

Final recommendations on the
future electoral arrangements
for Havant in Hampshire

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

July 2000

LOCAL GOVERNMENT COMMISSION FOR ENGLAND

This report sets out the Commission's final recommendations on the electoral arrangements for the borough of Havant in Hampshire.

Members of the Commission are:

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



Local Government Commission for England

25 July 2000

Dear Secretary of State

On 20 July 1999 the Commission began a periodic electoral review of Havant under the Local Government Act 1992. We published our draft recommendations in January 2000 and undertook an eight-week period of consultation.

We have now prepared our final recommendations in the light of the consultation. We have confirmed our draft recommendations as final, in their entirety. This report sets out our final recommendations for changes to electoral arrangements in Havant.

We recommend that Havant Borough Council should be served by 38 councillors representing 14 wards, and that changes should be made to ward boundaries in order to improve electoral equality, having regard to the statutory criteria. We recommend that the Council should continue to hold elections by thirds.

The Local Government Bill, containing legislative proposals for a number of changes to local authority electoral arrangements, is currently being considered by Parliament. 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 Havant on 20 July 1999. We published our draft recommendations for electoral arrangements on 18 January 2000, after which we undertook an eight-week period of consultation.

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

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

- **in eight of the 14 wards the number of electors represented by each councillor varies by more than 10 per cent from the average for the borough, and five wards vary by more than 20 per cent from the average;**
- **by 2004 electoral equality is not expected to improve, with the number of electors per councillor forecast to vary by more than 10 per cent from the average in eight wards and by more than 20 per cent in four wards.**

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

- **Havant Borough Council should have 38 councillors, four fewer than at present;**
- **there should be 14 wards, as at present;**
- **the boundaries of 10 of the existing wards should be modified and four wards should retain their existing boundaries;**
- **elections should continue to take place by thirds.**

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

- **In all of the proposed 14 wards the number of electors per councillor would vary by no more than 9 per cent from the borough average.**
- **This enhanced level of electoral equality is expected to improve further, with no ward varying by more than 8 per cent from the average by 2004.**

All further correspondence on these recommendations and the matters discussed in this report should be addressed to the Secretary of State for the Environment, Transport and the Regions, who will not make an order implementing the Commission's recommendations before 4 September 2000:

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

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

	Ward name	Number of councillors	Constituent areas
1	Barncroft	2	Barncroft ward (part); Bedhampton ward (part); Warren Park ward (part)
2	Battins	2	Battins ward (part)
3	Bedhampton	3	Barncroft ward (part); Battins ward (part); Bedhampton ward (part); St Faith's ward (part)
4	Bondfields	2	<i>Unchanged</i> (Bondfields ward)
5	Cowplain	3	Cowplain ward (part); Waterloo ward (part)
6	Emsworth	3	<i>Unchanged</i> (Emsworth ward)
7	Hart Plain	3	Cowplain ward (part); Hart Plain ward; Waterloo ward (part)
8	Hayling East	3	<i>Unchanged</i> (Hayling East ward)
9	Hayling West	3	<i>Unchanged</i> (Hayling West ward)
10	Purbrook	3	Bedhampton ward (part); Purbrook ward; Stakes ward (part)
11	St Faith's	3	St Faith's ward (part)
12	Stakes	3	Stakes ward (part)
13	Warren Park	2	Battins ward (part); Warren Park ward (part)
14	Waterloo	3	Stakes ward (part); Waterloo ward (part)

Notes: 1 The whole borough is unparished.

2 Map 2 and the large map at the back of the report illustrate the proposed wards outlined above.

Figure 2:
The Commission's Final Recommendations for Havant

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 Barncroft	2	4,638	2,319	-5	4,636	2,318	-5
2 Battins	2	4,831	2,416	-1	4,787	2,394	-2
3 Bedhampton	3	6,908	2,303	-5	6,867	2,289	-6
4 Bondfields	2	5,177	2,589	6	5,118	2,559	5
5 Cowplain	3	7,407	2,469	1	7,341	2,447	1
6 Emsworth	3	7,930	2,643	9	7,900	2,633	8
7 Hart Plain	3	7,488	2,496	3	7,291	2,430	0
8 Hayling East	3	7,132	2,377	-2	7,239	2,413	-1
9 Hayling West	3	6,926	2,309	-5	6,995	2,332	-4
10 Purbrook	3	7,441	2,480	2	7,439	2,480	2
11 St Faith's	3	6,764	2,255	-7	6,990	2,330	-4
12 Stakes	3	7,515	2,505	3	7,436	2,479	2
13 Warren Park	2	4,796	2,398	-1	4,669	2,335	-4
14 Waterloo	3	7,486	2,495	3	7,353	2,451	1
Totals	38	92,457	-	-	92,079	-	-
Averages	-	-	2,433	-	-	2,423	-

Source: Electorate figures are based on information provided by Havant 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 borough of Havant in Hampshire. We have now reviewed the 11 districts in Hampshire and Portsmouth and Southampton city councils as part of our programme of periodic electoral reviews (PERs) of all 386 principal local authority areas in England. Our programme started in 1996 and is currently expected to be completed by 2004.

