

LOCAL
GOVERNMENT
COMMISSION
FOR ENGLAND

DRAFT
RECOMMENDATIONS
ON THE FUTURE
ELECTORAL
ARRANGEMENTS FOR
CAMDEN

June 1999

LOCAL GOVERNMENT COMMISSION FOR ENGLAND

This report sets out the Commission's draft recommendations on the electoral arrangements for the London borough of Camden.

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

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WHY YOUR LOCAL AUTHORITY IS UNDER REVIEW

The Local Government Commission for England is an independent body set up by Parliament. Our task is to review and make recommendations to the Government on whether there should be changes to the structure of local government, the boundaries of individual local authority areas, and to their electoral arrangements, such as the number of councillors representing residents in each area.

As a result of changes in the electorate, we are statutorily required to review periodically the electoral arrangements of every principal local authority in England.

In broad terms, the objective of this periodic electoral review of Camden 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 can recommend changes to ward boundaries, the number of councillors and ward names, and propose the creation or abolition of wards. We cannot recommend changes to the external administrative boundary of the borough as part of this review.

This report sets out our draft recommendations on the electoral arrangements for Camden. Our conclusions are summarised at the front of the report, and illustrated on the large map inside the back cover. Details of our draft recommendations, and how to comment on them, are set out in Chapters 4 and 5.

We have not yet decided on our final recommendations and wish to use this period to seek further evidence. We will be prepared to modify or change our draft recommendations in the light of views expressed if, in our judgement, the statutory criteria and the achievement of electoral equality would be better served. It is therefore important that all those interested in the review should give us their views and evidence, *whether or not* they agree with our draft recommendations.

SUMMARY

The Commission began a review of the electoral arrangements for Camden on 5 January 1999.

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

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

- in 11 of the 26 wards the number of electors represented by each councillor varies by more than 10 per cent from the average for the borough, with one ward varying by more than 20 per cent;
- 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 10 wards, and by more than 20 per cent in one ward.

Our main draft recommendations for future electoral arrangements (Figures 1 and 2 and paragraphs 98-99) are that:

- Camden Borough Council should be served by 54 councillors, five fewer than at present;
- there should be 18 wards, eight fewer than at present, which would involve changes to the boundaries of all of the existing wards.

These draft 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 18 wards the number of electors per councillor would vary by no more than 3 per cent from the borough average.
- This improved electoral equality is forecast to continue, with the number of electors per councillor in all of the wards expected to vary by no more than 2 per cent from the average for the borough by 2004.

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

- We will consult on our draft recommendations for 11 weeks from 29 June 1999. We have not yet decided on our final recommendations and wish to use this period to seek further evidence. Because we take this consultation very seriously, we may move away from our draft recommendations in the light of Stage Three responses if, in our judgement, the statutory criteria and the achievement of electoral equality would be better served. It is important, therefore, that all interested parties let us have their views and evidence, whether or not they agree with our draft recommendations.
- After considering local views, we will decide whether to modify our draft recommendations and then make our final recommendations to the Secretary of State for the Environment, Transport and the Regions.
- It will then be for the Secretary of State to accept, modify or reject our final recommendations. He will determine when any changes come into effect.

You should express your views by writing directly to the Commission at the address below by 13 September 1999:

Review Manager
Camden Review
Local Government Commission for England
Dolphyn Court
10/11 Great Turnstile
London WC1V 7JU

Fax: 0171 404 6142
E-mail: reviews@lgce.gov.uk

Figure 1:
The Commission's Draft Recommendations: Summary

Ward name	Number of councillors	Constituent areas (existing wards)
1 Belsize	3	Adelaide ward (part); Belsize ward (part)
2 Bloomsbury	3	Bloomsbury ward (part)
3 Camden Town with Primrose Hill	3	Adelaide ward (part); Camden ward (part); Castlehaven ward (part); Caversham ward (part); Chalk Farm ward; Regent's Park ward (part); St Pancras ward (part)
4 Canteloves	3	Camden ward (part); Caversham ward (part)
5 Fortune Green	3	Fortune Green ward; Kilburn ward (part); West End ward (part)
6 Frognal	3	Belsize ward (part); Fitzjohns ward (part); Frognal ward (part)
7 Gospel Oak	3	Gospel Oak ward; Grafton ward (part); South End ward (part)
8 Hampstead Town	3	Fitzjohns ward (part); Frognal ward (part); Hampstead Town ward; South End ward (part)
9 Haverstock	3	Adelaide ward (part); Grafton ward (part); Castlehaven ward (part); South End ward (part)
10 Highgate	3	Highgate ward; St John's ward (part)
11 Holborn	3	Bloomsbury ward (part); Brunswick ward (part); Holborn ward
12 Kentish Town	3	Castlehaven ward (part); Caversham ward (part); St John's ward (part)
13 Kilburn	3	Kilburn ward (part); Priory ward (part); Swiss Cottage ward (part)
14 King's Cross	3	Brunswick ward (part); King's Cross ward
15 Regent's Park	3	Regent's Park ward (part); St Pancras ward (part); Somers Town ward (part)
16 St Pancras & Somers Town	3	Camden ward (part); St Pancras ward (part); Somers Town ward (part)
17 Swiss Cottage	3	Adelaide ward (part); Priory ward (part); Swiss Cottage ward (part)
18 West Hampstead	3	Kilburn ward (part); Swiss Cottage ward (part); West End 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 Draft Recommendations for Camden

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 Belsize	3	7,784	2,595	3	7,637	2,546	-1
2 Bloomsbury	3	7,724	2,575	2	7,734	2,578	0
3 Camden Town with Primrose Hill	3	7,721	2,574	2	7,820	2,607	2
4 Canteloves	3	7,504	2,501	0	7,829	2,610	2
5 Fortune Green	3	7,317	2,439	-3	7,636	2,545	-1
6 Frognal	3	7,500	2,500	-1	7,650	2,550	-1
7 Gospel Oak	3	7,451	2,484	-1	7,713	2,571	0
8 Hampstead Town	3	7,536	2,512	0	7,729	2,576	0
9 Haverstock	3	7,284	2,428	-3	7,662	2,554	-1
10 Highgate	3	7,714	2,571	2	7,792	2,597	1
11 Holborn	3	7,309	2,436	-3	7,602	2,534	-1
12 Kentish Town	3	7,612	2,537	1	7,811	2,604	1
13 Kilburn	3	7,391	2,464	-2	7,561	2,520	-2
14 King's Cross	3	7,499	2,500	-1	7,632	2,544	-1
15 Regent's Park	3	7,703	2,568	2	7,800	2,600	1
16 St Pancras & Somers Town	3	7,675	2,558	2	7,824	2,608	2
17 Swiss Cottage	3	7,655	2,552	2	7,641	2,547	-1
18 West Hampstead	3	7,301	2,434	-3	7,601	2,534	-1
Totals	54	135,680	—	—	138,674	—	—
Averages	—	—	2,513	—	—	2,568	—

Source: Electorate figures are based on Camden Borough Council's submission.

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 draft recommendations on the electoral arrangements for the London borough of Camden.

2 In broad terms, the objective of this periodic electoral review (PER) of Camden 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 periodic electoral reviews we must have regard to:

- the statutory criteria 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* in Schedule 11 to the Local Government Act 1972 (see Appendix B).

4 We also have regard to our *Guidance and Procedural Advice for Local Authorities and Other Interested Parties* (second edition published in March 1998). This 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.

5 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.

6 We are not prescriptive on council size but, as indicated in our *Guidance*, would expect the overall number of members on a London borough council usually to be between 40 and 80. 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.

