic electoral review of Greenwich under the Local Government Act 1992. We published our draft recommendations in August 1999 and undertook a ten-week period of consultation.

We have now prepared our final recommendations in the light of the consultation. We have substantially confirmed our draft recommendations, although some modifications have been made (see paragraphs 148-149) in the light of further evidence. This report sets out our final recommendations for changes to electoral arrangements in Greenwich.

We recommend that Greenwich Borough Council should be served by 51 councillors representing 17 wards, and that changes should be made to ward boundaries in order to improve electoral equality, having regard to the statutory criteria.

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

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

Yours sincerely

PROFESSOR MALCOLM GRANT  
Chairman



# SUMMARY

The Commission began a review of Greenwich on 9 February 1999. We published our draft recommendations for electoral arrangements on 3 August 1999, after which we undertook a ten-week period of consultation.

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

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

- **in six of the 36 wards the number of electors represented by each councillor varies by more than 10 per cent from the average for the borough;**
- **by 2004 electoral equality shows no overall improvement, with the number of electors per councillor forecast to vary by more than 10 per cent from the average in 12 wards, and by more than 20 per cent in four wards.**

Our main final recommendations for future electoral arrangements (Figures 1 and 2 and paragraphs 148-149) are that:

- **Greenwich Borough Council should be served by 51 councillors, compared to 62 at present;**
- **there should be 17 wards, 19 fewer than at present, which would involve changes to the boundaries of all of the existing wards.**

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

- **In 15 of the 17 wards the number of electors**

**per councillor would vary by no more than 10 per cent from the borough average.**

- **This level of electoral equality is forecast to improve further, with the number of electors per councillor in all wards expected to vary by no more than 1 per cent from the average for the borough in 2004.**

All further correspondence on these recommendations and the matters discussed in this report should be addressed to the Secretary of State for the Environment, Transport and the Regions, who will not make an order implementing the Commission's recommendations before 7 March 2000:

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

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

<b>Ward name</b>	<b>Number of councillors</b>	<b>Constituent areas (existing wards)</b>
1 Abbey Wood	3	Abbey Wood ward; Eynsham ward (part)
2 Blackheath Parks	3	Blackheath ward (part); Middle Park ward (part); Sutcliffe ward (part); Tarn ward (part)
3 Blackheath Westcombe	3	Blackheath ward (part); Ferrier ward (part); Vanbrugh ward (part)
4 Charlton	3	Charlton ward (part); Hornfair ward (part); Rectory Field ward (part); Woolwich Common ward (part)
5 Coldharbour	3	Coldharbour ward; New Eltham ward (part); Tarn ward (part)
6 Eltham North	3	Deansfield ward; Eltham Park ward (part); Sherard ward (part); Well Hall ward (part)
7 Eltham South	3	Avery Hill ward; Eltham Park ward (part); Middle Park ward (part); New Eltham ward (part); Tarn ward (part); Palace ward
8 Eltham West	3	Ferrier ward (part); Kidbrooke ward (part); Sherard ward (part); Sutcliffe ward (part); Well Hall ward (part)
9 Greenwich Town	3	St Alfege ward (part); Vanbrugh ward (part); West ward
10 Griffin	3	Arsenal ward (part); Burrage ward (part); Glyndon ward (part); Lakedale ward (part); Plumstead Common ward (part)
11 Kidbrooke with Hornfair	3	Hornfair ward (part); Kidbrooke ward (part); Rectory Field (part); Well Hall ward (part)
12 Peninsula	3	Charlton ward (part); St Alfege ward (part); Trafalgar ward
13 Plumstead	3	Eynsham ward (part); Glyndon ward (part); Lakedale ward (part); Slade ward (part); St Nicholas Ward; Thamesmead Moorings ward (part)
14 Shooters Hill	3	Herbert ward (part); Plumstead Common ward (part); Shrewsbury ward (part); Slade ward (part); Woolwich Common ward (part)
15 Thamesmead Moorings	3	Glyndon ward (part); Thamesmead Moorings ward (part)
16 Woolwich Common	3	Arsenal ward (part); Burrage ward (part); Herbert ward (part); Nightingale ward; Plumstead Common ward (part); St Mary's ward (part); Woolwich Common ward (part)
17 Woolwich Riverside	3	Arsenal ward (part); Charlton ward (part); St Mary's ward (part); Woolwich Common ward (part)

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

Figure 2:  
The Commission's Final Recommendations for Greenwich

Ward name	Number of councillors	Electorate (1999)	Number of electors per councillor	Variance from average %	Electorate (2004)	Number of electors per councillor	Variance from average %
1 Abbey Wood	3	9,535	3,178	7	9,550	3,183	0
2 Blackheath Parks	3	9,569	3,190	7	9,561	3,187	0
3 Blackheath Westcombe	3	9,696	3,232	8	9,689	3,230	1
4 Charlton	3	9,581	3,194	7	9,579	3,193	0
5 Coldharbour	3	9,564	3,188	7	9,564	3,188	0
6 Eltham North	3	9,595	3,198	7	9,605	3,202	0
7 Eltham South	3	9,551	3,184	0	9,548	3,183	0
8 Eltham West	3	9,245	3,082	3	9,515	3,172	0
9 Greenwich Town	3	8,189	2,730	0	9,612	3,204	1
10 Griffin	3	9,058	3,019	1	9,488	3,163	-1
11 Kidbrooke with Hornfair	3	8,571	2,857	-4	9,565	3,188	0
12 Peninsula	3	7,151	2,384	-20	9,426	3,142	-1
13 Plumstead	3	9,469	3,156	6	9,472	3,157	-1
14 Shooters Hill	3	9,536	3,179	7	9,545	3,182	0
15 Thamesmead Moorings	3	6,295	2,098	-30	9,700	3,233	1
16 Woolwich Common	3	9,531	3,177	6	9,544	3,181	0
17 Woolwich Riverside	3	8,031	2,677	-10	9,604	3,201	0
<b>Totals</b>	<b>51</b>	<b>152,167</b>	—	—	<b>162,567</b>	—	—
<b>Averages</b>	—	—	<b>2,984</b>	—	—	<b>3,188</b>	—

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

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



# 1. INTRODUCTION

1 This report contains our final recommendations on the electoral arrangements for the London borough of Greenwich.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

## The London Boroughs

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

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

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

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

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

13 Following publication of the White Paper, we advised all authorities in our 1998/99 PER programme, including the London boroughs, that until any direction is received from the Secretary of State, the Commission would continue to maintain the approach to PERs as set out in the March 1998 Guidance. Nevertheless, we added that local authorities and other interested parties would no doubt wish to have regard to the Secretary of

State's intentions and legislative proposals in formulating electoral schemes as part of PERs of their areas. Our general experience has been that proposals for three-member ward patterns emerged from most areas in London.

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

## **The Review of Greenwich**

15 This is our first review of the electoral arrangements for Greenwich. The last such review was undertaken by our predecessor, the Local Government Boundary Commission (LGBC), which reported to the Secretary of State in July 1977 (Report No. 234).

16 This review was in four stages. Stage One began on 9 February 1999, when we wrote to Greenwich Borough Council inviting proposals for future electoral arrangements. We also notified the local authority associations, the Metropolitan Police, Members of Parliament and the Member of the European Parliament with constituency interests in the borough, and the headquarters of the main political parties. At the start of the review and following publication of our draft recommendations, we placed a notice in the local press, issued a press release and other publicity, and invited the Borough Council to publicise the review further. The closing date for receipt of representations was 4 May 1999. At Stage Two we considered all the representations received during Stage One and prepared our draft recommendations.

17 Stage Three began on 3 August 1999 with the publication of our report, *Draft Recommendations on the Future Electoral Arrangements for Greenwich*, and ended on 11 October 1999. Comments were sought on our preliminary conclusions. Finally, during Stage Four we reconsidered our draft recommendations in the light of the Stage Three consultation and now publish our final recommendations.

## 2. CURRENT ELECTORAL ARRANGEMENTS

18 Greenwich covers an area of some 5,000 hectares, has a population of nearly 215,000, and is one of the 14 inner London boroughs. It is situated in the south-east of London and is bounded to the north by the River Thames. With seven miles of river frontage, Greenwich has the longest river embankment of all the London boroughs. The borough includes three main town centres –Greenwich, Woolwich and Eltham, and also encompasses all or parts of the areas of Charlton, Blackheath, Kidbrooke, Plumstead, Abbey Wood and New Eltham. The new town of Thamesmead is also partly in the borough, straddling Greenwich's eastern boundary with Bexley.

19 Greenwich is a borough of contrasts. Steeped in history, it contains some of Europe's finest historic buildings. Greenwich town centre, which is now a World Heritage Site, is a major tourist destination. The borough comprises many desirable residential areas, but at the same time there are many deprived areas with the characteristics and problems of the inner city. Indeed, the 1998 Index of Local Conditions shows Greenwich to be the eleventh most deprived local authority area in the country. Nineteen out of the existing 36 wards in Greenwich are within the highest 10 per cent of most deprived wards nationally.

20 Socially and culturally Greenwich is one of the most diverse local authority areas in London, with 16 per cent of the population from ethnic minorities. These are mainly Indian, Irish, Black Caribbean and Black African. Other significant ethnic groups in the borough are from Pakistan, Bangladesh, China and other Asian (including Vietnamese) origin.

21 Between 1981 and 1991 the number of jobs in Greenwich declined by 13 per cent, but this trend has slowly been reversed, with an increase of 10 per cent in the number of jobs in the borough between 1995 and 1996. Unemployment in Greenwich currently stands at 9.1 per cent. Over the next five years, approximately 6,000 new homes are due to