2 This was our first review of the electoral arrangements of Havant. The last such review was undertaken by our predecessor, the Local Government Boundary Commission (LGBC), which reported to the Secretary of State in September 1975 (Report No. 116). The electoral arrangements of Hampshire County Council were last reviewed in October 1980 (Report No. 397). We intend reviewing the County Council's electoral arrangements in 2002.

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

- the statutory criteria contained in section 13(5) of the Local Government Act 1992, i.e. the need to:
 - (a) reflect the identities and interests of local communities; and
 - (b) secure effective and convenient local government;
- 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 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.

5 We have also had regard to our *Guidance and Procedural Advice for Local Authorities and Other Interested Parties* (third edition published in October 1999), which sets out our approach to the reviews.

6 In our *Guidance*, we state that we wish wherever possible 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 The broad objective of PERs is to achieve, so far as practicable, equality of representation across the district as a whole. Our aim is to achieve as low a level of electoral imbalance as is practicable, having regard to our statutory criteria. We will require particular justification for schemes which would result in, or retain, an electoral imbalance of over 10 per cent in any ward. Any imbalances of 20 per cent or more should only arise in the most exceptional circumstances, and will require the strongest justification.

8 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 district but we are willing to look carefully at arguments why this might not be so. However, we have found it necessary to safeguard against upward drift in the number of councillors, and we believe that any proposal for an increase in council size will need to be fully justified; in particular, we do not accept that an increase in a district's electorate should automatically result in an increase in the number of councillors, or that changes should be made to the size of a district council simply to make it more consistent with the size of other districts.

9 In July 1998 the Government published a White Paper, *Modern Local Government – In Touch with the People*, which set out legislative proposals for local authority electoral arrangements. In two-tier areas, it proposed introducing a pattern in which both the district and county councils would hold elections every two years, i.e. in year one half of the district council would be elected, in year two half the county council would be elected, and so on. The Government stated that local accountability would be maximised where every elector has an opportunity to vote every year, thereby pointing to a pattern of two-member wards (and divisions) in two-tier areas. However, it stated that there was no intention to move towards very large electoral areas in sparsely populated rural areas, and that single-member wards (and electoral divisions) would continue in many authorities. The proposals are now being taken forward in a Local Government Bill, published in December 1999, and are currently being considered by Parliament.

10 Following publication of the White Paper, we advised all authorities in our 1999/00 PER programme, including the Hampshire districts, that the Commission would continue to maintain its current approach to PERs as set out in the October 1999 *Guidance*. Nevertheless, we considered that local authorities and other interested parties might 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.

11 This review was in four stages. Stage One began on 20 July 1999, when we wrote to Havant Borough Council inviting proposals for future electoral arrangements. We also notified Hampshire County Council, Hampshire Police Authority, the local authority associations, the Members of Parliament with constituency interests in the district and the Members of the European Parliament for the South East region, and the headquarters of the main political parties. We placed a notice in the local press, issued a press release and invited the Borough Council to publicise the review further. The closing date for receipt of representations, the end of Stage One, was 25 October 1999. At Stage Two we considered all the representations received during Stage One and prepared our draft recommendations.

12 Stage Three began on 18 January 2000 with the publication of our report, *Draft Recommendations on the Future Electoral Arrangements for Havant in Hampshire*, and ended on 13 March 2000. 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

13 The borough of Havant is situated on the south coast and covers an area of over 21 square miles. Havant is divided into four distinct communities: the western wards (north of the A3(M)), an area comprising Bedhampton, Havant and Leigh Park; Hayling Island; and Emsworth. The borough has a regular service of mainline trains to London, and has good road links, including the A3(M). Over the last 20 years Havant has attracted many high-technology businesses, particularly in the fields of electronics, plastics and pharmaceuticals.

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

15 The electorate of the borough is 92,457 (February 1999). The Council presently has 42 members who are elected from 14 three-member wards, all of which are relatively urban. The Council is elected by thirds. There are no parishes in the borough.

16 Since the last electoral review there has been an increase in the electorate in Havant borough, with around 15 per cent more electors than two decades ago as a result of new housing developments. The most notable increases have been in Stakes and Waterloo wards, with approximately 3,000 more electors in each ward.

17 At present, each councillor represents an average of 2,201 electors, which the Borough Council forecasts will decrease to 2,192 by the year 2004 if the present number of councillors is maintained. However, due to demographic and other changes over the past two decades, the number of electors per councillor in eight of the 14 wards varies by more than 10 per cent from the borough average, in five wards by more than 20 per cent and in one ward by more than 30 per cent. The worst imbalance is in Barncroft ward where the three councillors each represent 39 per cent fewer electors than the borough average.

