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## Summary

The Local Government Boundary Commission for England is an independent body which conducts electoral reviews of local authority areas. The broad purpose of an electoral review is to decide on the appropriate electoral arrangements – the number of councillors, and the names, number and boundaries of wards or divisions – for a specific local authority. We are conducting an electoral review of Suffolk Coastal District Council to provide improved levels of electoral equality across the authority.

The review aims to ensure that the number of voters represented by each councillor is approximately the same. The Commission commenced the review in April 2013.

This review is being conducted as follows:

<b>Stage starts</b>	<b>Description</b>
23 April 2013	Consultation on council size
23 July 2013	Invitation to submit proposals for warding arrangements to LGBCE
2 October 2013	LGBCE's analysis and formulation of draft recommendations
12 February 2014	Publication of draft recommendations and consultation on them
29 April 2014	Analysis of submissions received and formulation of final recommendations

## Submissions received

We received 37 submissions during our initial consultation on council size. These submissions proposed council sizes of between 43 and 55. During our consultation on warding patterns, we received 38 submissions including district-wide schemes from Suffolk Coastal District Council, Therese Coffey MP and Daniel Poulter MP. All submissions can be viewed on our website at [www.lgbce.org.uk](http://www.lgbce.org.uk)

## Analysis and draft recommendations

### Electorate figures

Suffolk Coastal District Council ('the Council') submitted electorate forecasts for 2019, a period five years on from the scheduled publication of our final recommendations in 2014. The forecasts projected an increase in the electorate of approximately 7% over this period. This included small increases in electorate in many rural parts of the district but also substantial increases in the larger communities where major residential developments are expected. During our consultation on warding arrangements, the Council provided updated forecast electorates in Purdis Farm and Felixstowe. We are content that the modified forecasts are the most accurate available at this time and have used them as the basis of our draft recommendations. The total electorate forecast for the district for 2019 is 103,638.

## Council size

Suffolk Coastal District Council currently has 55 members. The Council originally proposed a council size of 43. It argued that substantial changes have been made to the way in which the Council works and that a size of 43 would ensure that councillors could now continue to fulfil the roles expected of them. The leaders of the Labour, Liberal Democrat and Independent groups on the Council jointly submitted an alternative submission. They considered that a council size of 48 was necessary in order to give the Council resilience in conducting its business.

Our consultation on council size sought further views about a council size of 43, but we did not receive any persuasive evidence in support of any other size. When we invited proposals for warding arrangements, the Council considered that a council size of 42 would provide for a better allocation of councillors to distinct areas of the district. Therese Coffey MP also prepared a pattern of wards for a council size of 42.

## General analysis

Having considered the submissions received during consultation on council size and warding arrangements, we have developed proposals for a council of 42 in 10 single-member wards, 13 two-member wards and two three-member wards. In general, we have based our draft recommendations on the proposals made by Therese Coffey MP. We have modified her proposals in some areas, providing for parishes grouped under common parish councils to be included in the same ward. Our proposals will provide good electoral equality while reflecting community identities and transport links in the district.

## What happens next?

There will now be a consultation period, during which we encourage comment on the draft recommendations on the proposed electoral arrangements for Suffolk Coastal District Council contained in the report. **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 these draft proposals.** We will take into account all submissions received by **28 April 2014**. Any received **after** this date may not be taken into account.

We would particularly welcome local views backed up by demonstrable evidence. We will consider all the evidence submitted to us during the consultation period before preparing our final recommendations. Express your views by writing directly to us at:

**Review Officer**  
**Suffolk Coastal Review**  
**The Local Government Boundary Commission for England**  
**Layden House**  
**76–86 Turnmill Street**  
**London EC1M 5LG**  
[reviews@lgbce.org.uk](mailto:reviews@lgbce.org.uk)

The full report is available to download at [www.lgbce.org.uk](http://www.lgbce.org.uk)

You can also view our draft recommendations for Suffolk Coastal District Council on our interactive maps at <http://consultation.lgbce.org.uk>



# 1 Introduction

1 The Local Government Boundary Commission for England is an independent body which conducts electoral reviews of local authority areas. This electoral review is being conducted following our decision to review Suffolk Coastal District Council's electoral arrangements to ensure that the number of voters represented by each councillor is approximately the same across the authority.