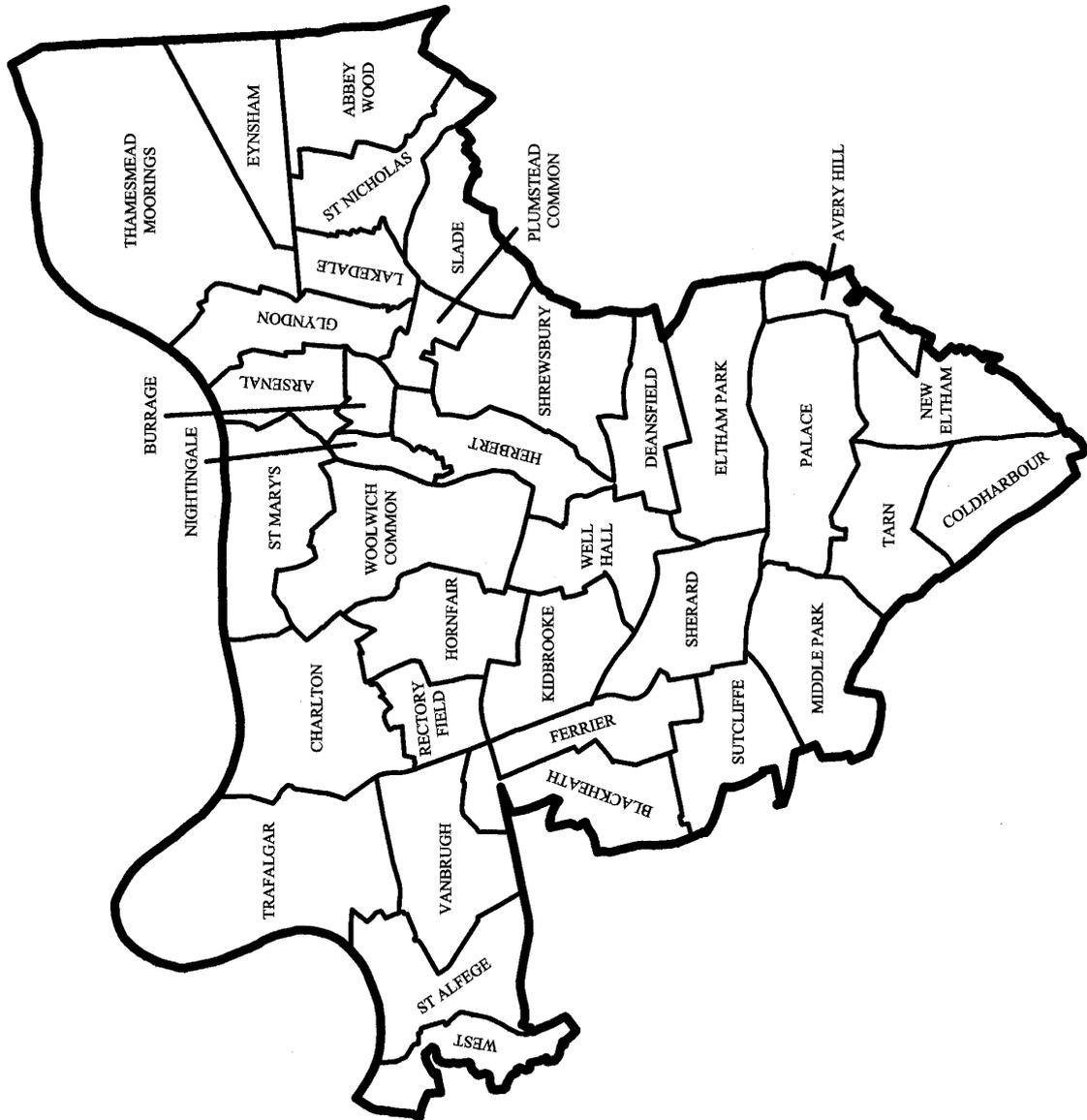
be constructed within the borough and the attraction of Greenwich as a visitor destination will be greatly strengthened. The Millennium Experience is expected to be the largest attraction of its kind ever in the UK. It is estimated that 'The Dome' will attract 12 million visitors to Greenwich in the year 2000, creating more than 10,000 jobs in direct on- and off-site employment. It is also likely to attract investment in tourism and leisure as well as increased trade across the business sector. The borough will also benefit substantially from improved transport links, such as the Jubilee Line and Docklands Light Railway extensions.

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

23 The electorate of the borough (February 1999) is 152,167. The Council currently has 62 councillors who are elected from 36 wards (Map 1 and Figure 3). Twenty six wards are each represented by two councillors while the other ten wards elect one councillor each. As in all London boroughs, the whole council is elected together every four years.

24 At present, each councillor represents an average of 2,454 electors, which the Borough Council forecasts would increase to 2,622 by the year 2004 if the present number of councillors is maintained. However, due to demographic and other changes since the last electoral review, the number of electors per councillor in six of the 36 wards varies by more than 10 per cent from the borough average, and in one ward by more than 20 per cent. The worst imbalance is in Palace ward where the councillor represents on average 42 per cent more electors than the borough average.

Map 1:  
Existing Wards in Greenwich



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Figure 3:  
Existing Electoral Arrangements

Ward name	Number of councillors	Electorate (1999)	Number of electors per councillor	Variance from average %	Electorate (2004)	Number of electors per councillor	Variance from average %
1 Abbey Wood	2	5,283	2,642	8	5,290	2,645	1
2 Arsenal	1	2,488	2,488	1	3,400	3,400	30
3 Avery Hill	1	2,466	2,466	0	2,470	2,470	-6
4 Blackheath	2	5,154	2,577	5	5,160	2,580	-2
5 Burrage	1	2,564	2,564	4	2,570	2,570	-2
6 Charlton	2	4,774	2,387	-3	4,780	2,390	-9
7 Coldharbour	2	4,420	2,210	-10	4,420	2,210	-16
8 Deansfield	1	2,622	2,622	7	2,620	2,620	0
9 Eltham Park	2	4,878	2,439	-1	4,880	2,440	-7
10 Eynsham	2	4,252	2,126	-13	4,260	2,130	-19
11 Ferrier	2	4,418	2,209	-10	4,420	2,210	-16
12 Glyndon	2	5,365	2,683	9	5,790	2,895	10
13 Herbert	2	4,989	2,495	2	5,000	2,500	-5
14 Hornfair	2	4,463	2,232	-9	4,470	2,235	-15
15 Kidbrooke	2	4,688	2,344	-4	4,690	2,345	-11
16 Lakedale	2	4,719	2,360	-4	4,720	2,360	-10
17 Middle Park	2	4,902	2,451	0	4,890	2,445	-7
18 New Eltham	2	5,249	2,625	7	5,250	2,625	0
19 Nightingale	1	2,618	2,618	7	2,620	2,620	0
20 Palace	1	3,478	3,478	42	3,470	3,470	32
21 Plumstead Common	1	2,778	2,778	13	2,780	2,780	6
22 Rectory Field	2	4,585	2,293	-7	4,580	2,290	-13
23 Sherard	2	5,138	2,569	5	5,400	2,700	3
24 Shrewsbury	1	2,399	2,399	-2	2,400	2,400	-8

*continued overleaf*

Figure 3 (continued):  
Existing Electoral Arrangements

Ward name	Number of councillors	Electorate (1999)	Number of electors per councillor	Variance from average %	Electorate (2004)	Number of electors per councillor	Variance from average %
25 Slade	2	4,990	2,495	2	5,000	2,500	-5
26 St Alfege	2	4,447	2,224	-9	4,760	2,380	-9
27 St Mary's	2	4,661	2,331	-5	5,330	2,665	2
28 St Nicholas	2	4,872	2,436	-1	4,870	2,435	-7
29 Sutcliffe	1	2,759	2,759	12	2,760	2,760	5
30 Tarn	1	2,430	2,430	-1	2,430	2,430	-7
31 Thamesmead Moorings	2	5,505	2,753	12	8,910	4,455	70
32 Trafalgar	2	4,939	2,470	1	7,207	3,604	37
33 Vanbrugh	2	4,778	2,389	-3	4,770	2,385	-9
34 Well Hall	2	5,172	2,586	5	6,170	3,085	18
35 West	2	4,538	2,269	-8	5,650	2,825	8
36 Woolwich Common	2	4,386	2,193	-11	4,380	2,190	-16
<b>Totals</b>	<b>62</b>	<b>152,167</b>	—	—	<b>162,567</b>	—	—
<b>Averages</b>	—	—	<b>2,454</b>	—	—	<b>2,622</b>	—

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

Note: The 'variance from average' column shows by how far, in percentage terms, the number of electors per councillor varies from the average for the borough. The minus symbol (-) denotes a lower than average number of electors. For example, in 1999, electors in Eynsham ward were relatively over-represented by 13 per cent, while electors in Palace ward were relatively under-represented by 42 per cent. Figures have been rounded to the nearest whole number.

### 3. DRAFT RECOMMENDATIONS

<sup>25</sup> During Stage One we received six representations. The Borough Council submitted three borough-wide schemes on behalf of the Conservative, Liberal Democrat and Labour Groups. The Greenwich & Woolwich Conservative Association also submitted a borough-wide scheme and we received submissions from the Eltham Conservative Association, the Blackheath Society and one councillor. 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 Greenwich*.

<sup>26</sup> Our draft recommendations were based on the Borough Council's scheme, which achieved improved electoral equality, provided good boundaries while having regard to the statutory criteria and proposed a pattern of entirely three-member wards. However, we moved away from the Borough Council's scheme in four areas, affecting eight wards. We proposed that:

- (a) Greenwich Borough Council should be served by 51 councillors;
- (b) there should be 17 wards, involving changes to the boundaries of all existing wards.

#### **Draft Recommendation**

Greenwich Borough Council should comprise 51 councillors serving 17 wards.

<sup>27</sup> Our proposals would have resulted in significant improvements in electoral equality, with the number of electors per councillor in 15 of the 17 wards varying by no more than 10 per cent from the borough average. This level of electoral equality was forecast to improve further, with all wards expected to vary by no more than 1 per cent from the borough average in 2004.



## 4. RESPONSES TO CONSULTATION

28 During the consultation on our draft recommendations report, 82 representations were received. A list of respondents is available on request from the Commission. All representations may be inspected at the offices of Greenwich Borough Council and the Commission, by appointment.

### **Greenwich Borough Council**

29 The Borough Council generally supported our draft recommendations and fully supported our recommendation for a pattern of three-member wards, to facilitate elections by thirds. It suggested a re-configuration of wards in Eltham and in the Blackheath area in order to unite the Blackheath Cator estate. The Council also suggested a few relatively minor boundary modifications to the some of the proposed wards and also put forward some alternative ward names.

### **Greenwich Borough Liberal Democrat Group**

30 The Liberal Democrat Group on the Borough Council also generally supported our draft recommendations and fully supported our recommendation for a pattern of three-member wards. It re-stated its preference for a 19-ward pattern, but stated it was “prepared to support our 17-ward option as the best alternative”. It rejected suggestions by the Labour Group that wards be created based on the Casterbridge and Ferrier council estates, and did not agree with the respondents who stated that the Cator estate should not be split between wards. It also suggested some alternative ward names.

### **Greenwich Borough Conservative Group**

31 The Conservative Group on the Borough Council rejected most of the Council’s criticisms of our draft recommendations, and generally supported our proposals. It agreed with the Council that it would be better for the Cator estate to be in a single ward, but disagreed with the

Council’s proposal and supported the argumentation in our draft recommendations report. The Conservative Group also suggested a few relatively minor modifications to some of the proposed ward boundaries.

### **Greenwich & Woolwich Conservative Association**

32 Greenwich & Woolwich Conservative Association stated that it supported the majority of our proposals, with the exception of the three-member wards in the Blackheath area. The Association proposed an alternative scheme for three two-member wards for the Blackheath area, on the grounds that this would be a better reflection of local communities.

### **Eltham Conservative Association**

33 Eltham Conservative Association stated that it welcomed the adoption of a 17 three-member ward scheme. It submitted general comments on a number of wards, and stated that the proposals for the wards of Shooters Hill and Kidbrooke with Hornfair ward provided clear and well-defined ward boundaries.

### **Woolwich Common Branch Labour Party**

34 Woolwich Common Branch Labour Party submitted proposals for boundary modifications to the draft recommendations in respect of the proposed Charlton, Woolwich Riverside, Woolwich Common and Kidbrooke with Hornfair wards.