Map 1: Existing Wards in Havant

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 Barncroft	3	3,996	1,332	-39	3,994	1,331	-40
2 Battins	3	5,526	1,842	-16	5,482	1,827	-17
3 Bedhampton	3	6,110	2,037	-7	6,069	2,023	-8
4 Bondfields	3	5,177	1,726	-22	5,118	1,706	-23
5 Cowplain	3	7,077	2,359	7	7,011	2,337	6
6 Emsworth	3	7,930	2,643	20	7,900	2,633	20
7 Hart Plain	3	6,714	2,238	2	6,517	2,172	-1
8 Hayling East	3	7,132	2,377	8	7,239	2,413	10
9 Hayling West	3	6,926	2,309	5	6,995	2,332	6
10 Purbrook	3	7,259	2,420	10	7,257	2,419	10
11 St Faith's	3	7,685	2,562	16	7,911	2,637	20
12 Stakes	3	8,204	2,735	24	8,125	2,708	23
13 Warren Park	3	4,638	1,546	-30	4,511	1,504	-32
14 Waterloo	3	8,083	2,694	22	7,950	2,650	20
Totals	42	92,457	-	-	92,079	-	-
Averages	-	-	2,201	-	-	2,192	-

Source: Electorate figures are based on information supplied by Havant 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 Barncroft ward were over-represented by 39 per cent, while electors in Stakes ward were under-represented by 24 per cent. Figures have been rounded to the nearest whole number.

3 DRAFT RECOMMENDATIONS

18 During Stage One we received seven representations, including borough-wide schemes from Havant Borough Council and Havant Labour Group, and representations from the Havant Borough Council Conservative Group, Havant Conservative Association, an MP, a borough councillor and a local resident. 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 Havant in Hampshire*.

19 Our draft recommendations were based on the Borough Council's proposals, which achieved significant improvements in electoral equality and best reflected local community identities. However, we moved away from the Borough Council's scheme in a number of areas, affecting five wards, to further improve electoral equality. We proposed that:

- Havant Borough Council should be served by 38 councillors, compared with the current 42, representing 14 wards, as at present;
- the boundaries of 10 of the existing wards should be modified, while four wards should retain their existing boundaries;
- elections should continue to be held by thirds.

Draft Recommendation

Havant Borough Council should comprise 38 councillors, serving 14 wards. The Council should continue to hold elections by thirds.

20 Our proposals would have resulted in significant improvements in electoral equality, with no ward having an electoral variance of more than 10 per cent from the borough average, initially or by 2004.

4 RESPONSES TO CONSULTATION

21 During the consultation on our draft recommendations report, nine representations were received. A list of all respondents is available on request from the Commission. All representations may be inspected at the offices of Havant Borough Council and the Commission.

Havant Borough Council

22 The Borough Council stated that “the Council accept and endorse the draft recommendations of the Local Government Commission for England”.

Havant Conservative Association

23 The Conservative Association opposed the proposed boundary between the wards of Bedhampton and St Faith’s and suggested that the Borough Council’s Stage One scheme for this area be adopted.

Havant Labour Group

24 Havant Labour Group opposed the draft recommendations on the basis that the scheme would not best reflect community identities in the borough. It suggested that we “re-visit the Labour Group’s submission” on the basis that its scheme would better reflect community identities, particularly in Emsworth, Hayling Island and the “Northern wards”, and provide equally good electoral equality.

Other Representations

25 A further six representations were received in response to our draft recommendations from a local residents’ association, Hampshire County Council, a county councillor, two borough councillors and a local resident.

26 Waterloo & District Residents’ Association expressed support for the draft recommendations, including the proposal for 38 members. Hampshire County Council stated that it had no comment to make on the draft recommendations for Havant Borough Council.

27 Councillor O’Brien, member for Stakes ward, proposed a modification to the boundary between the proposed Stakes and Waterloo wards to better reflect community identities in the area. She stated that the alternative boundary would ensure that a mix of social and owner-occupied housing would be retained in Stakes ward. County Councillor Blackett, member for Purbrook & Stakes (South) division, and a local resident of Waterloo both supported Councillor O’Brien’s proposal. Councillor Fulcher, member for St Faith’s ward opposed the proposed boundary between the wards of Bedhampton and St Faith’s, on the basis that the boundary does not reflect local community identities or would be identifiable; he proposed an alternative arrangement for the area.

5 ANALYSIS AND FINAL RECOMMENDATIONS

28 As described earlier, our prime objective in considering the most appropriate electoral arrangements for Havant is, so far as reasonably practicable and consistent with the statutory criteria, to achieve electoral equality. In doing so we have regard to section 13 (5) of the Local Government Act 1992 – the need to secure effective and convenient local government, and reflect the identities and interests 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”.