7 The review is in four stages (Figure 3).

Figure 3:
Stages of the Review

Stage	Description
One	Submission of proposals to the Commission
Two	The Commission's analysis and deliberation
Three	Publication of draft recommendations and consultation on them
Four	Final deliberation and report to the Secretary of State

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 the first London borough reviews by the Commission. (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. Having discussed the appropriate timing of London borough reviews with local authority interests, we therefore 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 in June 1998 and the last group began in February 1999, with completion planned for June 1999 to February 2000.

10 We have sought to ensure that all concerned are aware of our approach to the reviews. Copies of our *Guidance* have been 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 have welcomed the opportunity to meet with chief officers and, on an all-party basis, members in the great 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, Camden is in the fourth phase of reviews.

12 The Government's subsequent White Paper, *Modern Local Government – In Touch with the People*, published in July 1998, sets 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 so far is that proposals for three-member ward patterns are emerging from most areas in London.

14 As a quite separate exercise to the PERs, the Commission was directed by the Secretary of State to review the electoral arrangements of the Greater London Authority. Our recommendations were put to the Secretary of State in November 1998.

15 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 Camden

16 This is our first review of the electoral arrangements for Camden. The last such review was undertaken by our predecessor, the Local Government Boundary Commission (LGBC), which reported to the Secretary of State in August 1977 (Report No. 230).

17 Stage One began on 5 January 1999, when we wrote to Camden 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. 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, the end of Stage One, was 29 March 1999. At Stage Two we considered all the representations received during Stage One and prepared our draft recommendations.

18 Stage Three began on 29 June 1999 and will end on 13 September 1999. This stage involves publication of the draft recommendations in this report and public consultation on them. We take this consultation very seriously and it is therefore important that all those interested in the review should let us have their views and evidence, whether or not they agree with our draft recommendations.

19 During Stage Four we will reconsider the draft recommendations in the light of the Stage Three consultation, decide whether to move away from them in any areas, and submit final recommendations to the Secretary of State. Interested parties will have a further six weeks to make representations to the Secretary of State. It will then be for him to accept, modify or reject our final recommendations. If the Secretary of State accepts the recommendations, with or without modification, he will make an order. The Secretary of State will determine when any changes come into effect.

2. CURRENT ELECTORAL ARRANGEMENTS

20 The borough of Camden is located in inner London, covers eleven square miles and contains more than 180,000 people. The business centres of Holborn, Tottenham Court Road and New Oxford Street, the residential areas of Kilburn, Highgate, Hampstead, Kentish Town and Swiss Cottage, and the contrasting areas of Bloomsbury, Camden Town, King's Cross and Somers Town all combine to make the borough unique in character. It also contains significant centres of national importance, with the British Museum, the University of London, a number of leading teaching hospitals and the open spaces of Parliament Hill and Hampstead Heath all situated within its boundaries.

21 Good transport links exist throughout Camden, with the Finchley Road, the Euston Road, Haverstock Hill and Camden High Street all passing through the borough, linking central London with north London. The three major rail termini of Euston, King's Cross and St Pancras serve as principal links with the Midlands and North of England, and a number of London Underground lines pass through the borough including the Bakerloo, Piccadilly, Northern and Victoria lines.

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 135,680. The Council currently has 59 councillors who are elected from 26 wards (Map 1 and Figure 4). Seven wards are each represented by three councillors and 19 wards elect two councillors each. As in all London boroughs, the whole council is elected together every four years.

24 Since the last electoral review, there has been a net decrease in electorate in the borough, with around 5 per cent fewer electors than two decades

ago. At present, each councillor represents an average of 2,300 electors, which the Council forecasts will increase to 2,350 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 11 of the 26 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 Camden ward where both councillors represent on average 22 per cent more electors than the borough average.

Figure 4:
Existing Electoral Arrangements

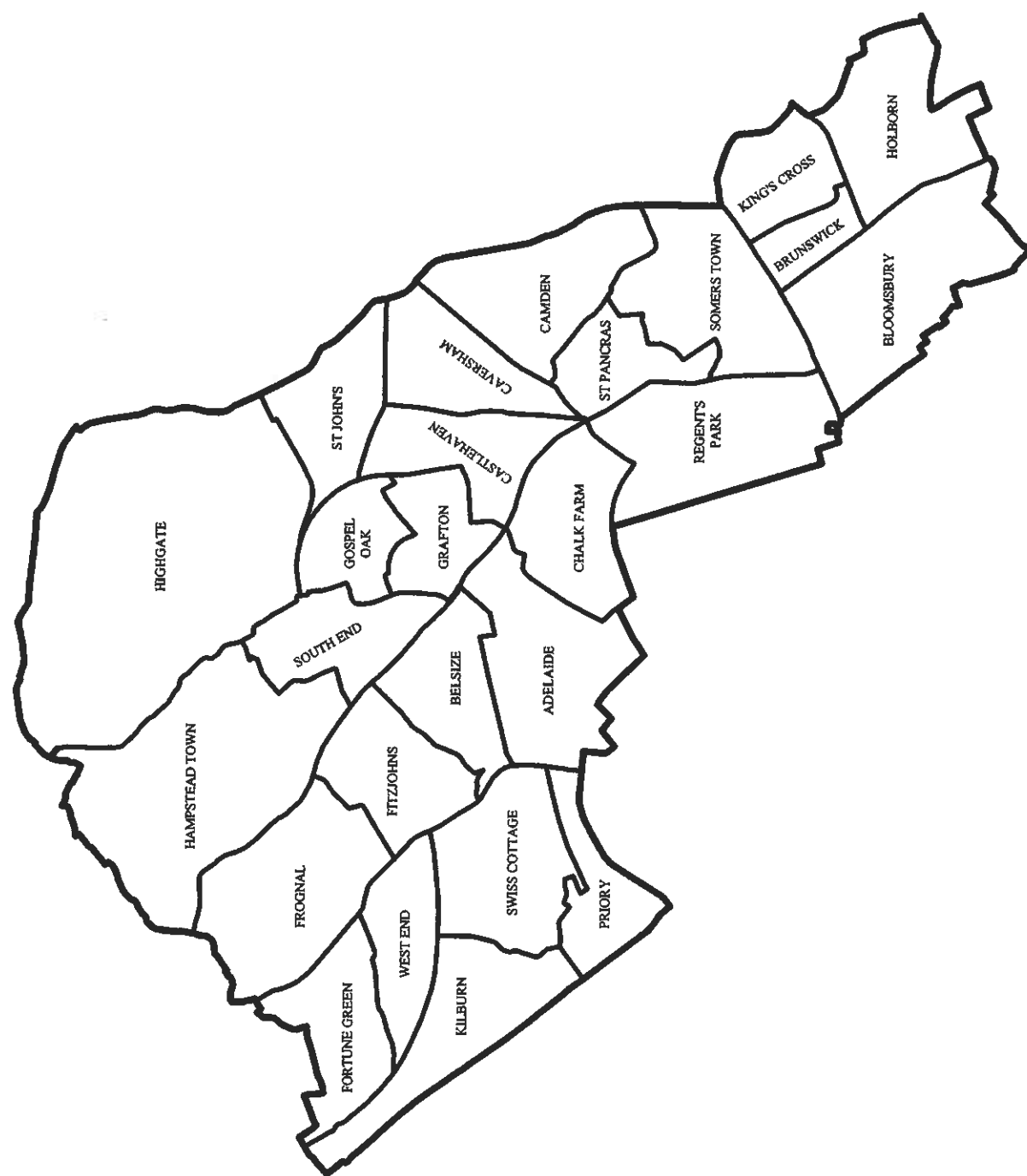
Ward name	Number of councillors	Electorate (1999)	Number of electors per councillor	Variance from average %	Electorate (2004)	Number of electors per councillor	Variance from average %
1 Adelaide	3	5,867	1,956	-15	5,819	1,940	-16
2 Belsize	3	6,039	2,013	-12	5,921	1,974	-14
3 Bloomsbury	3	7,959	2,653	15	8,036	2,679	16
4 Brunswick	2	4,647	2,324	1	4,668	2,334	1
5 Camden	2	5,596	2,798	22	5,898	2,949	28
6 Castlehaven	2	4,104	2,052	-11	4,261	2,131	-7
7 Caversham	2	5,211	2,606	13	5,363	2,682	17
8 Chalk Farm	2	4,178	2,089	-9	4,206	2,103	-9
9 Fitzjohns	2	3,986	1,993	-13	4,177	2,089	-9
10 Fortune Green	2	4,095	2,048	-11	4,320	2,160	-6
11 Frognal	2	4,536	2,268	-1	4,558	2,279	-1
12 Gospel Oak	2	4,469	2,235	-3	4,548	2,274	-1
13 Grafton	2	4,417	2,209	-4	4,734	2,367	3
14 Hampstead Town	2	3,960	1,980	-14	3,969	1,985	-14
15 Highgate	3	7,460	2,487	8	7,533	2,511	9
16 Holborn	2	4,986	2,493	8	5,202	2,601	13
17 Kilburn	3	7,614	2,538	10	7,843	2,614	14
18 King's Cross	2	4,940	2,470	7	5,061	2,531	10
19 Priory	2	4,710	2,355	2	4,795	2,398	4
20 Regent's Park	3	6,772	2,257	-2	6,855	2,285	-1
21 Somers Town	2	4,890	2,445	6	4,935	2,468	7
22 South End	2	5,095	2,548	11	5,406	2,703	18
23 St John's	2	4,715	2,358	3	4,807	2,404	5
24 St Pancras	2	3,727	1,864	-19	3,803	1,902	-17