2 We wrote to Suffolk Coastal District Council as well as to other interested parties, inviting the submission of proposals first on council size and then on warding arrangements for the Council. The submissions received during these stages of the review have informed our draft recommendations.

3 We are now conducting a full public consultation on the draft recommendations. Following this period of consultation, we will consider the evidence received and will publish our final recommendations for the new electoral arrangements for Suffolk Coastal District Council in summer 2014.

## What is an electoral review?

4 The main aim of an electoral review is to try to ensure 'electoral equality', which means that all councillors in a single authority represent approximately the same number of electors. Our objective is to make recommendations that will improve electoral equality, while also trying to reflect communities in the area and provide for effective and convenient local government.

5 Our three main considerations – equalising the number of electors each councillor represents; reflecting community identity; and providing for effective and convenient local government – are set out in legislation<sup>1</sup> and our task is to strike the best balance between them when making our recommendations. Our powers, as well as the guidance we have provided for electoral reviews and further information on the review process, can be found on our website at [www.lgbce.org.uk](http://www.lgbce.org.uk)

## Why are we conducting a review in Suffolk Coastal?

6 We decided to conduct this review because, based on December 2011 electorate data, two of the district's wards currently have a variance of more than 30%. These two wards, Rendlesham and Kesgrave East, have variances of 41% more and 42% more electors per councillor than the average for the district, respectively. Twelve wards, 35% of the total, have variances from the average number of electors per councillor which are greater than 10%. We had also received a formal request for an electoral review from Suffolk Coastal District Council.

## How will the recommendations affect you?

7 The recommendations will determine how many councillors will serve on the council. They will also decide which ward you vote in, which other communities are in that ward and, in some instances, which parish council wards you vote in. Your ward

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<sup>1</sup> Schedule 2 to The Local Democracy, Economic Development and Construction Act 2009.

name may also change, as may the names of parish or town council wards in the area. The names or boundaries of parishes will not change as a result of our recommendations.

8 It is therefore important that you let us have your comments and views on the draft recommendations. We encourage comments from everyone in the community, regardless of whether you agree with the draft recommendations or not. The draft recommendations are evidence-based and we would therefore like to stress the importance of providing evidence in any comments on our recommendations, rather than relying on assertion. We will be accepting comments and views until 28 April 2014. After this point, we will be formulating our final recommendations which we are due to publish in summer 2014. Details on how to submit proposals can be found on page 29 and more information can be found on our website, [www.lgbce.org.uk](http://www.lgbce.org.uk)

## What is the Local Government Boundary Commission for England?

9 The Local Government Boundary Commission for England is an independent body set up by Parliament under the Local Democracy, Economic Development and Construction Act 2009.

Members of the Commission are:

Max Caller CBE (Chair)  
Professor Colin Mellors (Deputy Chair)  
Dr Peter Knight CBE DL  
Sir Tony Redmond  
Dr Colin Sinclair CBE  
Professor Paul Wiles CB

Chief Executive: Alan Cogbill  
Director of Reviews: Archie Gall

## 2 Analysis and draft recommendations

10 Before finalising our recommendations on the new electoral arrangements for Suffolk Coastal District Council we invite views on these draft recommendations. We welcome comments relating to the proposed ward boundaries, ward names and parish or town council electoral arrangements. We will consider all the evidence submitted to us during the consultation period before preparing our final recommendations.