29 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 also must have regard to the desirability of fixing identifiable boundaries and to maintaining local ties which might otherwise be broken.

30 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.

31 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. However, we consider that, if electoral imbalances are to be kept to the minimum, such an objective 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 absolute electoral equality and only then make adjustments to reflect relevant factors, such as community identity and interests. Regard must also be had to five-year forecasts of change in electorates.

Electorate Forecasts

32 The Borough Council submitted electorate forecasts for the year 2004, projecting a decrease in the electorate of 0.4 per cent from 92,457 to 92,079 over the five-year period from 1999 to 2004. However, this decrease in electorate is not expected to occur uniformly across the borough; in fact, the electorate in St Faith’s ward is forecast to grow by 3 per cent. The Council has estimated rates and locations of housing development with regard to structure and local plans, the expected rate of building over the five-year period and assumed occupancy rates. Advice from the Borough Council on the likely effect on electorates of changes to ward boundaries has been obtained. In our draft recommendations report we accepted that this 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.

33 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

34 As already explained, the Commission's starting point is to assume that the current council size facilitates effective and convenient local government, although we are willing to look carefully at arguments why this might not be the case. Havant Borough Council presently has 42 members.

35 At Stage One the Borough Council proposed a council of 38 members, which it stated would provide an improved level of electoral equality without significantly altering the existing ward configuration, which "has stood the test of time". The Council also expressed general reservations about increases in council size. The Borough Council argued that the Commission's assumption that the current council size facilitated convenient and effective local government did not hold true in Havant, given the geography of the area and the distribution of electors. It argued that a council size of 38 would provide electoral equality, while reflecting the different geographical areas in the borough. The Conservative Group also supported proposals for a reduction in council size to 38 for similar reasons.

36 Havant Labour Group opposed the Borough Council's proposal for a 38-member scheme on the basis that the Council had adopted the approach of "determining the number of members that ought to make up the Council" first, then proceeding to formulate the consequential warding arrangements. It also opposed the 38-member scheme as it would result in the representation of the Leigh Park area being reduced from 12 members to eight. It proposed an increase in council size of three (to 45) on the basis that the population of Havant had grown significantly since 1974 and that the workload of councillors had consequently increased. Havant Labour Group also highlighted the fact that its proposals would not involve such a large change in council size as that proposed by the Council, and that the scheme would more adequately reflect communities and provide effective and convenient local government, while securing improved levels of electoral equality.

37 When considering the draft recommendations we accepted that, given the geography of the area, the current council size would not provide for as high levels of electoral equality as under the two alternative council sizes. We therefore carefully considered both these options and the supporting evidence submitted. As stated in our *Guidance*, the Commission has found it necessary to guard against an upward drift in the number of councillors, and would require any proposal for an increase in council size to be fully justified. In particular we did not accept that increases in an authority's electorate should automatically result in a commensurate increase in the number of councillors being returned, as suggested by the Labour Group. We noted that the majority of councillors do not consider that an increase is necessary. While we noted the Labour Group's proposal for a council size of 45, we did not consider that sufficient justification had been advanced for an increase of three councillors.

38 In 1979 the London Borough of Enfield successfully took the Commission's predecessor, the Local Government Boundary Commission, to judicial review over the procedures adopted in its periodic electoral reviews. The resulting judgement, commonly called the "Enfield Judgement", stated that, in undertaking a periodic electoral review, it is necessary first to identify a council size which facilitates effective and convenient local government and second to formulate recommendations for new electoral arrangements which reflect the statutory criteria and provide

high levels of electoral equality, based on such a council size. We did not, therefore, share the Labour Group's concern, expressed in its Stage One submission, at the Borough Council's approach to developing its proposals.

39 The Borough Council argued that the current arrangements, based on a council size of 42, have resulted in high levels of electoral inequality, but respected the specific geography of the area and the separate communities within the borough. Havant borough, as stated above, is made up of a number of separate communities including Emsworth and Hayling Island. The Borough Council argued that an alternative council size was needed to reflect these separate areas while ensuring a significantly higher degree of electoral equality than exists at present. It therefore proposed a reduction in council size to 38 in order to reflect community identities and interests in the borough. It stated that with a council size of 38 much of the general warding pattern, which is locally recognised and understood, could be retained. We considered that the Borough Council's proposed council size of 38 had been appropriately considered and noted that it would command a degree of local support.

40 During Stage Three Havant Borough Council and Waterloo & District Residents' Association expressed support for the proposed council size of 38. Havant Labour Group resubmitted its Stage One proposal for a 45-member council. The Labour Group did not submit any additional evidence (further to that submitted at Stage One). They again asserted that their scheme would best reflect community identities and was devised from a "blank piece of paper" – i.e. drawing the ward boundaries first and then determining an appropriate council size. However, as explained in the draft recommendations report and earlier in this chapter, the Commission was not convinced by the evidence submitted by Havant Labour Group at Stage One that an increase in council size is justified. We have decided not to depart from this view in the light of Havant Labour Group's Stage Three submission, and therefore confirm as final our draft recommendation that Havant Borough Council be represented by 38 members.