### **St Nicholas Branch Labour Party**

35 St Nicholas Branch Labour Party stated that it generally supported the creation of a Plumstead ward. However, it opposed the proposals to include part of the existing Slade ward. It suggested

that instead of including part of the existing Slade ward in the new Plumstead ward, the rest of Lakedale ward and part of Glyndon ward should be included in the proposed Plumstead ward.

## Other Representations

<sup>36</sup> A further 75 representations were received in response to our draft recommendations from local residents, community groups, residents' associations and other interested parties. We received 66 submissions objecting to our proposals for the Blackheath area. These included 10 pro-forma letters, which directly supported the Greenwich & Woolwich Conservative Association's proposal for three two-member wards. Councillor Harris, representing Blackheath ward, supported our proposal to place polling district 9A with the rest of Blackheath, but along with Councillor Brighty, representing Blackheath ward, opposed the proposals which divided the Cator estate. The Blackheath Cator Estate Residents Limited, the Blackheath Cator Estate Neighbourhood Watch Association and the Blackheath Society also opposed the division of the Cator estate between two wards. We also received representations from 51 local residents opposed to our recommendation to divide the Blackheath area between the two proposed wards of Blackheath Westcombe and Blackheath South and Parks.

<sup>37</sup> Councillors Grant and Picton, representing Vanbrugh ward, proposed that Chrisp House (a block of flats on Maze Hill) and Tom Smith Close should be included within Blackheath Westcombe ward, asserting that both Chrisp House and Tom Smith Close were long established within the area, and divided from the rest of the proposed Peninsula ward by the Greenwich-Woolwich railway line. A local resident supported this view, and submitted a 12-signature petition.

<sup>38</sup> We received four submissions specifically relating to our proposals for the Eltham area. The Old Page Estate Residents' Association commented that our proposals divided the estate between two wards, which it argued was contrary to the Commission's desire to reflect local communities and identities. The Association, with support from the South Greenwich Forum, opposed the alternative ward name of Nesbit. It stated that, if adopted, this ward name would give no indication of the geographical location of the ward, and that

many people would not understand the connection. The Community Association of New Eltham (CANE) stated that the proposal to utilise the railway line as a boundary would divide the community of New Eltham. A local resident was disappointed that it was proposed to divide the area of New Eltham between two wards, and wished to see the area retained within a single ward.

<sup>39</sup> Councillor Hales, who represents Woolwich Common ward, stated that he welcomed changes to the existing boundaries in the area. However, he argued that the proposed boundaries did not, in his view, reflect local community lines and supported a similar warding pattern to that proposed by the Woolwich Common Branch Labour Party. A local resident also supported this view.

## 5. ANALYSIS AND FINAL RECOMMENDATIONS

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

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

42 It is therefore impractical to design an electoral scheme which provides for exactly the same number of electors per councillor in every ward of an authority. There must be a degree of flexibility. However, our approach, in the context of the statutory criteria, is that such flexibility must be kept to a minimum.

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

urban areas such as the London boroughs, our experience suggests that we would expect to achieve a high degree of electoral equality in all wards.

### **Electorate Forecasts**

44 At Stage One the Borough Council submitted electorate forecasts for the year 2004, projecting an increase in the electorate of around 7 per cent from 152,167 to 162,567 over the five-year period from 1999 to 2004. It expected most of the growth to be in Thamesmead Moorings and Trafalgar wards and other areas in the north of the borough. The Council estimated rates and locations of housing development with regard to the unitary development plan for the borough, and the expected rate of building over the five-year period and assumed occupancy rates. Advice from the Borough Council on the likely effect on electorates of changes to ward boundaries was obtained.

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

46 We received no comments on the Council's electorate forecasts during Stage Three, and remain satisfied that they represent the best estimates presently available.

### **Council Size**

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

48 Greenwich Borough Council currently has 62 members. At Stage One the Borough Council stated that “consensus was reached [between the three political groups] that it would be desirable to move away from the current mix of one- and two-member wards to a pattern of wards represented by

three councillors each. Consensus was also reached that there should be a reduced number of councillors overall in the light of political management reform.” However, no consensus was reached on the scale of the reduction in council size, as was evident from the Council’s submission of three different options, of 57, 51 and 45 councillors for our consideration.

49 Each of the three council size options was supported by a different political group represented on the Council. We were informed that the Labour Group preferred 45 councillors, the Conservative Group 51 councillors and the Liberal Democrat Group 57 councillors.

50 The Council supplied evidence that it had considered how all three of these possible council sizes could fit in with its proposals for a new political management structure. In a letter to us after the end of Stage One, the Council stated that “an exercise has been undertaken to look at the number of seats and allocations to each Party Group if the total number of councillors were reduced to 57, 51 or 45. In all cases, a formula could be applied (of reducing the number of member-level bodies, or the number of seats on them allocated to councillors, or a mixture of both) which would be consistent with the principles of efficient government, and a clearer and more transparent system of responsibilities.”

51 The Council’s 45-member scheme was strongly opposed by the Eltham Conservative Association, which argued that an overall reduction of 17 members, from 62 to 45, would leave the Council with too few councillors for an inner London borough such as Greenwich. Additionally, the Association argued that optimum electoral equality would not be secured under the 45-member scheme.

52 We noted the Council’s assurances that it has considered how a council size of 57, 51 or 45 councillors might operate and fit with its proposals for a new structure of political management. We are also aware that it undertook local consultations on a range of council size and ward pattern options; a marginal preference was expressed by respondents for a council size of 51 members.

53 In our draft recommendations report we considered the size and distribution of the electorate, the geography and other characteristics of the area, together with the representations

received. We concluded that the statutory criteria and the achievement of electoral equality would best be met by a council of 51 members.

54 At Stage Three, the Borough Council supported a council size of 51, but added that it would like to have seen more argumentation for 45 members. The Liberal Democrat Group retained a preference for 57 members, however fully supported our proposals for a council size of 51. Therefore, in view of the general support for a council of 51 members, which would facilitate a good electoral scheme, we are confirming our draft recommendation for a council size of 51 as final.

## **Electoral Arrangements**

55 During Stage One, we recognised the difficulties involved in producing a scheme for the borough which produces good electoral equality having regard to the five-year forecast of electors, secures effective and convenient local government, and reflects local community identities and interests. The Council’s 17-ward scheme, in our view, generally secured better levels of electoral equality than the other proposals put to us, having regard to the five-year electorate projections, particularly in the north of the borough.

56 The Greenwich & Woolwich Conservative Association proposed alternative warding arrangements for the west of the borough. The Association argued that its proposals would keep that part of the Blackheath community which lies within Greenwich borough together within one ward. (Blackheath is already split, as part of that community is within the London Borough of Lewisham). The Association also stated that its proposals would reflect Single Regeneration Budget (SRB) funding in parts of the Kidbrooke, Ferrier and Sherard wards. It went on to argue that its proposed wards better reflected the communities in the Millennium Dome area and the Charlton Village area, the latter of which has “vital arterial access to the Millennium Dome” and which is “a separable community from any other part of Greenwich and Woolwich with an identifiable centre in Charlton”. Finally, the Association stated that its proposals would involve minimal change to the Greenwich & Woolwich and Eltham Parliamentary constituencies.

57 We carefully considered the proposals and the arguments put forward by the Greenwich &

Woolwich Conservative Association. However, we concluded that the community interests of electors in the proposed Peninsula and Charlton wards would be better served under the Council's scheme. In our view, under the Council's proposed Peninsula ward, the area to the east is well connected to the Millennium Dome site, and the railway line provides a clear boundary in the south. In the Greenwich & Woolwich Conservative Association's proposed Charlton ward, Charlton Park and Charlton House were placed in separate wards, but these features were kept together in the Council's proposed Charlton ward.

58 The Association's proposed Blackheath ward was a good reflection of the Blackheath community, although the northern boundary proposed for that ward was not clear and definitive. It was argued that the proposed wards covering the Kidbrooke, Ferrier and Hornfair wards would reflect Single Regeneration Budget (SRB) funding. However, this reason alone did not provide sufficient justification for us to base our proposals on their scheme. The Association's proposed scheme provided a possible alternative in the western part of the borough, but not necessarily a better one than the 17-ward scheme put forward by the Council.

59 In our draft recommendations we sought to build on the Council's 51-member scheme, in order to put forward electoral arrangements which would achieve good electoral equality, having regard to the statutory criteria. Where it existed, we tried to reflect the consensus between different schemes for warding arrangements in particular parts of the borough. However, we made further modifications in order to put forward electoral arrangements which would maintain the level of improvement in electoral equality, while also seeking to reflect the statutory criteria. Inevitably, we could not reflect the preferences of all respondents in our draft recommendations.

60 In response to our draft recommendations report, many respondents supported our proposals. However, there was no general consensus about arrangements in the Blackheath area, in particular, the Cator estate. We acknowledge that the definition of a community area is a subjective issue. However, in our final recommendations we have given weight to those submissions which provided evidence in support of arguments over the location of proposed ward boundaries. We recognise that we were unable to achieve consensus on the most appropriate ward

boundaries for this area, with a number of differing views expressed at Stage Three. However, we have received some general support for our proposals in the Blackheath area, notably from the Conservative and Liberal Democrat Groups and Eltham Conservative Association, and we conclude that there is no evidence to suggest that our draft recommendations are fundamentally flawed.

61 We have reviewed our draft recommendations in the light of further evidence and the representations received during Stage Three, and judge that relatively minor modifications should be made to a number of our proposed boundaries. The following areas, based on existing wards, are considered in turn:

- (a) St Alfege, Trafalgar, Vanbrugh and West wards;
- (b) Charlton, Hornfair, Kidbrooke and Rectory Field wards;
- (c) Blackheath, Middle Park and Sutcliffe wards;
- (d) Ferrier and Sherard wards;
- (e) Arsenal, Burrage, Nightingale, St Mary's and Woolwich Common wards;
- (f) Abbey Wood, Eynsham, Glyndon and Thamesmead Moorings wards;
- (g) Herbert, Lakedale, Plumstead Common, Shrewsbury, Slade and St Nicholas wards;
- (h) Deansfield, Eltham Park and Well Hall wards;
- (i) Avery Hill, Coldharbour, New Eltham, Palace and Tarn wards.

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

### **St Alfege, Trafalgar, Vanbrugh and West wards**

63 These four wards lie in the north-west of the borough and are each represented by two councillors. St Alfege ward, Vanbrugh ward and West ward are over-represented by 9 per cent, 3 per cent and 8 per cent respectively (9 per cent below, 9 per cent below and 8 per cent above the borough average by 2004). Trafalgar ward is currently under-represented by 1 per cent based on the current 62-member council size. This is forecast to increase to 37 per cent by 2004 due to significant development in the area, mainly associated with the Millennium Dome complex.