Figure 4 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 Swiss Cottage	3	6,949	2,316	1	6,939	2,313	1
26 West End	2	4,758	2,379	3	5,017	2,509	9
Totals	59	135,680	-	-	138,674	-	-
Averages	-	-	2,300	-	-	2,350	-

Source: Electorate figures are based on Camden Borough Council's submission.

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 St Pancras ward are relatively over-represented by 19 per cent, while electors in Camden ward are relatively under-represented by 22 per cent. Figures have been rounded to the nearest whole number.



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3. REPRESENTATIONS RECEIVED

25 At the start of the review, we invited members of the public and other interested parties to write to us giving their views on the future electoral arrangements for Camden Borough Council.

26 During this initial stage of the review, officers from the Commission visited the area and met with officers and members from the Council. We are most grateful to all concerned for their co-operation and assistance. We received 31 representations during Stage One. The Council, the Liberal Democrat Group on the Council and the Camden Conservative Committee all submitted borough-wide schemes. These, with accompanying mapping, may be inspected at the offices of the Council and the Commission by appointment, along with copies of all other representations received.

Camden Borough Council

27 The Council proposed that there should be a council size of 54 members, five fewer than at present, representing 18 three-member wards. Under its proposals all of the present 26 wards would be modified, and the number of electors per councillor in all of the wards would not exceed 3 per cent from the borough average. By 2004 this level of electoral equality was expected to improve, with all wards varying by 2 per cent or less from the borough average by that time.

28 The Council proposed an entire pattern of three-member wards for the borough, stating that its proposals were devised from the standpoint of allowing "the natural and social features that shape communities to identify the correct number of wards" (and therefore the council size). It acknowledged that balancing the need to reflect local community identities while securing good electoral equality is a difficult task, and stated that it had therefore determined which local features were perceived as strong divisions between communities. It had also attempted to work out "how best to straddle other features in the least destructive manner for local communities". Its proposals would retain the majority of the A41 (Finchley Road) and all of the A501 (Euston

Road) as ward boundaries, and utilise other locally identifiable features as boundaries elsewhere in the borough.

29 As part of the Council's submission, we received the views of Councillors Robinson and Lazenby, who represent the present St Pancras ward. The two councillors put forward a boundary modification to the Council's proposals for their area. They suggested that an area to the north-west of Euston British Rail station, on the eastern side of the railway tracks, should be included in the Council's proposed St Pancras & Somers Town ward, rather than be placed in its revised Regent's Park ward. Consequently an area to the north of this, around the Mornington Crescent London Underground station, would be transferred to the Regent's Park ward to compensate for the loss of electors in that ward. The councillors argued that this modification would better reflect local community identities.

Camden Borough Council Liberal Democrat Group

30 The Liberal Democrat Group on the Council proposed a council size of 57 members, two fewer than at present, representing 19 three-member wards. Under its proposals, the number of electors per councillor in all but one ward would vary by 4 per cent or less from the borough average, with its proposed Kilburn ward at 9 per cent above the average. By 2004 all but two wards would vary by 3 per cent or less from the borough average, with its proposed Kilburn and West End wards varying from the average by 7 per cent and 8 per cent respectively. Its proposals would involve modifications to all existing wards and would secure a number of clearly identifiable ward boundaries, including the centre of major roads and railway lines.

31 The Group stated that the Council's proposals "have many serious defects" and that they do not "fulfil the Commission's criteria of the need to reflect the identities and interests of local communities". It added that the Council's proposals would split some natural communities and conservation areas, as well as create wards

which cross major roads. The Liberal Democrat Group commented that "we believe it is vitally important that communities should be kept together wherever possible".

Camden Conservative Committee

32 The Camden Conservative Committee supported the Council's proposal for a 54-member council size based on 18 three-member wards. It supported a number of the Council's proposed wards, particularly in the north and west of the borough, but proposed some amendments that it believed would "make wards that better reflect Camden's local communities". Under its proposals the number of electors per councillor in all wards would vary by no more than 3 per cent from the borough average initially and by no more than 2 per cent by 2004.

Other Representations

33 We received a further 28 representations. The Camden Square Neighbourhood Association opposed a reduction in the number of wards for the borough and also opposed the principle of elections by thirds on the grounds that "more elections must mean an increase in cost to the ratepayers". The Camden Square Tenants' & Residents' Association supported a pattern of 20 three-member wards, a draft scheme prepared by the Council during Stage One for local consultation. It stated that Camden Square "has natural boundaries" and that the Council's scheme for 20 wards would reflect those boundaries. The Chetwynd & Twisden Roads Residents' Association broadly supported the Council's proposals for a 54-member council size. However, it proposed a minor modification between the Council's proposed Highgate and Kentish Town wards, suggesting an alternative boundary between the wards in order to exclude Carrol Close and Sanderson Close from the revised Highgate ward.

34 The remaining 25 submissions were received from local residents. Of these, 17 preferred that an area around St Mark's Crescent and Gloucester Avenue be retained in a ward based on the Primrose Hill area, rather than in a ward which included areas that lie to the east of Regent's Park. Of the remaining eight submissions from local

residents, one supported an element of one of the Council's draft schemes (a proposal for a Cricklewood & Childhill ward), and five others commented on alternative council sizes. Two residents proposed alternative ward boundaries for their areas.

4. ANALYSIS AND DRAFT RECOMMENDATIONS

35 As indicated previously, our prime objective in considering the most appropriate electoral arrangements for Camden is to achieve electoral equality, having regard to the statutory criteria set out in the Local Government Act 1992 and Schedule 11 to the Local Government Act 1972, which refers to the ratio of electors to councillors being "as nearly as may be, the same in every ward of the district or borough".