Electoral Arrangements

41 As set out in our draft recommendations report, we carefully considered all the representations received at Stage One, including the borough-wide schemes from the Borough Council and Havant Labour Group. From these representations, some considerations emerged which helped to inform us when preparing our draft recommendations.

42 The Council proposed a reduction in council size from 42 to 38, while Havant Labour Group proposed an increase from 42 to 45. Both schemes proposed moving away from the existing pattern of wholly three-member wards, and both would result in substantial improvements in electoral equality. We also noted that the schemes would provide warding arrangements that respect the four distinct communities in the borough: the western wards; Havant, Bedhampton and Leigh Park; Emsworth; and Hayling Island. Neither scheme included warding arrangements that would breach the boundaries of these four areas.

43 In view of the support expressed by other Stage One respondents for the Borough Council's scheme and the arguments outlined above regarding council size, we concluded that our draft recommendations should be based on the Borough Council's scheme. We considered that this scheme would provide a better balance between electoral equality and the statutory criteria than

the current arrangements or the other scheme submitted at Stage One. However, to improve electoral equality further and provide a more coherent warding pattern, we proposed moving away from the Borough Council's proposals in the Leigh Park area, in the wards of Barncroft, Battins and Warren Park; and in Bedhampton and St Faith's wards. Additionally, in view of our proposal to recommend that Havant be represented by 38 members, we were unable to make detailed comparisons with the boundaries proposed under the Labour Group's 45-member scheme, as ward sizes and configurations would vary substantially. It is important to note that (based on the 1999 electorate) under a council size of 38 the number of electors per councillor would be 2,433, while under a council size of 45 the number of electors per councillor would be 2,055, a difference of nearly 400 electors per ward.

44 At Stage Three we received a significant degree of support for our recommendations, including from the Borough Council. However, we also received a number of comments relating to our proposals for Bedhampton, St Faith's and Stakes wards. In the light of these comments we have reviewed the proposed electoral arrangements for these wards. The details of our final recommendations are discussed in the text below and illustrated on the large map at the back of the report. For borough warding purposes, the following areas, based on existing wards, are considered in turn:

- (a) Cowplain, Hart Plain and Waterloo wards;
- (b) Purbrook and Stakes wards;
- (c) Barncroft, Battins, Bondfields and Warren Park wards;
- (d) Bedhampton, Emsworth and St Faith's wards;
- (e) Hayling East and Hayling West wards.

45 Details of our final recommendations are set out in Figures 1 and 2, and illustrated on Map 2, in Appendix A and on the large map inserted at the back of this report.

Cowplain, Hart Plain and Waterloo wards

46 Located in the north of the borough, these three wards are currently each represented by three councillors. The number of electors per councillor is 7 per cent above the borough average in Cowplain ward (6 per cent in 2004), 2 per cent above the average in Hart Plain ward (1 per cent below in 2004) and 22 per cent above the average in Waterloo ward (20 per cent in 2004).

47 At Stage One the Borough Council proposed that this area continue to be represented by three three-member wards, but that the existing boundaries be modified to provide improved electoral equality. Cowplain ward would be extended south to include part of the existing Waterloo ward, while its western boundary with Hart Plain ward would be modified to follow Linda Grove. The existing Hart Plain ward would be subject to only minor modifications. Waterloo ward would be modified to exclude an area in the north-east while its southern boundary would be extended to include Waterlooville town centre. Under the Council's proposals the number of electors per councillor in Cowplain ward would be 1 per cent above the borough average (unchanged in 2004), and 3 per cent above the average in Hart Plain and Waterloo wards (equal to and 1 per cent above the average in 2004).

48 Under a 45-member council Havant Labour Group proposed that this area be represented by four three-member wards. As previously discussed, we were unable to consider the Labour Group's proposed boundaries in detail, due to the significant difference in ward patterns under a 45-member scheme. Councillor O'Brien opposed both the Borough Council's and Labour Group's proposals in this area, for reasons of community identity. She proposed an alternative which would have resulted in a worsening of electoral equality.

49 We carefully considered all the representations received at Stage One and in the light of our recommendation for a 38-member council, we recommended that Havant Borough Council's proposals for the wards of Cowplain, Hart Plain and Waterloo be adopted without modification. We were satisfied that this configuration would provide good electoral equality and accurately reflect communities in the area. We also noted that these arrangements would broadly reflect the wards proposed by Havant Labour Group.

50 During Stage Three the Borough Council and Waterlooville & District Residents' Association fully supported our draft recommendations in this area. Councillor O'Brien, member for Stakes ward, proposed a modification to the boundary between the proposed Stakes and Waterloo wards, to better reflect community identities (see below). This proposal was supported by County Councillor Blackett, member for Purbrook & Stakes (South) division, and a resident of Waterlooville.