64 At Stage One the Council proposed combining most of the existing St Alfege ward with West ward and part of Vanbrugh ward, with the remainder of Vanbrugh ward being included in its proposed Blackheath ward (discussed later in this report). The eastern boundary would run along Park Row, Park Vista and then along Maze Hill Road until the borough boundary. The Council argued that this ward comprises the historical and visitor heart of Greenwich and includes all the key elements of the Maritime Greenwich World Heritage Site. St Alfege's Church and the railway stations of Greenwich and Cutty Sark would also be included in the ward. It further stated that the part of St Alfege ward not included in this ward (polling district 2E, east of the Naval College) is "distinct from the town centre, and is an integral part of the East Greenwich community". This area would be included in the proposed Peninsula ward. The Council suggested the ward names of Greenwich Town or St Alfege. Under the Council's 51-member scheme the number of electors per councillor in this ward would equal the borough average, both initially and by 2004.

65 The Council also proposed a new Peninsula ward covering the existing Trafalgar ward and part of the existing Charlton ward. The eastern boundary would run along Anchor & Hope Lane until it meets Woolwich Road, where it would run eastwards and then south along Ransom Walk to the railway line. The proposed ward would retain the railway line as its southern boundary, with the addition of Tom Smith Close (near Maze Hill railway station), from the current Vanbrugh ward. The Council further proposed that the south-western boundary run along Park Row to include an area currently in the St Alfege ward. It argued that "this ward comprises the mixed residential, commercial and industrial communities of East Greenwich." Under the Council's 51-member scheme the number of electors per councillor would vary from the borough average by 19 per cent below, initially, but due to the development on the Millennium Dome site, would improve significantly, equalling the borough average by 2004.

66 We concluded that the Council's proposals for this area (based on a 51-member council size) provided good levels of electoral equality having regard to the five-year projections, and in our view took into account the identities of local communities. Although the proposals for the Peninsula ward included part of the existing

Charlton ward, we noted that the proposed ward's constituent areas are well connected by road. Therefore we were content to accept the Council's proposals for this area, and the proposed ward names of Greenwich Town and Peninsula.

67 In response to our draft recommendations, our proposals were supported by the Borough Council and the Conservative and Liberal Democrat Groups. However, the Borough Council proposed renaming the Greenwich Town ward. It contended that the overall area generally regarded as Greenwich would include parts of the proposed Peninsula and Blackheath Westcombe wards, and it proposed that the ward covering the western extremity of the borough should be named Greenwich West. Councillors Grant and Picton, representing Vanbrugh ward, commented on the proposals for Peninsula ward. They proposed that Chrisp House (a block of flats on Maze Hill) and Tom Smith Close should be included within Blackheath Westcombe ward, asserting that both Chrisp House and Tom Smith Close were long established within the area, and would be divided from the remainder of the proposed Peninsula ward by the Greenwich-Woolwich railway line. A local resident supported the views of Councillors Grant and Picton, and submitted a 12-signature petition requesting that the residents of Tom Smith Close be included in the proposed Blackheath Westcombe ward.

68 We have given careful consideration to the further evidence and representations received, and are convinced that there is justification for adopting the relatively minor boundary modification proposed between the wards of Peninsula and Blackheath Westcombe, affecting 124 electors. We do not propose adopting the alternative ward name proposed by the Council for Greenwich Town ward and confirm our draft recommendations as final for Greenwich Town and Peninsula wards (subject to the minor boundary modification). Under our final recommendations the electoral variances in Greenwich Town and Peninsula wards would initially equal the borough average and vary by 20 per cent (1 per cent and 1 per cent by 2004).

### **Charlton, Hornfair, Kidbrooke and Rectory Field wards**

69 These wards stretch from the north to the centre of the borough. The area is generally over-represented at present. The two-member Charlton

ward, situated in the north of the borough, currently has 3 per cent fewer electors per councillor than the borough average (9 per cent by 2004). Hornfair, Kidbrooke and Rectory Field wards each return two councillors and are 9 per cent, 4 per cent and 7 per cent below the borough average (15 per cent, 11 per cent and 13 per cent by 2004) respectively, under the current 62-member council size.

70 During Stage One the Council proposed a modified Charlton ward, based on the area of the existing Charlton ward, south of the railway line. The ward would extend further south to include most of the existing Rectory Field ward. The western boundary would run along the A102 road from the railway line until it meets Old Dover Road, where it would continue until it meets Reynolds Place. From here, the southern boundary would continue along the rear of the properties in Old Dover Road, along Indus Road, into Canberra Road, to include Charlton Park and Charlton House in the proposed ward. The Council further proposed that the eastern boundary run to the west of the Queen Elizabeth Hospital site, and then to the east of Charlton Cemetery (currently in Woolwich Common ward).

71 The Council argued that the proposed Charlton ward would contain “the predominantly residential areas of Charlton and the historical heart of Charlton focused on Charlton Village and Charlton House” and that the area and community contained in this proposal has a “strong and distinctive” identity. Under the Council’s proposal, the level of electoral equality would be 7 per cent above the borough average. However, this figure improves significantly over the next five years, equalling the borough average by 2004, based on the proposed 51-member council size.

72 The Council also proposed a new ward comprising part of the Hornfair ward, part of Rectory Field ward, parts of Herbert and Woolwich Common wards and most of the existing Kidbrooke ward. The western boundary would continue along the A102 road from the proposed Charlton ward, with the Rochester Way Relief Road providing part of the southern boundary. It would then continue along Bournbrook Road and run to the south and east of the cemetery and the Brook Hospital site. The Council suggested the ward name of Hornfair or Kidbrooke Hornfair.

73 The Council argued that the proposed ward was predominantly residential. It stated that, “although the ward straddles Shooters Hill Road this is not considered detrimental to the integrity of the ward as residents [on] both sides of that road use the parade of shops on the south side of Shooters Hill Road.” The proposal would result in the number of electors per councillor being 4 per cent below the borough average initially and equal to the average in 2004, based on a 51-member council size.

74 We were content that the proposed Charlton ward was a good reflection of the Charlton community and satisfactorily reflected the statutory criteria, whilst providing for improved levels of electoral equality. We were similarly content that the proposed Kidbrooke or Kidbrooke Hornfair ward reflected the residential nature of that area, generally utilised clear boundaries and resulted in an improved level of electoral equality. For consultation purposes, we proposed that the ward be named Kidbrooke with Hornfair.

75 However, we proposed a minor boundary modification between the Council’s proposed Charlton and Kidbrooke with Hornfair wards to better reflect local interests. We incorporated the Blackheath Bluecoat School and its grounds into the proposed Kidbrooke with Hornfair ward along with those few properties which face Old Dover Road. This proposal had no adverse affect on electoral equality but would, in our view, better reflect the interest of the local community along that part of Old Dover Road.

76 At Stage Three the Conservative and Liberal Democrat Groups on the Council and the Greenwich & Woolwich Conservative Association fully supported our proposals for Charlton and Kidbrooke with Hornfair wards. Eltham Conservative Association supported our proposals for Kidbrooke with Hornfair ward. The Borough Council recognised that our proposals for the Charlton ward reflected and unified the local community, but put forward an alternative warding arrangement to the proposed Kidbrooke with Hornfair ward, which was dependent on us accepting its proposals for the Blackheath area.

77 Woolwich Common Branch Labour Party submitted proposals for boundary modifications to the proposed Charlton and Kidbrooke with Hornfair wards. Councillor Hales, who represents Woolwich Common ward, stated that he welcomed

changes to the existing boundaries in the area. However, he argued that the proposed boundaries did not, in his view, reflect local community lines and supported a similar warding pattern to that proposed by Woolwich Common Branch Labour Party. A local resident also supported this view. The respondents proposed transferring electors in Kinveachy Gardens, Heathwood Gardens, Woodland Terrace, Barnby Close and Gallion Close from the proposed Woolwich Riverside ward to a modified Charlton ward. They contended that this area “better fits the postal code areas and primary school catchment patterns”.

78 With regard to the proposed Kidbrooke with Hornfair ward, the respondents proposed transferring Royal Herbert Pavilions and the Brook Hospital site to the Woolwich Common ward, and transferring electors from the Rectory Fields conservation area from the proposed Charlton ward to a modified Kidbrooke with Hornfair ward. Woolwich Common Branch Labour Party contended that these alterations would better reflect community identity and provide “greater representational coherence”.

79 We have carefully considered the representations received during the consultation period. However, we do not have regard to postal codes and school catchment areas during our deliberations. While some of the Woolwich Common Branch Labour Party proposals have merit, the level of electoral equality which would result does not improve on the draft recommendations, and some of the proposed boundaries appear somewhat arbitrary. We remain of the view that the draft proposals for the two wards in this area would provide the best electoral equality, have regard to well-defined boundaries and to communities. We therefore confirm our draft recommendations for Charlton and Kidbrooke with Hornfair ward as final. Under the final recommendations, Charlton and Kidbrooke with Hornfair wards would initially vary from the average number of electors per councillor by 7 per cent and 4 per cent respectively (both equal to the borough average by 2004).

### **Blackheath, Middle Park and Sutcliffe wards**

80 These three wards stretch along the western boundary of the borough. The two-member Blackheath ward is slightly under-represented by 5 per cent (2 per cent below the borough average by 2004). Middle Park ward also returns two

councillors and equals the borough average number of electors per councillor now (7 per cent below by 2004). The number of electors per councillor in the single-member Sutcliffe ward is 12 per cent above the average (5 per cent by 2004), under the current 62-member council size.

81 At Stage One, the Council proposed that the Blackheath ward be modified to include two polling districts (8A and 8B) of the three in existing Blackheath ward, most of the current Vanbrugh ward and part of Ferrier ward. The railway line would provide the proposed ward's northern boundary, with Blackheath Park road and the neighbouring sports grounds providing most of the southern boundary. The eastern boundary would be formed by the A102 road whilst the boundary to the west is the borough boundary.

82 The Council contended that the proposed Blackheath ward would comprise the Vanbrugh and Westcombe Park communities, and most of the Blackheath community, including part of Blackheath village. It further argued that although Shooters Hill Road is a busy roadway and may be regarded as a barrier between communities on either side, “it is considered preferable for the ward to cross this road rather than the A102 motorway into Charlton. This proposal maintains the ‘heathside’ character of the [present Blackheath] ward, a feature which does unite the communities north and south of Shooters Hill Road. A further advantage of this ward is that it unites the communities east and west of Kidbrooke Grove.” The proposal would result in the number of electors per councillor in the ward being 7 per cent above the average initially, forecast to improve significantly to equal the average by 2004 under a 51-member council size. It was proposed that the ward either retain the name ‘Blackheath’ or be renamed ‘Blackheath Westcombe’.

83 Under the Council's scheme, the remainder of the existing Blackheath ward (polling district 8C) would be joined with most of Sutcliffe and Middle Park wards, along with small parts of Tarn and Sherard wards, to create a new ward. The proposed eastern boundary of this ward would run along Kidbrooke Park Road, to the west of Sutcliffe Park and would continue along Eltham Hill Road, which constitutes much of the existing ward boundary. It would continue southwards along Kingsground and King John's Walk and would include the electors from Shrubsall Close within the proposed ward.