36 However, our function is not merely arithmetical. First, 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. Second, we must have regard to the desirability of fixing identifiable boundaries, and to maintaining local ties which might otherwise be broken. Third, we must consider the need to secure effective and convenient local government, and reflect the interests and identities of local communities.

37 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.

38 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, 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. Regard must also be had to five-year forecasts of change in electorates. We will require particular justification for schemes which result in, or retain, an imbalance of 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

39 The Council submitted electorate forecasts for the year 2004, projecting an increase in the electorate of 2 per cent from 135,680 to 138,764 over the five-year period from 1999 to 2004. It expected much of the growth to be in the current Camden, Fortune Green, Grafton and South End wards. The Council estimated rates and locations of housing development with regard to the unitary development plan for the borough, the expected rate of building over the five-year period and assumed occupancy rates. Advice from the Council on the likely effect on electorates of changes to ward boundaries has been obtained.

40 We accept that this is an inexact science and, having given consideration to the Council's forecast electorates, are content that they represent the best estimates that can reasonably be made at this time.

Council Size

41 We indicated in our *Guidance* that we would normally expect the number of councillors serving a London borough to be in the range of 40 to 80.

42 Camden Borough Council currently has 59 members. The Council and the Camden Conservative Committee both proposed that there should be a reduction of five councillors, while the Liberal Democrat Group on the Council proposed that there should be a reduction of two. All three schemes proposed an entire pattern of three-member wards for Camden.

43 In its submission the Council commented on how it had arrived at a preferred council size of 54. It stated that "the best way to define [an optimum ward size] was not to tie the Council to a predetermined number of wards, but instead allow

the natural and social features that shape communities to identify the correct number of wards". The Council put forward considerable supporting evidence in favour of its proposed wards, and also stated that its proposals for a 54-member council size would "bring the Council into line with the average councillor:voter ratio for London". Although the Camden Conservative Committee supported parts of the Council's scheme, including the proposed council size, it did not directly comment on this issue.

44 As stated above, the Liberal Democrat Group proposed a council size of 57. It did not supply particularly strong evidence as to why a council size of 57 would be appropriate for Camden, or significant reasons why its own proposals were more preferable to those for a 54-member council size. However, it did state that the Council's proposals "have many serious defects" and that they do not "fulfil the Commission's criteria of the need to reflect the identities and interests of local communities". It also argued that the Council's proposals would divide the borough on an "east/west axis" and that this part of London is "notorious for its lack of east/west orbital transport routes".

45 We received five other representations commenting specifically on council size, all from local residents. Two submissions proposed alternative council sizes based on varying numbers of councillors returned from each proposed ward. However, given the local consensus between the three political parties represented on the Council for a pattern of three-member wards, and in light of the Government's White Paper which, *inter alia*, promotes such a warding pattern, we are not putting forward either of the residents' proposals. Two other submissions supported a scheme for 20 wards and 60 members, but given the local consensus for a reduction in council size we are not putting forward this proposal either. The other local resident supported the Liberal Democrat Group's proposal for a 57-member council size.

46 Although the Liberal Democrat Group provided details of the flaws it perceived in the Council's proposals, it did not supply particularly strong supporting evidence to persuade us that its own proposals had more merit than the Council's. The Group's reference to the Council's proposals dividing the borough along an east/west axis is only correct in relation to a relatively small part of the borough, and its own proposals themselves have

some disadvantages: for example, breaching the Euston Road as a ward boundary and the fact that two proposed wards would vary by 7 and 8 per cent from the borough average by 2004, relatively high levels of electoral inequality. Additionally, we are aware of the consultation exercise that the Council undertook during Stage One of this review, seeking the views of local residents, and we understand that its proposals took account of the views of those who responded.

47 We acknowledge that there are parts of the Liberal Democrat Group's scheme which have merit, and we are grateful to the Group for the contribution it has made during this review to date. However, on balance, we believe that the Council's proposal for a 54-member council size, supported in part by the Camden Conservative Committee, represents the best balance of the criteria guiding our work. Having considered the size and distribution of the electorate, the geography and other characteristics of the area, together with the representations received, we have concluded that the statutory criteria and the achievement of electoral equality would best be met by a council of 54 members. We would welcome any further views on the issue of council size during Stage Three.

Electoral Arrangements

48 We have carefully considered all the representations received, including borough-wide schemes from the Borough Council, the Liberal Democrat Group on the Council and the Camden Conservative Committee. From these representations, some considerations have emerged which have informed us when preparing our draft recommendations.

49 First, although the current electoral arrangements in Camden provide for a mixture of two- and three-member wards, with 19 of the former and seven of the latter, the Council, the Liberal Democrat Group and the Camden Conservative Committee all submitted proposals based on a pattern of three-member wards throughout the borough. Additionally, each proposed that there should be a reduction in council size.

50 Second, there were some broadly similar proposals put forward for the boundaries of wards in certain parts of the borough. For example, in the northern and western parts, the Council and the Camden Conservative Committee put forward very nearly identical proposals for seven wards. Additionally, the Liberal Democrat Group's

proposals were very similar to the Council's in the Frognal, Hampstead and Highgate areas. We have tried to reflect such considerations in our draft recommendations where it is consistent with our objective of electoral equality, although we note that there is no borough-wide consensus on the precise boundaries of all the various local communities.

51 Third, many of the ward names proposed were the same under each of the schemes, although some individual preferences were also put forward. Finally, all three borough-wide schemes would provide for substantially improved electoral equality, with all wards under each of the schemes varying by less than 10 per cent from the average number of electors per councillor for the borough, both initially and by 2004. We are grateful for all the representations submitted to us.

52 We have sought to put forward electoral arrangements which would achieve an excellent level of electoral equality, while also reflecting the statutory criteria. Where it exists, we have sought to reflect the consensus among representations for warding arrangements in particular parts of the borough. Inevitably though, we could not reflect the preferences of all of the respondents in our draft recommendations.

53 We have had to make judgements in light of the representations received. In view of the degree of consensus behind substantial elements of the Council's proposals, and the consultation exercise which it undertook with interested parties, we have concluded that we should base our draft recommendations on the Council's scheme. We consider that, in general, this scheme would provide a better balance between electoral equality and the statutory criteria than either the current arrangements or other schemes submitted at Stage One. The following areas, based on existing wards, are considered in turn:

- (a) Adelaide, Belsize, Fitzjohns, Frognal and Hampstead Town wards;
- (b) Bloomsbury, Brunswick, Holborn and King's Cross wards;
- (c) Camden, Castlehaven, Caversham, Chalk Farm, Regent's Park, St Pancras and Somers Town wards;
- (d) Fortune Green, Kilburn, Priory, Swiss Cottage and West End wards; and

- (e) Gospel Oak, Grafton, Highgate, St John's and South End wards.

54 Details of our draft recommendations are set out in Figures 1 and 2, and illustrated on Map 2 and the large map inserted at the back of the report.

Adelaide, Belsize, Fitzjohns, Frognal, and Hampstead Town wards

55 Presently Adelaide and Belsize wards return three councillors each, while the wards of Fitzjohns, Frognal and Hampstead Town return two councillors each. Currently the electors in this area are somewhat over-represented on the Council, with the number of electors per councillor in the five wards being 15 per cent, 12 per cent, 13 per cent, 1 per cent and 14 per cent below the borough average respectively. Over the five-year period this over-representation is not expected to improve, with the wards varying from the average by 16 per cent, 14 per cent, 9 per cent, 1 per cent and 14 per cent respectively by 2004.