51 Having carefully considered the representations received, we propose endorsing our draft recommendations for the wards of Cowplain and Hart Plain as final, as we note that they would provide significant improvements in electoral equality and command local support. We have noted Councillor O'Brien's proposal and her statement that community identities could be better reflected. However, we are concerned that the proposal would have implications for the electoral equality of neighbouring wards (see below). Consequently, and in the light of the support expressed for our proposal and the significant improvements in electoral equality achieved, we also propose confirming our draft recommendations for Waterloo ward as final. These proposals are outlined on the large map at the back of this report.

Purbrook and Stakes wards

52 The wards of Purbrook and Stakes are situated in the west of the borough and are both represented by three councillors. The members for Purbrook and Stakes wards currently represent 10 per cent and 24 per cent more electors than the borough average respectively (unchanged and 23 per cent more in 2004).

53 At Stage One the Borough Council proposed that this area continue to be represented by two revised three-member wards, Purbrook and Stakes. It proposed that the eastern boundary of Purbrook ward be extended to follow the A3(M) in the east and part of Portsdown Hill Road in the south and that its northern boundary be extended to include Park Farm Road (part of Stakes ward). Stakes ward would be revised to exclude Waterlooville town centre in the north, and a small number of electors on Park Farm Road. Under these proposals the electoral variances in Purbrook and Stakes wards would be 2 per cent and 3 per cent respectively (unchanged and 2 per cent respectively by 2004).

54 Havant Labour Group proposed that this area be represented by a revised Purbrook ward and a new Crookhorn ward. As previously discussed, we were unable to consider the Labour Group's proposed boundaries in detail, due to the significant difference in ward patterns under a 45-member scheme.

55 We carefully considered the Stage One representations and, given our proposal for a council size of 38 and the resulting high levels of electoral equality in this area, we proposed that the Borough Council's recommendations for Purbrook and Stakes wards be adopted without modification. We considered that the revised wards would accurately reflect local communities and provide identifiable boundaries, and were also satisfied that they would provide good electoral equality.

56 At Stage Three the Borough Council and Waterloo & District Residents' Association fully supported our draft recommendations in this area. Councillor O'Brien, member for Stakes ward, proposed a modification to the boundary between the wards of Waterloo and Stakes. She proposed that the part of Stakes ward broadly between Friendstaple Road and the A3(M) be included in a modified Waterloo ward, to better reflect community identities. This proposal was supported by County Councillor Blackett, member for Purbrook & Stakes (South) division, and a resident of Waterloo.

57 We have noted Councillor O'Brien's proposal but are concerned that it would create significant electoral imbalances in the wards of Stakes and Waterloo (both wards would have electoral variances of over 10 per cent). We have attempted to find an alternative arrangement, to accommodate this proposal, but have been unable to identify a more satisfactory arrangement than the draft recommendations. Having carefully considered the representations received, we have decided to confirm our draft recommendations for the wards of Purbrook and Stakes as final, without modification. In our opinion they would achieve a good balance between electoral equality and the statutory criteria and note that they have received some local support.

Barncroft, Battins, Bondfields and Warren Park wards

58 These three-member wards are situated in the north of the borough and are all significantly over-represented. The number of electors per councillor is currently 39 per cent below, 16 per cent below, 22 per cent below and 30 per cent below the borough average in Barncroft, Battins, Bondfields and Warren Park wards respectively, with little or no change forecast by 2004.

59 At Stage One the Borough Council asserted that under a 38-member council the total electorate of Barncroft, Battins, Bondfields and Warren Park wards would be entitled to eight councillors, four fewer than at present. In order to facilitate this level of representation the Borough Council proposed that this area continue to be covered by four wards, but that each be represented by two councillors, rather than three as at present. The eastern boundary of the revised Barncroft ward would broadly follow the rear of properties on Middle Park Way, Finchdean Road, Purbrook Way and Stock Heath Road to Barncroft Way. The southern boundary would be revised to include electors on Barncroft Way and Ashley Close from Bedhampton ward. The A3(M) would be retained as the western boundary of Barncroft ward.

60 The Council proposed that Battins ward be modified to broadly exclude Stockheath Common and the allotments, the area south of Tronsnant School and Well Meadow, Cotswold Close, Great Close and the factory on Fulford Road. Warren Park ward would be modified to exclude Corhampton Crescent, Ditcham Crescent and Middle Park Way. The existing boundaries of Bondfields ward would be retained. The number of electors per councillor would be 2 per cent below the borough average in Barncroft ward (unchanged in 2004), 3 per cent below the average in Battins ward (4 per cent in 2004), 6 per cent above in Bondfields ward (5 per cent in 2004) and 2 per cent below in Warren Park ward (4 per cent in 2004).