11 As described earlier, our prime aim when recommending new electoral arrangements for Suffolk Coastal is to achieve a level of electoral equality – that is, each elector’s vote being worth the same as another’s. In doing so we must have regard to the Local Democracy, Economic Development and Construction Act 2009,<sup>2</sup> with the need to:

- secure effective and convenient local government
- provide for equality of representation
- reflect the identities and interests of local communities, in particular
  - the desirability of arriving at boundaries that are easily identifiable
  - the desirability of fixing boundaries so as not to break any local ties

12 Legislation also states that our recommendations are not intended to be based solely on the existing number of electors in an area, but also on estimated changes in the number and distribution of electors likely to take place over a five-year period from the date of our final recommendations. We must also try to recommend strong, clearly identifiable boundaries for the wards we put forward at the end of the review.

13 In reality, the achievement of absolute electoral equality is unlikely to be attainable and there must be a degree of flexibility. However, our approach is to keep variances in the number of electors each councillor represents to a minimum. We therefore recommend strongly that in formulating proposals for us to consider, local authorities and other interested parties should also try to keep variances to a minimum, making adjustments to reflect relevant factors such as community identity and interests. As mentioned above, we aim to recommend a scheme which provides improved electoral equality over a five-year period.

14 Additionally, in circumstances where we propose to divide a parish between district wards, we are required to divide it into parish wards so that each parish ward is wholly contained within a single district ward. We cannot make amendments to the external boundaries of parishes as part of an electoral review.

15 These recommendations cannot affect the external boundaries of Suffolk Coastal District Council or result in changes to postcodes. Nor is there any evidence that the recommendations will have an adverse effect on local taxes, house prices, or car and house insurance premiums. The proposals do not take account of parliamentary constituency boundaries and we are not therefore able to take into account any representations which are based on these issues.

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<sup>2</sup> Schedule 2 to the Local Democracy, Economic Development and Construction Act 2009.

## Submissions received

16 Prior to, and during, the initial stages of the review, we visited Suffolk Coastal District Council ('the Council') and met with members and officers. We are grateful to all concerned for their co-operation and assistance. We received preliminary submissions on council size from the Council and jointly from the leaders of the Labour, Liberal Democrat and Independent groups on the Council. Having considered these submissions, we undertook an initial public consultation on council size, receiving a further 35 submissions. In response to our invitation to make proposals on warding, we received 38 submissions including district-wide schemes from the Council, Therese Coffey MP and Daniel Poulter MP. All of the submissions may be inspected at our offices and those of the Council. All representations received can also be viewed on our website at [www.lgbce.org.uk](http://www.lgbce.org.uk)

## Electorate figures

17 The Council provided us with the number of people registered as electors in each polling district at the end of 2012. The Local Democracy, Economic Development and Construction Act 2009 ('the 2009 Act') also requires that we consider how the electorate may be expected to change. The Council therefore also submitted electorate forecasts for 2019, a period five years on from the scheduled publication of our final recommendations in 2014. These forecasts were made at polling district level and together indicated an increase in Suffolk Coastal's electorate of approximately 7.2% to 2019. The forecasts provided by the Council took into account the likelihood that the development of identified sites across the district would result in additions to the electoral register.

18 In response to our consultation on warding arrangements, both Therese Coffey MP and Councillor Susan Harvey commented that in the period since the electorate forecasts had been produced, the Council's decisions on land use planning matters indicated that a greater increase in the electorate of Purdis Farm parish could be expected. We asked the Council to look again at its electorate forecasts and, having done so, the Council concluded that the electorate of Purdis Farm could be expected to increase by 232 in the period up to 2019, rather than 32 as it originally forecast. It also revised its electorate forecast for Felixstowe. In this instance, the Council's decisions on planning matters result in a growth forecast of 1,100 electors rather than the 1,700 initially indicated. This means that the overall increase in the district's electorate would be 6.8% by 2019.

19 The Council's revised forecast is broadly consistent with those prepared by the Office for National Statistics. Having considered the Council's revised forecasts, we consider them to be the best available at this time and have used them as the basis of our draft recommendations.