56 The Council proposed that the boundaries of each of these wards should be revised. Its proposals included Adelaide ward being disbanded, with its constituent electorate being divided between revised Belsize, Camden Town, Haverstock and Swiss Cottage wards. It proposed that parts of the present Belsize, Fitzjohns and Frognal wards should form a revised Frognal ward, which would have strong boundaries, including Finchley Road to the west. It also proposed that an enlarged Hampstead Town ward should additionally include electors from the present South End, Frognal and Fitzjohns wards, while a proposed Belsize ward should comprise the majority of the ward of the same name, plus a number of electors from the present Adelaide ward.

57 Under its proposals the number of electors per councillor in revised Belsize, Frognal and Hampstead Town wards would initially be 3 per cent above, 1 per cent below and equal to the borough average respectively. By 2004 electoral equality in this area would improve, with all three wards varying by 1 per cent or less from the average.

58 The Liberal Democrat Group on the Council proposed an alternative council size for the borough, but as argued earlier in this chapter we have not been convinced that an alternative council

size (be it for 57 or 60 councillors) has greater merit than the 54-member authority proposed by the Council. As the Liberal Democrat Group's proposals are incompatible with the Council's, we were unable to use them within the framework of the Council's scheme. However, the Group's proposed Hampstead Town and Frognal wards had similar boundaries to the Council's proposed wards of the same names.

59 The Camden Conservative Committee endorsed the Council's proposals for this area in terms of the overall number of councillors which should serve it, and broadly supported the Council's proposed Hampstead Town and Frognal wards, although the boundaries it proposed for the Hampstead Town ward were slightly different and it alternatively proposed that the other ward be named Frognal & Fitzjohns. Its proposed Belsize ward was also broadly similar to the Council's proposed ward of the same name.

60 One local resident commented on the Council's proposed boundary between its Hampstead Town and Gospel Oak wards. She preferred that areas either side of the railway line in the central and northern part of the present South End ward be included in the same ward, rather than be separated between two wards as proposed by the Council. However, as the resident did not put forward any alternative boundaries in this area, which would facilitate her suggested boundary modification, we are unable to consider her proposal on the grounds of the high level of electoral inequality that would result if her boundary modification was implemented in isolation.

61 The Conservative Committee also suggested modifications to the boundary between the Council's proposed Hampstead Town and Gospel Oak wards (see also later paragraphs). Although the Conservative Committee's proposals would have similar levels of electoral equality to the proposals put forward by the Council, we have not been persuaded that its revised boundary would better reflect community identities in the area, given the consultation processes undertaken by the Council on its proposals. However, we would welcome further comments, or alternative proposals, during Stage Three.

62 We have therefore decided to adopt as our draft recommendations for this area the proposals put forward by the Council. Our proposals partly reflect those put forward by the Liberal Democrat

Group in that they also proposed retaining the ward names of Belsize, Frognal and Hampstead Town. Details of our proposed boundaries in this area are illustrated on the large map inserted at the back of this report. We would welcome any further views that interested parties may have during Stage Three.

Bloomsbury, Brunswick, Holborn and King's Cross wards

63 These four wards are located in the south of the borough, to the south of the Euston Road, and return a total of nine councillors. Bloomsbury ward returns three councillors, and varies from the borough average number of electors per councillor by 15 per cent, projected to be 16 per cent by 2004. Brunswick, Holborn and King's Cross wards each return two councillors, with the number of electors per councillor in the three wards being 1 per cent above, 8 per cent above and 7 per cent above the borough average respectively (1 per cent, 13 per cent and 10 per cent by 2004).

64 The Council proposed modifications to each of these wards, suggesting that the Euston Road be retained as a strong boundary between these wards and those to its north. Its proposals involved Brunswick ward being disbanded, with its constituent electors divided between enlarged King's Cross and Holborn wards. It acknowledged in its submission that Southampton Row and Woburn Place could provide a clearly identifiable ward boundary in the area, although it recognised that a relatively high level of electoral inequality would result. In the light of this it stated that it had examined our draft recommendations for other London boroughs in the first phase of our PERs and commented that "having a 5% deviation from the target would result in the boundary being amended by the LGC".

65 Therefore, in order to provide a good level of electoral equality in this area, it had sought to identify an area which could be transferred from Bloomsbury ward into Holborn ward, which would have the least effect on local community identities. In view of this, it proposed that an area around Russell Square should be included in its proposed Holborn ward. Under its proposals, the number of electors per councillor in the proposed Bloomsbury, Holborn and King's Cross wards would be 2 per cent above, 3 per cent below and 1 per cent below the borough average respectively. By 2004, Bloomsbury ward would be equal to the

average, while the other two wards would each vary by 1 per cent below it.

66 As detailed earlier, the Liberal Democrat Group on the Council proposed an alternative council size to that put forward by the Council. Alongside the higher levels of electoral inequality that its proposals would provide (in certain areas) compared to the Council's, the Group's proposals for this area also included breaching the Euston Road as a boundary between wards. We consider that the Euston Road is a strong division between communities in this area and that the electors on either side of it do not share particularly strong ties with each other. This is one of the factors which persuaded us to overlook the Liberal Democrat Group's proposals in favour of the Council's. As the remainder of its proposals in this area are not compatible with the Council's, we are not putting them forward.

67 The Camden Conservative Committee supported the Council's proposals concerning the overall number of councillors which should serve this area, but proposed boundary modifications between the proposed wards, which, it stated, were aimed at better reflecting local community identities and interests. Its proposals included an area around Coram's Fields being transferred into a revised Holborn ward from the present King's Cross ward, rather than an area around the Brunswick Shopping Centre being added to the Holborn ward. It also proposed that the Russell Square area should remain in a modified Bloomsbury ward, rather than be included in an enlarged Holborn ward. It suggested that an area on the western side of Kingsway should alternatively be transferred into Holborn ward.

68 The Council included as an appendix to its submission a number of responses to its own consultation from organisations in this area. The majority opposed the proposal put forward by the Conservative Committee, including one from the Covent Garden Community Association. This representation was particularly useful in its discussion of perceived community identities. Although Covent Garden lies outside the borough, the electors in the area to the west of Kingsway appear to share closer ties with Covent Garden than they do with Bloomsbury or Holborn. Therefore, we are of the view that, were we to adopt the Conservative Committee's proposals for this area as part of our draft recommendations, the

electors in this area would be split between two wards within Camden borough as well as between the boroughs of Camden and Westminster. Having considered the representations concerning this area, we regard the community of Covent Garden as having a distinct character and therefore believe that the electors around Great Queen Street, Maklin Street, Newton Street and Parker Street should be located within the same ward.

69 In light of this, and the arguments detailed earlier, we consider that the Council's proposal to transfer the Russell Square area of the present Bloomsbury ward to a revised Holborn ward to be more appropriate than the proposal put forward by the Conservative Committee. Similarly we are not convinced that the Committee's alternative boundary between revised King's Cross and Holborn wards would better reflect local community identities than those put forward by the Council. We therefore propose adopting the Council's proposals as our draft recommendations for this area, but would welcome views on alternative ward boundaries for this area. Details of our proposed boundaries in this area are illustrated on the large map inserted at the back of this report.

Camden, Castlehaven, Caversham, Chalk Farm, Regent's Park, St Pancras and Somers Town wards

70 Presently Regent's Park ward returns three councillors, and varies from the borough average number of electors per councillor by 2 per cent initially, projected to be 1 per cent by 2004. Camden, Castlehaven, Caversham, Chalk Farm, St Pancras and Somers Town wards return two councillors each, with the number of electors per councillor in the six wards being 22 per cent above, 11 per cent below, 13 per cent above, 9 per cent below, 19 per cent below and 6 per cent above the borough average respectively. Such levels of electoral inequality are not expected to improve over the five-year period, with the wards respectively varying from the average by 28 per cent, 7 per cent, 17 per cent, 9 per cent, 17 per cent and 7 per cent by 2004.