84 The Council argued that this ward would contain a number of “distinct and close-knit communities which are linked together by open spaces and the River Quaggy”. It contended that the parks and open spaces in the ward provide a dominant feature, and that the River Quaggy is a unifying factor. The Council therefore proposed that the ward be named South (or Southern) Parks. Under its proposal the number of electors per councillor would be 7 per cent above the borough average initially, and equal to the average by 2004, assuming a 51-member council size.

85 We noted that the Council highlighted the disadvantages of using the Blackheath Park road as a ward boundary in this area, as it would divide the Blackheath area between two wards. However, the Council stated that this option did receive some local support, and that “this division could only be avoided by a too great departure from the electoral quota.”

86 We acknowledged that to divide those parts of Blackheath that lie within Greenwich borough between two wards is not ideal, and for that reason we considered Greenwich & Woolwich Conservative Association’s alternative proposals. However, as stated above and in the draft recommendations report, we were not convinced that these proposals were better than the Council’s for this part of the borough. Given our acceptance of the Council’s proposals in the Blackheath area, and the fact that any departure from using the road of Blackheath Park as a ward boundary would result in a relatively large electoral imbalance, we believed that the Council’s suggested warding arrangements in this area were the most appropriate.

87 We concluded that the Council’s proposals would provide a satisfactory balance between reflecting community identities and securing good levels of electoral equality, with the proposed wards in this area both equalling the borough average by 2004. We considered that these proposals would generally provide clear boundaries and were content to put them forward for consultation. We accepted the Council’s suggested ward name of Blackheath Westcombe, but because the southern part of the existing Blackheath ward would form part of a new ward, we proposed the name of Blackheath South with Parks.

88 At Stage Three we received many differing views regarding the proposed warding arrangement of this part of the borough,

particularly the division of the Cator estate. The Borough Council proposed an alternative pattern of three-member wards. It stated that the proposed Blackheath Westcombe ward would exclude the southern part of the Cator estate, which it contended has strong community links with Blackheath village, but included the community east of Kidbrooke Grove which has weaker links with Blackheath and a stronger ‘Kidbrooke’ character. It suggested that the proposed Blackheath South with Parks ward would be unsatisfactory, and that there were no connecting footways or roads (other than Lee Road) connecting the Cator estate with the remainder of the present Sutcliffe ward.

89 The Greenwich & Woolwich Conservative Association proposed an alternative scheme for three two-member wards for the Blackheath area, on the grounds that this would be a better reflection of local communities and would unite the Cator estate. The number of electors per councillor in the two-member wards of Vanbrugh, Blackheath and Westthorne would initially vary from the borough average by 5 per cent, 9 per cent and 11 per cent respectively (1 per cent, 2 per cent and 8 per cent by 2004). Under the draft recommendations the three-member wards of Blackheath Westcombe and Blackheath South with Parks, both initially, vary from the borough average by 7 per cent, with both wards equalling the average by 2004.

90 The Conservative Group on the Council agreed with some respondents that the Cator estate would best be situated in a single ward. However, the Group stated that this should not be done at the “expense of the community east of Kidbrooke Grove which is also an integral part of Blackheath”. It disputed many of the Borough Council’s Stage Three views on community identities in the area and supported our argumentation in the draft recommendations report.

91 Eltham Conservative Association believed that the boundary proposed between Blackheath Westcombe and Blackheath South with Parks wards was “reasonable”. While the Association was fully aware of the views of the Greenwich & Woolwich Conservative Association, it “is not persuaded that there are overwhelming arguments against having a boundary along Blackheath Park”. It suggested that the Cator estate is by no means a deprived area, indeed quite the reverse, and thus does not require strong council representation. The

Association concluded that the proposed boundary creates no significant problems, and fully supported the draft recommendations for the wards of Blackheath Westcombe and Blackheath South with Parks. However, the Group did suggest that the Blackheath South with Parks ward be renamed Blackheath Parks.

92 The Liberal Democrat Group on the Council had only one “slight reservation” regarding the proposed new ward Blackheath South with Parks. The Group felt that the name was too long and invited us to consider as alternatives: Blackheath South; Blackheath Parks; South Parks or Southern Parks.

93 The Group commented on the alternative proposals from the Labour majority group on the Borough Council and the Greenwich & Woolwich Conservative Association. It suggested that it was “difficult to see any rationale behind this [Borough Council proposal] other than party political considerations, in that this proposed ward would bring together a number of areas of traditional Labour support and maximise the Labour share of the vote in this part of the borough. It may also be that this proposal is looking to a future review of the boundaries of the parliamentary constituencies, with a view to creating a safe Labour ward that could be wholly included in a revised Eltham constituency.”

94 With regard to the Greenwich & Woolwich Conservative Association’s proposal to create three two-member wards in the Blackheath area, the Group stated that there were “no circumstances which justify keeping the Cator estate within a single ward” and believed the Association would need to make much stronger arguments to begin to justify deviating from a pattern of three-member wards. The Group fully supported the draft recommendations for this area.

95 We received a further 66 submissions objecting to our proposals for the Blackheath area. This included 10 pro-forma letters, which directly supported the Greenwich & Woolwich Conservative Association’s proposal for three two-member wards. Councillors Harris and Brighty, representing Blackheath ward, the Blackheath Cator Estate Residents Limited, the Blackheath Cator Estate Neighbourhood Watch Association, the Blackheath Society and 51 local residents, opposed the division of the Cator estate between the proposed wards of Blackheath Westcombe and Blackheath South and Parks.

96 We have given consideration to all the submissions we received at Stage Three. We have not, however, been persuaded to adopt either the Borough Council’s or the Greenwich & Woolwich Conservative Association’s alternative proposals for the Blackheath area. We do not consider that the Borough Council has demonstrated that, in general, its proposals would better reflect the statutory criteria than our draft recommendations. In particular, the council has not demonstrated why its new proposals would better reflect community ties or why, since Stage One of the review, it has changed its views in relation to community ties in some areas from those which underlay its initial proposals. Similarly, the Greenwich & Woolwich Conservative Association has not convinced us that the Blackheath area warrants a pattern of two-member wards, particularly as each of the political groups on the Council support a pattern of three-member wards.

97 We stated earlier in this report that we regard the achievement of electoral equality as the primary aim of our electoral review work. The fact that we have not substantially altered our draft proposals in this part of the borough does not mean that we have not considered the responses received - far from it. Many of them were very informative, particularly in relation to community identities and interests. However, we have formed the view that the draft proposals are an appropriate balance between the criteria we need to consider and, in our judgement, no better proposals have emerged for the area during Stage Three. We recognise that there is some disagreement about the community orientation of the Cator estate, and in view of this lack of consensus, and having visited the area, we are not minded to change our draft recommendations (except a relatively minor boundary modification between the wards of Blackheath Westcombe and Peninsula) in this area, which we continue to consider would provide a reasonable balance between electoral equality and the statutory criteria. We also support the alternative ward name for Blackheath South with Parks proposed by the Liberal Democrat Group and propose renaming the ward Blackheath Parks. Under our final recommendations, the number of electors per councillor in the wards of Blackheath Westcombe and Blackheath Parks would vary from the borough average by 8 per cent and 7 per cent (1 per cent and equal by 2004).

### **Ferrier and Sherard wards**

98 These two wards border the existing Blackheath and Kidbrooke wards in the west of the borough.

The two-member Ferrier ward is currently over-represented by 10 per cent and is forecast to increase to 16 per cent by 2004. The Sherard ward also returns two councillors, but is slightly under-represented by 5 per cent (3 per cent by 2004), based on the current 62-member council size.

<sup>99</sup> At Stage One the Council proposed a new 'Nesbit' ward "after the author Edith Nesbit who lived at the Well Hall for over twenty years early this century". The ward, which would lie between the proposed Kidbrooke with Hornfair and Blackheath South with Parks wards, would comprise most of the current Sherard ward, together with parts of the existing Well Hall, Ferrier, Kidbrooke and Sutcliffe wards. Its eastern boundary would run to the rear of the properties in Arbroath Road, along Well Hall Road and around Tom Coombs Close and behind the shopping parade to the west of Well Hall Road. It would continue southwards along Sherard Road, to the rear of the properties in Everest Road, east along Lassa Road and to the rear of the properties in Spencer Gardens, returning by Well Hall Road to Eltham Church and then west along Eltham High Street. The southern boundary would run along Eltham Road and on to Eltham Hill Road, to include Sutcliffe Park within the ward.

<sup>100</sup> The Council argued that "although [the ward is] crossed by the railway line from Eltham to Blackheath stations, and by the A2 and Westhorne Avenue, it is considered that there is a very strong and distinctive community based on well-established as well as newer public housing stock." Sutcliffe Park, it was argued, was included in this proposal in view of its close relationship and setting for the Ferrier estate. The Council pointed out that there was support in the public consultation from local residents for the inclusion of the park in the same ward as the estate. These proposals would result in the number of electors per councillor being 4 per cent above the borough average initially (equal to the average by 2004), based on a 51-member council size.

<sup>101</sup> We were content that there was a significant community argument to place Sutcliffe Park in the proposed Nesbit ward. However, we were not content to adopt the Council's proposed ward name of Nesbit, and proposed instead that the ward be named Eltham West. We also believed we could further improve the proposed boundary

between Eltham West and the proposed Eltham North wards. We proposed that the electors in Everest Road and Lassa Road should form part of the proposed Eltham West ward, with the new boundary running along the back of the properties and following Sherard Road until it meets the proposed Eltham North ward.

<sup>102</sup> At Stage Three our proposal for Eltham West ward was generally supported by the Conservative and Liberal Democrat Groups on the Council. Eltham Conservative Association also supported our proposal, but recommended renaming the ward 'Nesbit'. The Borough Council proposed a modified Eltham West ward, however this was dependent on us accepting its proposals for the Blackheath area, which we have not done as described above. The Old Page Estate Residents' Association commented that our proposals divided the estate between the wards of Eltham West and Eltham North, which it argued was contrary to the Commission's desire to reflect local communities and identities. It also contended that in recent years there had been a growing recognition of the unifying nature of town centres. It argued that, although previously Eltham High Street had been a ward boundary, it would be a better reflection of the developing nature of town centre communities for areas either side of the High Street to be located within a single ward, as had been achieved in Greenwich and Woolwich. The Association and South Greenwich Forum opposed any proposal to name the ward 'Nesbit'. The Association stated that, if adopted, this ward name would give no indication of the geographical location of the ward, and that many people would not understand the connection.

<sup>103</sup> We have given careful consideration to the views expressed to us during the consultation stage, including the comments regarding an alternative ward name, and are content to confirm the ward name of Eltham West. We are not persuaded by the comments from the Old Page Estate Residents' Association that our draft recommendation fails to reflect local communities and identities, and in view of the general support our proposal has received and the excellent level of electoral equality achieved, confirm our draft recommendation as final. Under our final recommendations the number of electors per councillor in Eltham West ward would vary by 3 per cent and equal the borough average by 2004.