61 Havant Labour Group asserted that, under its proposal for a 45-member council, these wards would be entitled to 10 councillors (two fewer than at present) and proposed that the number of councillors representing the wards of Barncroft and Warren Park be reduced to two to facilitate this. As previously discussed, we were unable to consider the Labour Group's proposed boundaries in detail, due to the significant difference in ward patterns under a 45-member scheme.

62 We carefully considered all the Stage One representations and, having proposed a council size of 38, we recommended the adoption of the Borough Council's proposals, subject to a number of minor modifications to provide more coherent boundaries and ward configurations. We recommended that the Borough Council's proposed boundary between the wards of Barncroft and Warren Park be modified, to broadly include Chalton Crescent and Cheriton Close in Barncroft ward. We further proposed that the Council's Warren Park ward be extended southwards to include Corhampton Crescent, Hermitage Close and Adsdean Close, and that the proposed Battins ward be extended southwards to include St Francis Place and Sunnyheath. Under our proposals the members for Barncroft ward would represent 5 per cent fewer electors than the borough average (unchanged in 2004) and in Battins and Warren Park wards the members would represent 1 per cent fewer electors than the average (2 per cent and 4 per cent respectively in 2004). The electoral variance of Bondfields ward would be 6 per cent initially (5 per cent in 2004).

63 During Stage Three the Borough Council & Waterlooville and District Residents' Association fully supported our draft recommendations in this area. We received no further comments relating to the proposals in this area.

64 Having noted the significant local support for our proposals in this area, we propose confirming our draft recommendation, for the wards of Barncroft, Battins, Bondfields and Warren Park as final. The proposals would provide good electoral equality and allocate the correct level of representation to the area. These proposals are outlined on the large map at the back of the report.

Bedhampton, Emsworth and St Faith's wards

65 Bedhampton, Emsworth and St Faith's wards cover a large geographical area in the east of the borough. Each ward is represented by three councillors. The electoral variance is currently 7 per cent in Bedhampton ward (8 per cent in 2004), 20 per cent in Emsworth ward (unchanged in 2004) and 16 per cent in St Faith's ward (20 per cent in 2004).

66 At Stage One the Borough Council proposed that this area continue to be represented by three three-member wards. It proposed that Emsworth ward retain its existing boundaries and that the western boundary of St Faith's ward be modified to exclude 750 electors (to be included in the modified Bedhampton ward). The northern boundary of a revised Bedhampton ward would generally follow the existing boundary along Hubert Road, Jessie Road and Park Lane. Its eastern boundary would be extended to include part of Battins ward, while its western boundary with Purbrook ward would be modified to follow the A3(M) and Portsdown Hill Road. Under this scheme the number of electors per councillor would be 8 per cent below the average in Bedhampton ward (unchanged in 2004), 9 per cent above the average in Emsworth ward (8 per cent in 2004) and 5 per cent below the average in St Faith's ward (2 per cent in 2004).

67 Havant Labour Group proposed that this area be represented by four wards, rather than the current three, with the existing Emsworth ward divided into two two-member wards: Emsworth and Spencers. As previously discussed, we were unable to consider the Labour Group's proposed boundaries in detail, due to the significant difference in ward patterns under a 45-member scheme.

68 After carefully considering all the representations received at Stage One and having proposed a council size of 38, we adopted the Borough Council's recommendation to retain the existing boundaries of Emsworth ward. We considered that the proposal would provide good electoral equality and accurately reflect community interests in the area. We noted that the electoral equality in Emsworth ward under our draft recommendations would not be as good as that under the Havant Labour Group's scheme in the same area. However, it is important to note that, under a council size of 38, further improvements in electoral equality in Emsworth ward would have involved dividing distinct communities in neighbouring areas.

69 We recommended adopting the Borough Council's modification to the western boundary of St Faith's ward, but proposed that this boundary be extended further east to include a larger number of electors in Bedhampton ward. We noted that the eastern boundary of the Borough Council's Bedhampton ward would not be clearly identifiable and that such a modification would improve electoral equality in Bedhampton ward. Under our proposals the boundary was extended to broadly include Boundary Way, North Way, West Street, Cross Way and Park Way in Bedhampton ward. The number of electors per councillor in the modified Bedhampton ward would be 5 per cent below the borough average (6 per cent in 2004) and 7 per cent below the average in St Faith's ward (4 per cent in 2004).

70 A local resident proposed that the boundary between Havant and Portsmouth be modified to include West Bedhampton in Portsmouth. The Commission is unable to review the external boundaries of local authority areas as part of a periodic electoral review; this would require a direction from the Secretary of State. We therefore suggested that any queries relating to this issue be addressed to the Secretary of State for the Department of the Environment, Transport and the Regions.

