

INTRODUCTION

At the time of the conclusion of the First World War, the area of Middlesex now administered by the modern London Borough of Harrow was under the local government jurisdiction of three principal local authorities: Harrow-on-the-Hill Urban District, Wealdstone Urban District and Hendon Rural District.

In the late 1920s Middlesex County Council made orders under Section 57 of the Local Government Act 1888 for: a) the transfer of the parish of Pinner to Harrow-on-the-Hill Urban District, and, b) the formation of a new Urban District comprising Wealdstone Urban District and the four remaining parishes of Hendon Rural District, namely Harrow Weald, Great Stanmore, Little Stanmore and Edgware.

However, in December 1928 Middlesex County Council asked the Minister of Health to defer confirmation of the orders because of the annexation, after successful litigation, of the parish of Edgware by Hendon Urban District. Edgware was formally transferred to Hendon on 1 April 1931.

In October 1929 Hendon Rural District Council made fresh submissions, called the *Greater Harrow Scheme*. The plan envisaged an amalgamation of the Urban Districts of Harrow-on-the-Hill and Wealdstone, with the four remaining parishes of Hendon Rural District (Pinner, Harrow Weald, Great Stanmore and Little Stanmore). The substance of the *Scheme* was accepted and incorporated in the Middlesex Review Order 1934 that created (among other things) the Urban District of Harrow. Over 99.8% of the area of the three former Districts and 135 acres of mainly open space and playing fields between Harrow School and Watford Road (a transfer from Wembley) were incorporated in the new Harrow Urban District; there were a few further adjustments (mostly consisting of lengths of road frontage) to obtain improved boundaries with neighbouring authorities. The Order also abolished the Parish Councils in Pinner, Harrow Weald, Great Stanmore and Little Stanmore.

Harrow Urban District assumed full powers on 1 April 1934, eight days after the first election to the authority on 24 March. The Council met for the first time at the Technical School (now demolished) in Station Road, Harrow, on 9 April and Councillor Thomas Charles was elected as the first Chairman. During his address to the new Council, Charles proudly remarked that "Harrow is the largest Urban District in England, and the largest but one in England and Wales, the other being Rhondda Valley."

The composition of the Council was initially 36 Councillors, with 3 Councillors being elected from each of 12 wards. After the first election in 1934, annual elections were held for one-third of the seats (except during the Second World War when elections were suspended). In 1949 three additional wards were created as a result of a ward boundary revision, so raising the total number of Councillors to 45.

In mid-1934 the Registrar-General estimated that Harrow had a population of 132,049. This figure rose steadily to reach a maximum of 220,400 in 1949 before dropping back to approximately 218,000 by the time Harrow received Borough status in 1954.