## **Arsenal, Burrage, Nightingale, St Mary's and Woolwich Common wards**

104 These wards stretch from the north-east to the centre of the borough. The single-member wards of Arsenal, Burrage and Nightingale are presently reasonably well represented under a 62-member council. The number of electors per councillor varies from the borough average by 1 per cent, 4 per cent and 7 per cent respectively. However, development along the river front of the existing Arsenal ward would result in the ward being under-represented by 30 per cent by 2004. Burrage ward would improve to 2 per cent and Nightingale ward would equal the borough average by 2004. The two-member wards of St Mary's and Woolwich Common are presently over-represented, varying from the borough average by 5 per cent and 11 per cent respectively (2 per cent below and 16 per above by 2004).

105 At Stage One, the Council proposed creating a Woolwich Riverside ward comprising most of St Mary's ward, combined with parts of the current Arsenal, Charlton and Woolwich Common wards. The ward would be bounded to the north by the River Thames. The boundary would then follow the eastern boundary of the Arsenal site, west along Plumstead Road, south along Burrage Road, west along Vincent Road, around the south of General Gordon Place, then along Wellington Street, along Artillery Place and Hillreach. From this point, the boundary would run south of two residential blocks in Little Heath, and north to the west of properties in Kinveachy Gardens, around the western edge of Maryon Park, and then west along the railway line to the boundary with the proposed Peninsula ward.

106 The Council stated that the proposed ward would contain Woolwich town centre, "the biggest town centre in the borough, and the civic heart of the borough". To the east of the town centre is the Royal Arsenal site, "a major regeneration opportunity" contributing to the revival of Woolwich town centre. The ward would also contain the riverside residential area of Woolwich Dockyard, most of the New Charlton residential area, and part of the mixed residential and light industrial area of lower Charlton. The Council further added that the proposed ward, which would contain the Woolwich Arsenal and Dockyard stations and the Waterfront Leisure Centre, would provide a Woolwich ward with "a

strong historical identity", distinct from the proposed Woolwich Common ward.

107 The Council's proposed new Woolwich Common ward would be formed from the present Nightingale ward, and parts of the current Arsenal, Burrage, Herbert, Plumstead Common, St Mary's and Woolwich Common wards. The ward would be bounded by the proposed Charlton ward to the west and Woolwich Riverside ward to the north. The boundary would continue to the east along Burrage Road, along a line behind the Oaks and a number of properties in Plumstead Common Road at the corner of Plumstead Common, along Plumstead Common Road, and then south along Admaston Road. From here it would run west along Hinstock and Genesta Roads, down Ripon Road, south-west along Herbert Road, south immediately to the east of properties in Red Lion Lane north of Eaglesfield School and then west of all other Red Lion Lane properties, west along Shooters Hill Road, and then north along Baker Road to the proposed Charlton ward.

108 The Council contended that the ward would contain the communities to the south of Woolwich town centre. It also stated that the proposal would unite the community of the Woolwich Common estate, which is currently divided between Herbert and Nightingale wards. The ward would also incorporate the Barnfield and Connaught estates, as well as the residential and commercial area at the north end of Herbert Road. The Council further stated that the ward would encompass the Woolwich Barracks and military properties and grounds including the Queen Elizabeth Hospital.

109 Finally in this area, the Council proposed a Griffin ward, adopting the name of one of the ward's principal roads. The ward would comprise most of the current Glyndon ward, together with parts of the existing Arsenal, Burrage, Lakedale and Plumstead Common wards. The ward would be bounded by the proposed Woolwich Common and Woolwich Riverside wards to the west, and with the River Thames and the proposed Thamesmead Moorings ward to the north and north-east. The boundary would continue southwards along Griffin Road, east along Conway Road, along Liffler Road, east along Brewery Road, south along Lakedale Road and The Slade, thence west along Plumstead Common Road to its junction with the proposed Woolwich Common ward.

110 The Council stated that the ward would be predominantly residential, with local shopping centres in Brewery Road, Plumstead Common Road, Warwick Terrace and Whinchat Road. The ward would also encompass Plumstead Common as well as Plumstead station and bus garage. Although we had some concerns that the ward would include a distinctive 'Thamesmead' area of housing to the north of the A206 road, we accepted that, to attain good electoral equality by 2004, this area needed to be incorporated within the proposed Griffin ward.

111 Under the Council's scheme the number of electors per councillor in the proposed wards of Griffin, Woolwich Common and Woolwich Riverside would initially vary from the borough average by 2 per cent, 7 per cent and 10 per cent respectively based on a 51-member council size. However, each of the three wards would equal the borough average by 2004. We considered that these proposals generally provided clear boundaries and substantially improved the level of electoral equality, and, apart from a slight boundary modification to the proposed Griffin ward, were content to accept the proposals.

112 At Stage Three, the Conservative and Liberal Democrat Groups on the Council and Greenwich & Woolwich Conservative Association fully supported our proposals for the wards of Griffin, Woolwich Common and Woolwich Riverside. The Borough Council proposed relatively minor boundary modifications between the proposed Griffin and Plumstead wards and the proposed Woolwich Common and Shooters Hill wards, which it contended would better reflect local community identities. The Borough Council also proposed renaming the proposed Griffin ward 'Glyndon'. It contended that Glyndon Road is located closer to the centre of the proposed ward than is Griffin Road.

113 Woolwich Common Branch Labour Party submitted proposals for boundary modifications to the draft recommendations in respect of the proposed Woolwich Common and Woolwich Riverside wards. Councillor Hales, who represents Woolwich Common ward, argued that the proposed boundaries did not, in his view, reflect local community lines and supported a similar warding pattern to that proposed by Woolwich Common Branch Labour Party. A local resident also supported this view. As described earlier

(please see paragraphs 77-79), we were not convinced by the evidence provided by the respondents.

114 We acknowledge the general support for our proposed wards in this part of the borough. While some of the Woolwich Common Branch Labour Party proposals have merit, the level of electoral equality proposed in Woolwich Common and Woolwich Riverside wards does not improve on the draft recommendations, and some of the proposed boundaries appear somewhat arbitrary. While we remain generally content with our draft proposals for this part of the borough, we believe that the Borough Council's alternative warding arrangements affecting the wards of Griffin and Woolwich Common better reflect community identities, without having an adverse affect on electoral equality. We do not, however, accept the alternative ward name of Glyndon. We therefore propose moving away from our draft recommendations and instead propose modified Griffin and Woolwich Common wards in accordance with the Council's Stage Three Submission. We have decided to confirm our draft recommendation for Woolwich Riverside ward as final. Under our final recommendations the number of electors per councillor in Griffin, Woolwich Common and Woolwich Riverside would initially vary from the borough average by 1 per cent, 6 per cent and 10 per cent respectively (1 per cent, equal and equal to the average in 2004).

### **Abbey Wood, Eynsham, Glyndon and Thamesmead Moorings wards**

115 The two-member wards of Abbey Wood, Eynsham, Glyndon and Thamesmead Moorings presently suffer from varying degrees of electoral imbalance. Abbey Wood, Glyndon and Thamesmead Moorings wards are under-represented, with the number of electors per councillor varying from the borough average by 8 per cent, 9 per cent and 12 per cent respectively. Electoral equality is projected to deteriorate in Thamesmead Moorings ward due to large-scale housing development, resulting in the worst electoral variance in the borough at 70 per cent by 2004. Glyndon ward will continue to be under-represented, varying from the borough average by 10 per cent by 2004, although Abbey Wood ward would improve to just 1 per cent from the average. Eynsham ward is presently over-represented, with the number of electors per councillor varying from

the borough average by 13 per cent (19 per cent by 2004), based on a 62-member council.

116 As described earlier, at Stage One, the Council proposed that the majority of the existing Glyndon ward would form part of Griffin ward, with the remainder forming part of the Council's proposed Thamesmead Moorings ward. This new ward would comprise the whole of the existing Thamesmead Moorings ward and parts of Eynsham and Glyndon wards. The ward would be bounded by the River Thames to the north, the borough boundary with Bexley to the east, the Southern Outfall Sewers to the south, and by a line running north along Pettman Crescent and then northwards along Whinchat Road and finally west to the River Thames.

117 The Council acknowledged that, while the boundary through the Broadwater Estate was not ideal, it was made in order to provide for a good level of electoral equality and "is probably the best that can be achieved". However, the Council suggested an alternative boundary which would not divide the estate and would result in the boundary being redrawn in the south-west along Plumstead Road. Under this proposal the projected electorate for the ward would be 11,080, resulting in an electoral variance of 16 per cent which would impact on the level of electoral equality in the proposed Griffin ward. We acknowledged that the Broadwater estate had to be divided to provide a good level of electoral equality, but we proposed modifying the Council's western boundary to continue along Whinchat Road, incorporating Heronsgate School.

118 The Council also proposed creating a new Abbey Wood ward, comprising the current electorate of Abbey Wood and Eynsham wards. The ward would be bounded to the north by the Southern Outfall Sewer, to the east and south by the borough boundary with Bexley, and to the west by the proposed Plumstead ward. The Council stated that the ward would incorporate the well-established Eynsham and Abbey Wood communities. A section of the present Eynsham ward (containing no electors) would become part of the Thamesmead Moorings ward providing an improved southern boundary.

119 The number of electors per councillor in the proposed wards of Abbey Wood and Thamesmead

Moorings would initially vary from the borough average by 7 per cent and 30 per cent respectively, based on a 51-member council size. However, Abbey Wood ward would equal the borough average and Thamesmead Moorings would vary by 1 per cent by 2004. We considered that the wards (albeit with a slight boundary modification between Griffin and Thamesmead Moorings wards) generally provided clear boundaries and substantially improved the level of electoral equality in this part of the borough, and were content to put them forward for consultation.

120 At Stage Three the Borough Council, the Conservative Group on the Council and the Conservative & Woolwich Conservative Association fully supported our proposals for the wards of Abbey Wood and Thamesmead Moorings. The Liberal Democrat Group supported the proposal for Abbey Wood ward, but was concerned that the Broadwater estate would be divided between two wards. As described in paragraph 117, we considered uniting the estate in a single ward, but we did not believe that such a high level of electoral inequality could be justified.

121 Having considered the representations and in the light of the general support received for our proposed Abbey Wood and Thamesmead wards, we have decided to confirm our draft recommendations as final.

### **Herbert, Lakedale, Plumstead Common, Shrewsbury, Slade and St Nicholas wards**

122 The two-member wards of Herbert and Slade are presently slightly under-represented under a council size of 62, both varying from the borough average by 2 per cent (both becoming 5 per cent below by 2004). The single-member ward of Plumstead Common is also presently under-represented, varying from the borough average by 13 per cent (6 per cent by 2004). The two-member wards of Lakedale and St Nicholas and the single-member ward of Shrewsbury are presently over-represented, varying from the borough average by 4 per cent, 1 per cent and 2 per cent respectively (10 per cent, 7 per cent and 8 per cent by 2004).