## Council size

20 Suffolk Coastal District Council currently has 55 councillors elected from 34 district wards. The Council proposed a reduction in council size to 43 members. In support of its proposal, the Council said that since the council size was first set at 55 in 1974 there have been significant changes to the role and responsibilities of the Council and the way its members work. These changes mean that a Council of 43 members could operate effectively, and its members carry out the representational

activities expected of them. A submission made jointly by the leaders of the Council's Labour, Liberal Democrat and Independent groups argued that a smaller reduction in council size, to 48 members, would give the Council greater resilience and provide for better representation.

21 Having considered the evidence received, we considered that the Council had made a strong case for a council size of 43 and we consulted publicly on this council size. This consultation ended on 3 June 2013. In response, we received 35 submissions. Of these, eight were from parish councils, two were from individual local councillors, one submission was received from the Felixstowe Labour Party and 24 were from members of the public.

22 Generally, those who favoured a reduction in council size cited potential cost savings, an expectation that a smaller council could conduct its business more effectively, or a general belief that having fewer elected members in a council was desirable. Some respondents were in favour of a reduction to 43. Others thought that a greater reduction would be desirable whilst some agreed with the opposition groups' proposal for a council size of 48. Those who opposed a change argued either that a reduction would compromise the ability of councillors to represent their community or would discourage people from standing for election because of the increased workload that a reduction in the number of councillors would imply.

23 We carefully considered the information provided during the consultation period. We considered that the Council's proposal for a council size of 43 members still represented the strongest body of evidence received on council size. We therefore invited warding proposals on the basis of a council size of 43.

24 Consultation on warding arrangements began on 23 July 2013 and ended on 1 October 2013. The Council submitted a scheme based on 42 members. We received district-wide schemes based on council sizes of 42, 43 and 44 members from Therese Coffey MP. Daniel Poulter MP submitted a scheme based on a council of 43 members.

25 Our examination of the submissions led us to conclude that the best balance between electoral equality and the representation of identifiable communities within ward boundaries lies with a council size of 42 members. We therefore have modified our initial conclusion on council size. In making our draft recommendations, we are proposing a council size of 42.

## Electoral fairness

26 Electoral fairness, in the sense of each elector in a local authority having a vote of equal weight when it comes to the election of councillors, is a fundamental democratic principle. It is expected that our recommendations will provide for electoral fairness, reflect communities in the area, and provide for effective and convenient local government.

27 In seeking to achieve electoral fairness, we work out the average number of electors per councillor. The district average is calculated by dividing the total electorate of the district (97,059 in 2012 and 103,638 by 2019) by the total number of councillors representing them on the council, 42 under our draft recommendations.

Therefore, the average number of electors per councillor under our draft recommendations is 2,311 in 2012 and 2,468 by 2019.

28 Whilst under our draft recommendations one of our proposed wards will have an electoral variance of more than 10% from the average for the district by 2019, we are satisfied that we have achieved good levels of electoral equality for Suffolk Coastal.

## General analysis

29 During the consultation on warding patterns, we received 38 submissions, including district-wide schemes from the Council, Therese Coffey MP and Daniel Poulter MP. The remainder of the submissions either presented general points of principle about warding or provided comments on localised warding considerations in particular areas of the district.

30 The Council's proposal would result in six wards which would have a variance greater than 10%, one having a variance of 16% by 2019. Daniel Poulter MP's proposal for a council of 43 members suggested ward boundaries substantially different from those put forward by the Council. His proposal would result in 14 wards having a variance of more than 10% from the average number of electors per councillor, including one ward with a variance of 40%. Therese Coffey MP submitted warding proposals based on council sizes of 42, 43 and 44 members. Her proposal for a 42-member scheme was, for much of the district, similar to that made by the Council. Overall, her scheme provided the best levels of electoral equality of all the schemes submitted, only one ward having a variance of more than 10% from the average. We have therefore broadly based our proposals across the district on her submission.

31 We propose some amendments to Therese Coffey MP's scheme in parts of the rural area in order to provide for wards which include all parishes grouped under common parish councils. We have also proposed ward boundaries within Felixstowe and Kesgrave where she did not submit any. These are based on warding schemes which were also submitted to us.