71 At Stage Three the Borough Council and Waterlooville & District Residents' Association fully supported our draft recommendations in this area. Havant Conservative Association and Councillor Fulcher, member for St Faith's ward, both expressed reservations about our proposed boundary between the wards of Bedhampton and St Faith's, asserting that it would not best reflect

community identities in the area. Councillor Fulcher proposed that the railway line be utilised as a boundary, and the Conservative Association proposed that the Borough Council's Stage One proposals in this area be adopted. Both suggestions would result in a worsening of electoral equality. Havant Labour Group asserted that our proposals for Emsworth do not best reflect community identities.

72 We have noted the objections to the boundary between Bedhampton and St Faith's wards but are concerned that both locally suggested alternatives would worsen electoral equality, with Bedhampton ward being 12 per cent under-represented if the railway line was utilised as a boundary. Electoral variances of this extent are of particular concern to us in such an urban area. We have attempted to identify an alternative arrangement that would better reflect community identities, while continuing to provide similar levels of electoral equality. However, we conclude that the alternatives would result in either a worsening of electoral equality or a departure from identifiable and locally supported boundaries in neighbouring areas. We have not been convinced by the evidence received at Stage Three that Havant Labour Group's proposals for Emsworth would better reflect community identities than the draft recommendations. We know that our proposal commands some local support and do not feel that the further warding of this area would provide improved electoral arrangements. Having carefully considered the representations received, we propose endorsing our draft recommendations for Bedhampton, Emsworth and St Faith's wards as final. We consider that they strike the best balance presently available between electoral equality and the statutory criteria. We have also noted that they command some local support. The proposals are outlined on the large map at the back of the report.

Hayling East and Hayling West wards

73 The two three-member wards of Hayling East and Hayling West cover Hayling Island, situated in the far south of Havant borough. The number of electors per councillor in Hayling East and Hayling West wards is currently 8 per cent and 5 per cent above the borough average respectively (10 per cent and 6 per cent in 2004).

74 At Stage One the Borough Council proposed that the existing boundaries of these wards be retained. Under a council size of 38, electoral equality in these wards would improve, with the number of electors per councillor being 2 per cent below and 5 per cent below the borough average in Hayling East and Hayling West wards respectively (1 per cent and 4 per cent by 2004).

75 Havant Labour Group recommended that Hayling Island be represented by one three-member ward and two two-member wards. However, as previously discussed, we were unable to consider the Labour Group's proposed boundaries in detail, due to the significant difference in ward patterns under a 45-member scheme.

76 We carefully considered the representations received at Stage One and, given a council size of 38, adopted the Borough Council's recommendation for no change to the wards of Hayling East and Hayling West. We were satisfied that this proposal would provide good electoral equality and reflect existing community ties in the area.

77 At Stage Three the Borough Council and Waterlooville & District Residents' Association supported our draft recommendations in this area in full. In its Stage Three submission, Havant

Labour Group asserted that our proposals for Hayling Island did not best reflect community identities, proposing three wards (as at Stage One) to cover the same area.

78 We have noted the Labour Group's suggestion that our draft recommendations in this area do not best reflect local communities. However, since we propose endorsing our recommendation for a 38-member council as final, the Labour Group's proposals in this area would not provide for good electoral equality or, in our opinion, better reflect community ties. We have decided to endorse our draft recommendations for Hayling East and Hayling West wards as final, as they would achieve reasonable electoral equality and command some local support. These proposals are outlined on the large map at the back of the report.

Electoral Cycle

79 At Stage One we received no proposals in relation to the electoral cycle of the borough. Accordingly, we made no recommendation for change to the present system of elections by thirds. At Stage Three no further comments were received to the contrary, and we confirm our draft recommendation as final.

Conclusions

80 Having carefully considered all the representations and evidence received in response to our consultation report, we have decided to endorse our draft recommendations in full. We conclude that, in Havant:

- there should be a reduction in council size from 42 to 38;
- there should be 14 wards, as at present;
- the boundaries of 10 of the existing wards should be modified;
- the Council should continue to hold elections by thirds.

81 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.

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	42	38	42	38
Number of wards	14	14	14	14
Average number of electors per councillor	2,201	2,433	2,192	2,423
Number of wards with a variance more than 10 per cent from the average	8	0	8	0
Number of wards with a variance more than 20 per cent from the average	5	0	4	0

82 As Figure 4 shows, our recommendations would result in a reduction in the number of wards with an electoral variance of more than 10 per cent from eight to zero. This improved level of electoral equality would improve further in 2004. We conclude that our recommendations would best meet the need for electoral equality, having regard to the statutory criteria.

Final Recommendation
 Havant Borough Council should comprise 38 councillors serving 14 wards, as detailed and named in Figures 1 and 2, and illustrated on Map 2 on the large map inserted at the back of the report. The Council should continue to hold elections by thirds.

Map 2: The Commission's Final Recommendations for Havant

6 NEXT STEPS

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

84 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 before 4 September 2000.

85 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