123 At Stage One the Council proposed a new Plumstead ward, comprising the current St Nicholas ward and parts of the existing Glyndon, Lakedale and Slade wards. The ward would be

bounded by the proposed Griffin and Thamesmead Moorings wards to the west and north, and to the east and south by a line running along Church Manorway, Blithdale Road, Woodhurst Road, Plumstead High Street/Bostall Hill, Old Park Road, and thence along a path through Bostall Woods and around the north edge of Plumstead Cemetery to the borough boundary with Bexley. The borough boundary is used running west to Camdale Road, which then forms the boundary, extending along Kirkham Street to The Slade and the proposed Griffin ward.

<sup>124</sup> The Council contended that Plumstead High Street would be the “northern focus” for this ward, providing an important shopping centre for the residential communities on either side of the High Street. To the south the residential area extends upwards to the open space of Winn’s Common and beyond to the residential communities based around the Slade shopping parade and Wickham Lane shopping parade.

<sup>125</sup> The Council also proposed a new Shooters Hill ward, which would comprise the majority of the current Shrewsbury ward and parts of the existing Herbert, Plumstead Common, Slade and Woolwich Common wards. The ward would be bounded to the west and north by the proposed Kidbrooke with Hornfair, Woolwich Common, Griffin and Plumstead wards. Its eastern boundary would be with the neighbouring borough of Bexley. The boundary would continue to the south by Welling Way, Rochester Way and a line along the northern edge of properties in Crookston Road and Castlewood Drive to the junction with Well Hall.

<sup>126</sup> The Council contended that the present ward boundaries divide the area of Shooters Hill in a “quite unsatisfactory way”. It asserted that Shrewsbury Park, although physically dividing also unites the two fairly similar areas of housing to the east and west of it, and to the south joins with the large and important area of Metropolitan Open Land. Herbert Road would provide a good boundary where the north-eastern slope of the Hill flattens into Woolwich Common, with All Saints’ Church (Shooters Hill) at the junction of Ripon and Herbert Roads. Again to the north a similar boundary is needed and the Genesta, Admaston and Plumstead Common Roads would provide a reasonable boundary in the absence of clear topographical features, and would achieve a high

degree of electoral equality. There are local shopping parades in Plumstead Common Road, The Slade and Swingate Lane. The Council further contended that it did not recommend that the southern boundary of the ward should be the old Roman Road, because this would “lead to very inconvenient polling arrangements for those living immediately to the south”.

<sup>127</sup> Under the Council’s scheme the number of electors per councillor in the proposed wards of Plumstead and Shooters Hill would initially vary from the borough average by 6 per cent and 7 per cent respectively. However, both wards would equal the borough average by 2004. We were content that the proposals provided clear boundaries and an excellent level of electoral equality, and put them forward for consultation.

<sup>128</sup> At Stage Three the Conservative and Liberal Democrat Groups on the Council and Greenwich and Woolwich Conservative Association fully supported our proposed Plumstead ward. The Borough Council proposed a relatively minor boundary modification transferring 59 electors from Plumstead ward to the proposed Griffin ward. The St Nicholas Branch Labour Party stated that it generally supported the creation of a Plumstead ward. However, it opposed the proposal to include part of the existing Slade ward. It argued that Plumstead is an identifiable community, which is centred on Plumstead High Street. It argued that the proposals should reflect and retain the High Street as a boundary, suggesting that instead of including part of the existing Slade ward in the new Plumstead ward, the rest of Lakedale ward and part of Glyndon ward should be included in the proposed Plumstead ward.

<sup>129</sup> We acknowledge the general support for our proposed wards in this part of the borough. However, we believe that the Borough Council’s alternative warding arrangements affecting the wards of Plumstead and Shooters Hill would better reflect community identities. We do not however accept the argument from St Nicholas Branch Labour Party, that we should retain the High Street as a boundary, as we believe this would have an adverse affect on the electoral equality of the neighbouring Griffin ward. We therefore propose moving away from our draft recommendations and instead propose modified Plumstead and Shooters Hill wards in accordance with the Council’s Stage Three submission. Under our final

recommendations the number of electors per councillor in Plumstead and Shooters Hill wards would initially vary from the borough average by 6 per cent and 7 per cent respectively (1 per cent and equalling the average in 2004).

### **Deansfield, Eltham Park and Well Hall wards**

130 The single-member ward of Deansfield and the two-member wards of Eltham Park and Well Hall presently suffer from varying degrees of electoral imbalance. Deansfield and Well Hall wards are under-represented, with the number of electors per councillor varying from the borough average by 7 per cent and 5 per cent respectively. Electoral equality is projected to deteriorate in Well Hall ward, with the ward varying from the borough average by 18 per cent by 2004. However, Deansfield ward is expected to equal the borough average by 2004. Eltham Park ward is at present reasonably well represented, with the number of electors per councillor varying from the borough average by 1 per cent (7 per cent over by 2004).

131 In its Stage One submission the Council proposed a new Westmount ward, which, it contended, would provide “for a satisfactory north Eltham ward”. The ward would comprise the current Deansfield ward, the majority of Eltham Park ward and parts of the existing Sherard and Well Hall wards. The ward would be bounded by the proposed Eltham West and Kidbrooke with Hornfair wards to the west, the proposed Shooters Hill ward to the north and the borough boundary with Bexley to the east. The boundary would continue along the railway line, then south and east along the southern perimeter of Eltham Park South, to the east of even-numbered properties in Glenesk Road, then west along Bexley Road and Eltham High Street to the junction with Well Hall Road and the proposed Eltham West ward.

132 The Council contended that Westmount Road, which runs north to south through the proposed ward, “provides a good, well known local name”. The ward would contain the communities of east and north Eltham, covering the area from the woods north of Eltham High Street and from Well Hall to Falconwood Field in the east. It would contain the northern side of Eltham town centre, which is the major town centre in the south of the borough. The ward would also include a shopping parade in Well Hall Road and the shopping area in

Westmount Road between its junction with Earlsall Road and the bridge across the railway. The proposed ward would also incorporate Eltham station and bus terminus, Eltham Police Station and Eltham Parks. The Council acknowledged that the A2 Rochester Relief Road crosses the ward, but contends that “it is not a divisive feature as it is sunk into a cutting and there are several well-used routes across it including a bridge joining Eltham Park North with Eltham Park South.” The Council also stated that the inclusion of the properties to the west of Well Hall Road was made to provide for common representation of the shopping parades and in view of the community links between Spencer Gardens and Well Hall Road.

133 Under the Council’s scheme the number of electors per councillor in the proposed Westmount ward would initially vary from the borough average by 7 per cent, based on a 51-member council size. However, the ward would equal the borough average by 2004. As described above (paragraph 101), we proposed a boundary modification between the Council’s proposed Eltham West (Nesbit) and Westmount wards. In all other aspects, we were content to accept the Council’s proposal but proposed the alternative ward name of Eltham North.

134 At Stage Three the Conservative and Liberal Democrat Groups on the Council fully supported our draft recommendation for Eltham North ward. The Borough Council disagreed with our draft recommendation, and stated that “the proposed ward would continue the present unsatisfactory division of Eltham town centre between different wards”. Eltham Conservative Association whilst recognising there “is a commonality of commercial interests between both sides of Eltham High Street” did not feel that “this argues for their both being within the same ward”, and supported the argumentation contained within the draft recommendations report. However, the Association suggested that we reconsidered one of the Council’s original proposals regarding the Eltham Church area and the boundary between Eltham West and Eltham North wards.

135 We have given careful consideration to the views expressed to us during the consultation stage, particularly the comments regarding the division of Eltham High Street. However, we are not persuaded by the comments from the Council that our draft recommendation does not reflect

local communities and identities, and in view of the general support our proposal has received and the excellent level of electoral equality achieved, confirm our draft recommendation as final. Under our final recommendations the number of electors per councillor in Eltham North ward would vary by 7 per cent initially and equal the borough average by 2004.

### **Avery Hill, Coldharbour, New Eltham, Palace and Tarn wards**

136 The two-member Coldharbour ward and the single-member Tarn ward are both presently over-represented, varying from the borough average by 10 per cent and 1 per cent respectively (16 per cent and 7 per cent by 2004). The single-member ward of Avery Hill is presently equal to the borough average, but is expected to become over-represented (6 per cent by 2004). The two-member ward of New Eltham is presently under-represented, varying from the borough average by 7 per cent, but is expected to equal the borough average by 2004. The single-member ward of Palace is presently the most under-represented ward in the borough, varying from the borough average by 42 per cent. It is not expected to improve a great deal (32 per cent by 2004).

137 At Stage One the Council proposed an Eltham South ward comprising the existing Avery Hill and Palace wards, with parts of the current Eltham Park, Middle Park, New Eltham and Tarn wards. The ward would be bounded with the proposed Blackheath South with Parks, Eltham West and Eltham North wards to the west and north, and the borough boundary with Bexley to the east. The boundary would then continue along Footscray Road, Southwood Road, along a line to the rear of properties on the north side of Southwood Road and on the east side of properties in Park View Road, along the railway line that runs between Sidcup and Lee stations, to its junction with the proposed Blackheath South with Parks ward.

138 The ward would contain the southern part of Eltham High Street and would coincide with the boundary between the existing Palace and Eltham Park wards, which the Council contended has proven to be satisfactory in “ensuring a good group of councillors interested in issues affecting the High Street”. The Council considered that Eltham High Street shopping centre is too large and

pervasive in its impact for it to be desirable to be wholly included in a single ward. The ward would include the communities in the immediate vicinity of the High Street, the Eltham Palace precincts, the Crown Woods area (known locally as Eltham Heights), the Avery Hill communities, the northern part of New Eltham and the communities of Footscray Road and Court Road. The area contains Eltham Palace and Royal Blackheath and Eltham Warren Golf Clubs, the Avery Hill Campus of the University of Greenwich, Avery Hill Park and New Eltham station. All of these open spaces form part of the Southeast London Green Chain network. Although the area is predominantly residential and leisure-related, in addition to Eltham High Street there are local shopping areas in Bexley Road (Avery Hill) and in Footscray Road (New Eltham).

139 With regard to the proposed ward name, the Council contended that the proposed ward contains residential areas where people would say “we live in the vicinity of Eltham Palace”, “we live in Eltham Heights”, “we live in New Eltham”, and so on. Therefore, a ward name of Eltham or Eltham South would be a “good and unifying compromise”.

140 The Council also proposed a Montbelle/South ward comprising the current Coldharbour ward, with parts of the existing New Eltham and Tarn wards. The ward would be bounded to the north by the proposed wards of Blackheath South with Parks and Eltham South, and by the borough boundaries with Bexley and Bromley to the east and south. The ward would be primarily formed by the residential areas south of the arc of open spaces forming the southern boundary of Eltham town centre to the borough boundary. It would contain the well-established Coldharbour estate, together with that part of Mottingham in the borough, the Green Lane/Chislehurst borders area, the Montbelle triangle and the southern part of New Eltham. Essentially it would be the southern tip of the borough bounded by the railway line, a divisive feature except in the area of New Eltham station.