71 The Council's proposals for this area included the centre of Camden Town (around the London Underground station) becoming the focus for one ward, rather than being split among a number of wards as at present. Its proposed Camden Town ward would comprise the present Chalk Farm

ward, along with parts of the present Adelaide, Castlehaven, Caversham, Camden, St Pancras and Regent's Park wards. It also proposed a new St Pancras & Somers Town ward comprising parts of those two existing wards, together with a number of electors from the present Camden and Regent's Park wards.

72 The remainder of Somers Town ward would be included in a ward with the majority of the present Regent's Park ward, to form a revised Regent's Park ward. The Council further suggested that a new Canteloves ward should be formed from parts of the present Camden and Caversham wards. Finally in this area under the Council's proposals, the remainder of Caversham ward plus part of Castlehaven ward and the majority of St John's ward would form a new Kentish Town ward.

73 Under the Council's scheme, the number of electors per councillor in its proposed Canteloves ward would initially be equal to the borough average, projected to be 2 per cent above the average by 2004. The number of electors per councillor in each of the Camden Town, Regent's Park and St Pancras & Somers Town wards would initially be 2 per cent above the borough average, projected to be 2 per cent, 1 per cent and 2 per cent above the average respectively by 2004.

74 As detailed earlier, the Liberal Democrat Group on the Council proposed the creation of a 57-member authority based on 19 three-member wards. We have not, therefore, been able to consider the Group's proposals for this part of the borough in detail, as they are incompatible with a 54-member council size.

75 The Camden Conservative Committee endorsed the Council's proposals regarding the overall number of councillors which should serve this area, but proposed alternative ward boundaries. Like the Council, the Conservative Committee suggested that the central area of Camden Town (i.e. the area around the London Underground station) should be the focus of a ward rather than be the intersection of a number of wards, as at present. Its proposals would also utilise railway lines in this area as ward boundaries. Its proposed Camden Town, Canteloves, Regent's Park & Primrose Hill and Somers Town & Euston wards would all vary from the borough average by 3 per cent or less initially, with no ward varying by more than 2 per cent by 2004.

76 We also received representations from 17 local residents from the Primrose Hill area, expressing opposition to any proposal to include the St Mark's Crescent and Gloucester Crescent areas in a ward which included areas that lie to the east of Regent's Park (see also Chapter Three). The Camden Square Neighbourhood Association stated that it would prefer for the central part of Camden Town to be split between a number of wards (as at present) as this would enable all parts to have "a stake in the town centre". The Camden Square Tenants' & Residents' Association also expressed opposition to the Council's proposals.

77 We have carefully considered each of the representations received for this area. We agree with the Council that the Camden Town area has a united focus at the point where various roads meet around the London Underground station. We believe that uniting the area within one ward could be beneficial for this unique area. While we acknowledge that the Camden Conservative Committee's proposals for this part of the borough also have merit, we are basing our scheme on the Council's scheme (as stated earlier). We have therefore decided to endorse the Council's proposals for this area, but with two exceptions.

78 Councillors Robinson and Lazenby, who represent the existing St Pancras ward, put forward minor modifications to the Council's proposed boundary between its suggested Regent's Park and St Pancras & Somers Town wards. The Council stated that these proposals were received by it "at a very late stage" and therefore it was not possible to include them as part of its submission. However, it stated that the revised boundary would secure good levels of electoral equality in the two wards, as well as appearing to better reflect local community interests than its own proposal. In their submission councillors Robinson and Lazenby stated that the Amphill Estate should be part of the new St Pancras & Somers Town ward rather than be included in Regent's Park ward, which is divorced from the Estate by a busy road and railway line.

79 We saw merit in councillors Robinson and Lazenby's proposed boundary modification in this area and subsequently sought advice from officers of the Council regarding the implications that such a change would have on electorate totals for revised Regent's Park and St Pancras & Somers Town wards. Despite the modification, both wards would retain a comparable level of electoral equality to the

Council's proposal, both initially and by 2004. In view of this, we propose adopting as part of our draft proposals the councillors' revised boundary in this area.

80 We also examined the Council's proposed Camden Town ward in relation to its constituent communities. In our view, as the proposed ward comprises both the Camden Town area and a substantial part of the Primrose Hill area, both these communities should be reflected in the ward name. The other ward names in this part of the borough are acceptable to us at this stage. We therefore put forward for consultation the Council's proposed Canteloves ward, and the Regent's Park and St Pancras & Somers Town wards incorporating the boundary modifications described above. We endorse the boundaries of the Council's proposed Camden Town ward, but propose that it should be renamed Camden Town with Primrose Hill to better reflect the ward's constituent communities.

81 We would welcome any views on our proposals during Stage Three, in particular regarding our proposed boundary modification to two of the Council's proposed wards and our proposal to rename its proposed Camden Town ward as Camden Town with Primrose Hill. Details of our proposed boundaries in this area are illustrated on the large map inserted at the back of this report.

Fortune Green, Kilburn, Priory, Swiss Cottage and West End wards

82 Currently Kilburn and Swiss Cottage wards return three councillors each, with the number of electors per councillor in the two wards being 10 per cent and 1 per cent above the borough average respectively, projected to be 14 per cent and 1 per cent by 2004. Fortune Green, Priory and West End wards each return two councillors, with the number of electors per councillor in the three wards being 11 per cent below, 2 per cent above and 3 per cent above the borough average respectively (6 per cent, 4 per cent and 9 per cent by 2004).

83 The Council proposed that the boundaries of these five wards be modified to form four new wards, including some electors from the neighbouring Adelaide ward. Under its proposals the Finchley Road would be retained as a boundary between wards. An enlarged Fortune Green ward would include electors from the present Kilburn

and West End wards, while a revised Kilburn ward would include electors from parts of the present Kilburn, Swiss Cottage and Priory wards. A new West Hampstead ward would comprise parts of the present Kilburn, Swiss Cottage and West End wards, while the remainder of Swiss Cottage ward would form the basis of a revised Swiss Cottage ward, along with part of Priory ward and part of the neighbouring Adelaide ward.

84 Under the Council's proposals, the Fortune Green, Kilburn, Swiss Cottage and West Hampstead wards would initially vary from the borough average by 3 per cent, 2 per cent, 2 per cent and 3 per cent respectively. By 2004 none of the wards would vary by more than 2 per cent from the borough average.

85 As detailed earlier, the Liberal Democrat Group on the Council proposed a council size of 57 members. However, as we have decided to base our draft recommendations on the Council's proposals for a 54-member council size, the two schemes are incompatible and we are therefore unable to incorporate the Group's proposals into our draft proposals. Nevertheless, we are grateful for the Liberal Democrat Group's comments, particularly in this part of the borough where the Council's proposals, while securing better electoral equality, are arguably not as strong in terms of community identities.

86 The Camden Conservative Committee supported the Council's proposed Fortune Green and West Hampstead wards, and its proposals for the number of councillors which should serve this part of the borough. However, it proposed slight modifications to the boundary between the proposed Kilburn and Swiss Cottage wards in order, in its view, to better reflect local community identities. It suggested that electors on the eastern side of West End Lane should be included in the revised Kilburn ward, while the electors on the southern side of Acol Road should be included in the proposed West Hampstead ward, stating that this latter area "has little affinity with Kilburn".

87 We believe the Council's proposals to utilise the centres of West End Lane and Acol Road as ward boundaries to have marginally more merit than the Conservative Committee's proposal for the boundary to run behind properties in this area, as a more clearly identifiable boundary would be secured. However, we acknowledge that the arguments are finely balanced and would very

much welcome further evidence on local community identities in this particular area during Stage Three.

88 We therefore propose putting forward, as part of our draft recommendations, the Council's proposals for this western part of the borough. Details of our proposed boundaries and ward names in this area are illustrated on the large map inserted at the back of this report.

Gospel Oak, Grafton, Highgate, St John's and South End wards

89 Currently Highgate ward returns three councillors and the number of electors per councillor varies from the borough average by 8 per cent initially, projected to be 9 per cent by 2004. Gospel Oak, Grafton, St John's and South End wards return two councillors each, with the number of electors per councillor in the four wards being 3 per cent below, 4 per cent below, 3 per cent above and 11 per cent above the borough average respectively (1 per cent, 3 per cent, 5 per cent and 18 per cent by 2004).

90 The Council proposed that an enlarged Gospel Oak ward should also include electors from parts of the present South End and Grafton wards, with most of the remaining electors from South End ward being transferred to an enlarged Hampstead Town ward (as described earlier). A new Haverstock ward would comprise the majority of the present Grafton ward, along with parts of the present Adelaide, South End and Castlehaven wards. The majority of the present St John's ward would form a new Kentish Town ward, along with parts of the existing Castlehaven and Caversham wards, while the remaining part of St John's ward would be included in an enlarged Highgate ward.

91 Under the Council's proposals, the number of electors per councillor in revised Gospel Oak and Highgate wards, and new Haverstock and Kentish Town wards would be 1 per cent below, 2 per cent above, 3 per cent below and 1 per cent above the borough average respectively. By 2004, all four wards would vary by no more than 1 per cent from the average. We have described above that, due to the Liberal Democrat Group's overall scheme being based on a different council size to the Council's proposals, it is not comparable with our scheme and we are therefore unable to consider adopting the Liberal Democrat Group's proposals for this part of the borough.

92 The Camden Conservative Committee endorsed the Council's proposed overall number of councillors which should serve this area of the borough, and specifically supported the boundary between its proposed Highgate and Kentish Town wards. However, it proposed alternatives to the Council's proposed Gospel Oak and Haverstock wards, stating that the proposals would "divide communities". It alternatively put forward new Queens Crescent and Royal Free wards, with consequential boundary modifications required for some of the Council's suggested neighbouring wards. Under its proposals, electoral equality in the new Queens Crescent and Royal Free wards would not exceed 2 per cent from the borough average both initially and by 2004.

93 We also received a representation from the Chetwynd & Twisden Roads Residents' Association which opposed the Council's proposals for its area. It suggested an alternative boundary between the Council's proposed Highgate and Kentish Town wards, which would involve Carrol Close and Sanderson Close being included in the latter ward rather than being transferred into the former. It suggested alternatively that electors on the eastern side of Highgate Road could be included in Highgate ward.

94 We acknowledge that with an overall council size of 54 members, securing optimum electoral equality in this area is not possible without breaching the North London railway line as a ward boundary, in order to avoid a relatively high level of electoral imbalance resulting in an unchanged Highgate ward. We recognise that electors to the south of the North London railway line may not share strong ties with those to its north, but are of the view that it may be necessary to transfer a number of these electors into an enlarged Highgate ward in order to secure improved electoral equality.

95 In our view, the Council's proposals in this area have greater merit than those of the Residents' Association, and we therefore propose adopting the Council's proposed Highgate and Kentish Town wards as part of our draft proposals. However, we would welcome further views on this issue, and in particular any further evidence on boundaries in this area.

96 We recognise that the Conservative Committee's proposed wards would provide good levels of electoral equality, similar to that attained under the Council's proposals. However, as with its proposals

in the west of the borough, we have not been convinced that its proposals would better reflect local community identities and interests than those put forward by the Council. As we are endorsing the Council's proposed wards in the surrounding parts of the borough, the Conservative Committee's suggested ward boundaries do not fit in exactly with our scheme. We would welcome any further evidence from the Conservative Committee and others on community identities in this area of the borough.

97 In our view the Council's proposals provide the best balance between securing good levels of electoral equality in this area, while reflecting local community identities, and we are therefore putting them forward for consultation. We would welcome further views during Stage Three. Details of our proposed boundaries and ward names are illustrated on the large map inserted at the back of this report.

Conclusions

98 We have considered carefully all the evidence and representations received during the initial stage of the review. Overall the Council's proposals would achieve a significant improvement to

electoral equality, with the number of electors per councillor in all wards varying by no more than 3 per cent, both initially and by 2004. We are therefore basing our draft recommendations substantially on the Council's scheme.

99 However, in order to better reflect local community identities, we propose a modification to the boundary between its proposed Regent's Park and St Pancras & Somers Town wards. We also propose a modification to one of the Council's proposed ward names. We have examined alternative configurations of wards and communities in order to assess whether electoral equality could be improved further. We conclude, however, that any further improvements may be at the expense of the statutory criteria, namely the need to reflect community identities and interests and to secure effective and convenient local government. We believe that our proposals strike a satisfactory balance of the criteria guiding our work. Consequently, we propose that:

- (a) there should be a council size of 54 members, five fewer than at present; and
- (b) there should be 18 wards, eight fewer than at present, which would involve changes to the boundaries of all of the existing wards.

Figure 5: Comparison of Current and Recommended Electoral Arrangements

	1999 electorate		2004 forecast electorate	
	Current arrangements	Draft recommendations	Current arrangements	Draft recommendations
Number of councillors	59	54	59	54
Number of wards	26	18	26	18
Average number of electors per councillor	2,300	2,513	2,350	2,568
Number of wards with a variance more than 10 per cent from the average	11	0	10	0
Number of wards with a variance more than 20 per cent from the average	1	0	1	0

100 Figure 5 shows the impact of our draft recommendations on electoral equality, comparing them with the current arrangements, based on 1999 electorate figures and with forecast electorates for the year 2004.