141 The area is predominantly residential, with local shopping parades in Sidcup Road, William Barefoot Drive and Court/Mottingham Road, and also contains Mottingham station and the new Coldharbour Leisure Centre. Although the area is crossed by the A20, which may be considered

something of a barrier, it was argued by the Council that this factor is outweighed by the interests of the communities in this southernmost part of the borough, and that the railway line and open spaces beyond form a more appropriate boundary. Moreover, using the A20 as a boundary would make it impracticable to achieve a ward with acceptable electoral equality.

<sup>142</sup> Under the Council's scheme the number of electors per councillor in the proposed wards of Eltham South and Montbelle/South would initially equal the borough average and vary by 7 per cent respectively, based on a 51-member council size. However, both wards would equal the borough average by 2004. We were generally content with the proposed boundaries, but believed we could further improve the boundary between the wards by continuing along the railway line to the junction with Footscray Road. This proposal would have, no adverse affect on electoral equality, but would include New Eltham station and the grounds and library to the south of the station in the Council's proposed Montbelle/South ward. We accepted the Council's proposals as the basis of our draft recommendations, and the proposed ward name of Eltham South but were not content with the proposed ward name of Montbelle/South. We concluded that, because the existing Coldharbour ward would be retained in its entirety, we should name the ward 'Coldharbour'.

<sup>143</sup> The Borough Council opposed the draft recommendations in this area because "it was dependent on the splitting of New Eltham". It contended that "the proposed division of the close-knit and distinctive New Eltham community, centred around the New Eltham shopping parade and rail station, between the proposed Eltham South and Coldharbour wards is also undesirable, and exacerbates the divisions already in place", concluding that the use of the railway line as a ward boundary appears "arbitrary".

<sup>144</sup> The Conservative and Liberal Democrat Groups on the Council fully supported our draft recommendations for the wards of Eltham South and Coldharbour. Eltham Conservative Association also supported our proposals. The Association stated that there was some reluctance to see the "present New Eltham ward divided although acceptance that in reality 'New Eltham' as a place is more defined by a railway station and the small group of shops, which have grown up around it and has no well defined boundary. Moreover it is clear that some parts of what could be called the New

Eltham community are in the borough of Bexley". However it suggested renaming Coldharbour ward 'Eltham South' which it was a "more appropriate description of what the area actually is". As a consequence of this proposal it proposed renaming Eltham South ward 'Crown Lands', as the "Crown Estate is still very extensive and persuasive and includes not only Eltham Palace but houses in Court Yard and King's Orchard where the Crown Estate is not prepared to sell the freeholds".

<sup>145</sup> The Community Association of New Eltham (CANE) stated that the proposal to utilise the railway line as a boundary would divide the community of New Eltham. It stated that, although it saw the logic of using the railway line, the proposal would place New Eltham Library in the proposed Coldharbour ward. It also argued that (by implication) there has been an assumption that residents who reside north of the railway line share links with residents of the southern half of Eltham High Street. In its view, this is not the case. A local resident also commented on the proposals for the Eltham area, stating that they were disappointed that the proposals would divide New Eltham between two wards, and wished to see the area retained within a single ward.

<sup>146</sup> We have given consideration to all the submissions we received at Stage Three. We have not, however, been persuaded by the Borough Council's and some of the other respondents' views with regard to the 'New Eltham' area. As described earlier (the Blackheath area) we do not consider that the Borough Council has demonstrated that, in general, its proposals would better reflect the statutory criteria than our draft recommendations. In particular, the council has not demonstrated why its new proposals would better reflect community ties or why, since Stage One of the review, it has changed its views in relation to community ties in some areas from those which underlay its initial proposals.

<sup>147</sup> Therefore, we have formed the view that the draft proposals are an appropriate balance between the criteria we need to consider, and, in our judgement, no better proposals have emerged for the area during Stage Three. We recognise that there is some disagreement about the community identities of the New Eltham area, and in view of this lack of consensus, we are not minded to change our draft recommendations (including the alternative ward names proposed by Eltham Conservative Association), which we continue to consider would provide a reasonable balance

between electoral equality and the statutory criteria. Under our final recommendations the number of electors per councillor in the wards of Coldharbour and Eltham South would initially vary by 7 per cent and equal to the borough average (both wards equalling the average by 2004).

## Conclusions

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

- (a) the boundary between Blackheath Westcombe and Peninsula wards should be amended to incorporate Tom Smith Close and Chrisp House in the Blackheath Westcombe ward as proposed by local councillors and residents;
- (b) the boundary between Shooters Hill and Woolwich Common wards should be modified as proposed by the Borough Council; and
- (c) the boundary between Griffin and Plumstead wards should be modified as proposed by the Borough Council.

149 We conclude that, in Greenwich:

- (a) there should be a reduction in council size from 62 to 51;

- (b) there should be 17 wards, 19 fewer than at present, which would involve changes to the boundaries of all of the existing wards.

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

151 As shown in Figure 4, our final recommendations for Greenwich Borough Council would result in a reduction in the number of wards where the number of electors per councillor varies by more than 10 per cent from the borough average from six to two. This improved balance of representation is expected to improve further with no ward expected to vary by more than 1 per cent in 2004. Our final recommendations are set out in more detail in Figures 1 and 2, and illustrated on Map 2 and the large map at the back of this report.

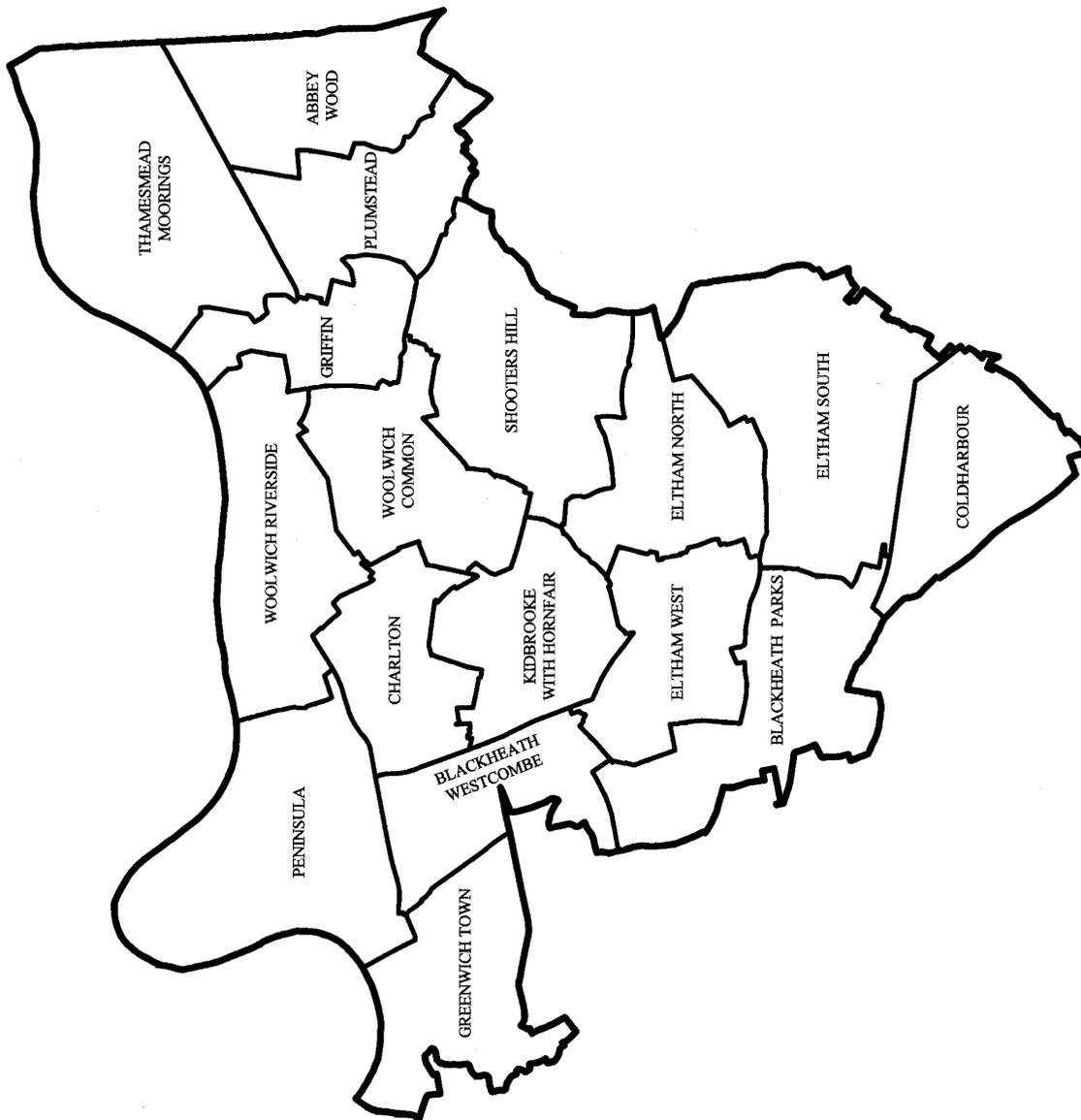
### Final Recommendation

Greenwich Borough Council should comprise 51 councillors serving 17 wards, as detailed and named in Figures 1 and 2, and illustrated on Map 2 and the large map in the back of the report.

*Figure 4 : Comparison of Current and Recommended Electoral Arrangements*

	1999 electorate		2004 forecast electorate	
	Current arrangements	Final recommendations	Current arrangements	Final recommendations
Number of councillors	62	51	62	51
Number of wards	36	17	36	17
Average number of electors per councillor	2,454	2,984	2,622	3,188
Number of wards with a variance more than 10 per cent from the average	6	2	12	0
Number of wards with a variance more than 20 per cent from the average	1	1	4	0

Map 2:  
*The Commission's Final Recommendations for Greenwich*



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## 6. NEXT STEPS

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

153 It now falls to the Secretary of State to decide whether to give effect to our recommendations, with or without modification, and to implement them by means of an order. Such an order will not be made earlier than six weeks from the date that our recommendations are submitted to the Secretary of State.

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

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



# APPENDIX A

## Draft Recommendations for Greenwich

Our final recommendations, detailed in Figures 1 and 2, differ from those we put forward as draft recommendations in respect of a number of wards where our draft proposals are set out below. The only other change from draft to final recommendations, which is not included in Figure A1, is that we propose to rename Blackheath South with Parks ward as Blackheath Parks ward.

*Figure A1:*

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

Ward name	Number of councillors	Electorate (1999)	Number of electors per councillor	Variance from average %	Electorate (2004)	Number of electors per councillor	Variance from average %
Blackheath Westcombe	3	9,572	3,191	7	9,565	3,188	0
Griifin	3	8,999	3,000	1	9,429	3,143	-1
Plumstead	3	9,528	3,176	6	9,531	3,177	0
Shooters Hill	3	9,534	3,178	7	9,543	3,181	0
Peninsula	3	7,275	2,425	-19	9,550	3,183	0
Woolwich Common	3	9,533	3,178	7	9,546	3,182	0

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

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