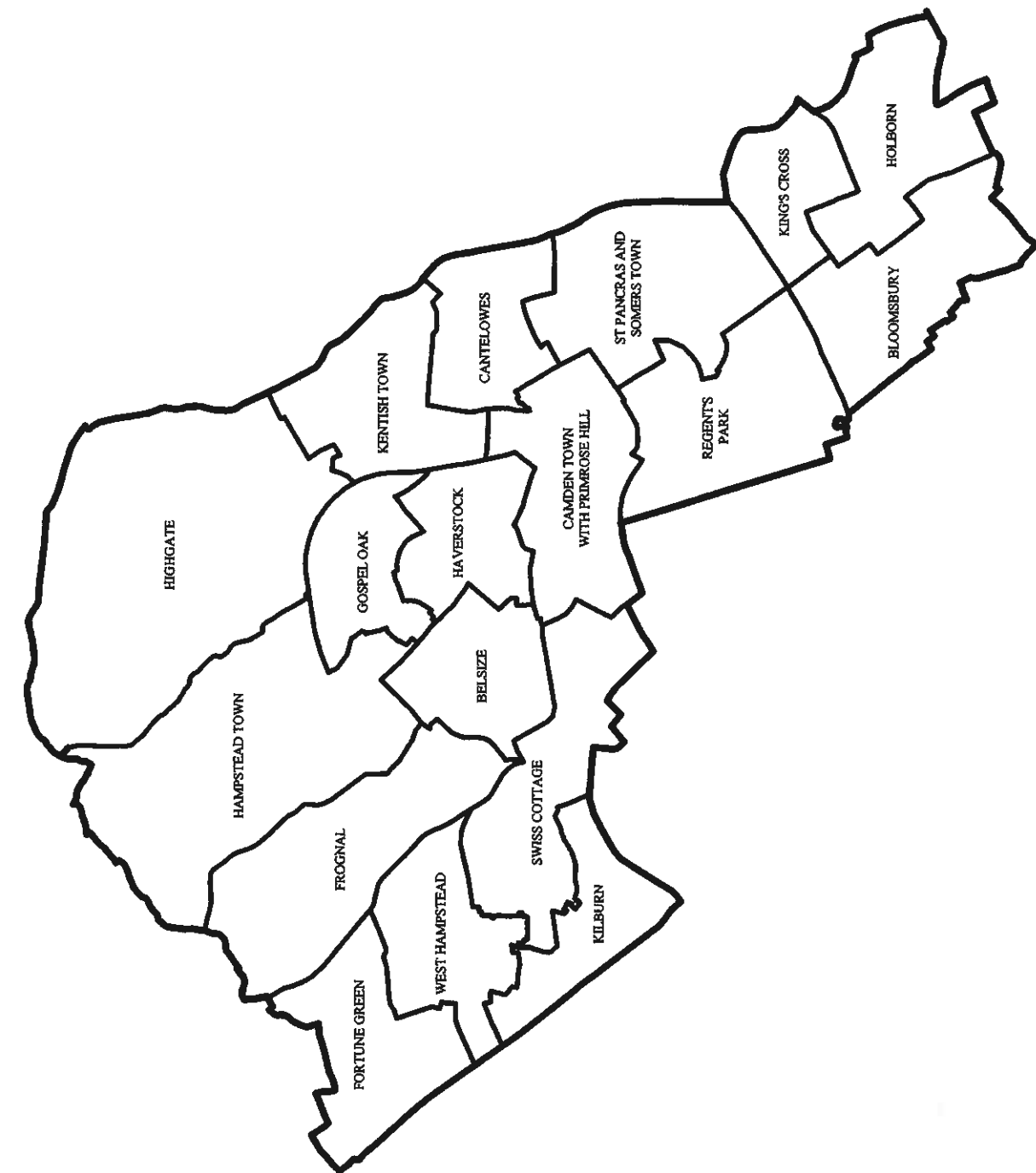
101 As shown in Figure 5, our draft recommendations for Camden Borough Council would result in a reduction in the number of wards where the number of electors per councillor varies by more than 10 per cent from the borough average from 11 to zero. This improved balance of representation is expected to continue by 2004.

Draft Recommendation

Camden Borough Council should comprise 54 councillors serving 18 wards, as detailed and named in Figures 1 and 2, and illustrated on Map 2 and the large map inserted in the back of the report.

102 We have not finalised our conclusions on the electoral arrangements for Camden and welcome comments from the Borough Council and others on the proposed ward boundaries, number of councillors and ward names. We will consider all the evidence submitted to us during the consultation period before preparing our final recommendations.

Map 2:
The Commission's Draft Recommendations for Camden



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5. NEXT STEPS

¹⁰³ The Commission is putting forward draft recommendations on the future electoral arrangements for Camden. Now it is up to the people of the area. We will take fully into account all representations received by 13 September 1999. Representations received after this date may not be taken into account. All representations will be available for public inspection by appointment at the offices of the Borough Council and the Commission, and a list of respondents will be available on request from the Commission after the end of the consultation period.

¹⁰⁴ Views may be expressed by writing directly to us:

Review Manager
Camden Review
Local Government Commission for England
Dolphyn Court
10/11 Great Turnstile
London WC1V 7JU

Fax: 0171 404 6142
E-mail: reviews@lgce.gov.uk

¹⁰⁵ In light of the representations received, we will review our draft recommendations to consider whether they should be altered. As indicated earlier, it is important that all interested parties let us have their views and evidence, *whether or not* they agree with our draft recommendations. We will then submit our final recommendations to the Secretary of State for the Environment, Transport and the Regions. After the publication of our final recommendations, all further correspondence should be sent to the Secretary of State, who cannot make an order giving effect to our recommendations until six weeks after he receives them.

APPENDIX A

Proposed Electoral Arrangements

Our draft recommendations, detailed in Figures 1 and 2, differ substantively from those put forward by the Borough Council in only one area: the boundary between Regent's Park ward and St Pancras & Somers Town ward. The Council's proposals for those wards are shown below. Additionally, we are proposing one ward name change; the Council's proposed Camden Town ward is named Camden Town with Primrose Hill under our draft proposals.

*Figure A1:
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 %
Regent's Park	3	7,682	2,561	2	7,780	2,593	1
St Pancras & Somers Town	3	7,696	2,565	2	7,844	7,844	2

Source: Electorate figures are based on Camden Borough Council's submission.

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.

APPENDIX B

The Statutory Provisions

Local Government Act 1992: The Commission's Role

1 Section 13(2) of the Local Government Act 1992 places a duty on the Commission to undertake periodic electoral reviews of each principal local authority area in England, and to make recommendations to the Secretary of State. Section 13(3) provides that, so far as is reasonably practicable, the first such review of any area should be undertaken not less than 10 years, and not more than 15 years, after this Commission's predecessor, the Local Government Boundary Commission (LGBC), submitted an initial electoral review report on the county within which that area, or the larger part of the area, was located. This timetable applies to districts within shire and metropolitan counties, although not to South Yorkshire and Tyne and Wear¹. Nor does the timetable apply to London boroughs; the 1992 Act is silent on the timing of periodic electoral reviews in Greater London. Nevertheless, these areas have been included in the Commission's review programme. The Commission has no power to review the electoral arrangements of the City of London.

2 Under section 13(5) of the 1992 Act, the Commission is required to make recommendations to the Secretary of State for any changes to the electoral arrangements within the areas of English principal authorities as appear desirable to it, having regard to the need to:

- (a) reflect the identities and interests of local communities; and
- (b) secure effective and convenient local government.

3 In reporting to the Secretary of State, the Commission may make recommendations for such changes to electoral arrangements as are specified in section 14(4) of the 1992 Act. In relation to principal authorities, these are:

- the total number of councillors to be elected to the council;
- the number and boundaries of electoral areas (wards or divisions);

- the number of councillors to be elected for each electoral area, and the years in which they are to be elected (although current legislation provides for elections in London boroughs to be held every four years); and
- the name of any electoral area.

Local Government Act 1972: Rules to be Observed in Considering Electoral Arrangements

4 By virtue of section 27 of the Local Government Act 1992, in undertaking a review of electoral arrangements the Commission is required to comply so far as is reasonably practicable with the "rules" set out in Schedule 11 to the 1972 Act. For ease of reference, those provisions of Schedule 11 which are relevant to this review are set out below.

5 In relation to London boroughs:

Having regard to any changes in the number or distribution of the local government electors of the borough likely to take place within the period of five years immediately following the consideration (by the Secretary of State or the Commission):

- (a) the ratio of the number of local government electors to the number of councillors to be elected shall be, as nearly as may be, the same in every ward in the borough.
- 6 The Schedule also provides that, subject to (a) above, regard should be had to:
 - (b) the desirability of fixing ward boundaries which are and will remain easily identifiable; and
 - (c) any local ties which would be broken by the fixing of any particular ward boundary.

¹ The Local Government Boundary Commission did not submit reports on the counties of South Yorkshire and Tyne and Wear.