32 Easton Parish Council argued that we should not aim for electoral equality, but in rural areas, create wards with fewer electors per councillor than would be found in urban wards. Such an approach would be inconsistent with the legislation which determines our approach to electoral reviews and we have therefore sought to achieve the same level of electoral equality in both urban and rural areas.

33 Our draft recommendations would result in 10 single-member wards, 13 two-member wards and two three-member wards. We consider our recommendations provide for good levels of electoral equality while reflecting community identities and interests where we have received such evidence during consultation.

34 We welcome all comments on these draft recommendations and would encourage interested parties from all parts of the district to respond. As well as the pattern of warding arrangements proposed, we welcome comments on the ward names we have put forward in the draft recommendations.

## Electoral arrangements

35 This section of the report details the proposals we have received, our consideration of them, and our draft recommendations for each area of Suffolk Coastal. The following areas of the authority are considered in turn:

- Rural north (pages 11–12)
- Rural west (pages 12–14 )
- Rural east and the coast (pages 14–18)
- Woodbridge and the rural south (pages 19–24)
- Felixstowe (pages 24–5)

36 Details of the draft recommendations are set out in Table A1 on pages 33-4 and illustrated on the large map accompanying this report.

### Rural north

37 The Rural North of Suffolk Coastal district is characterised by small villages set in a large rural tract. The electorate are currently represented in the wards of Peasehall, Walberswick & Wenhaston, and Yoxford. We received no representations about these areas apart from the district-wide schemes submitted.

38 Therese Coffey MP and the Council both proposed that the parish of Yoxford should be added to those which currently comprise the Peasehall ward: Chediston, Cookley, Cratfield, Heveningham, Huntingfield, Linstead Magna, Linstead Parva, Peasehall, Sibton, Ubbeston and Walpole. This would create a single-member North ward with a number of electors in 2019 almost equal to the district average per councillor.

39 Daniel Poulter MP proposed a different grouping of parishes. He suggested that the 12 parishes adjacent or close to the River Blyth and stretching from the western edge of the district to the coast should be combined into a single-member Blyth ward. The number of electors in this proposed ward would be 5% greater than the average by 2019. He stated that Peasehall and Sibton parishes are part of the catchment area of Framlingham for shops, doctors, services and secondary education at Thomas Mills High School.

40 We note that Therese Coffey MP's and the Council's proposed ward will provide for good electoral equality and we propose to adopt it. Daniel Poulter MP's proposal would also provide for a good level of electoral equality. However, adopting it would have significant knock-on effects in the neighbouring areas and we do not consider we have received sufficient community identity evidence to justify this, in light of an alternative ward with better electoral equality. We note that Therese Coffey MP proposed that this ward be named North. We do not consider that this clearly defines the location and area of the ward. We recommend, therefore, the name Peasehall & Yoxford. These parishes have the largest populations of those in the recommended ward.

41 The Council proposed that the parishes of Blythburgh, Hinton, Bramfield, Thorington, Walberswick and Wenhaston with Mells Hamlet, which together comprise the current Walberswick & Wenhaston ward, be combined with the parishes of Darsham, Dunwich, Middleton and Westleton. Therese Coffey MP made a similar

proposal for a ward she called Coast but would exclude the parish of Middleton. Both proposals would result in wards with a similar variance from the average number of electors per councillor; 7% more electors in the Council's proposal and 6% fewer in that made by Therese Coffey MP. The only other proposal we received in this area was from Daniel Poulter MP, described in paragraph 39 and which we were not persuaded to adopt, in light of the alternatives with better electoral equality.

42 There was a similar level of electoral equality and arguments in terms of community identity between the Council's and Therese Coffey MP's proposals. We propose to adopt Therese Coffey MP's proposed Coast ward as it provides good electoral equality and also facilitates proposals with good electoral equality which reflect the community identity evidence which we have received for wards elsewhere in the district.

43 Therese Coffey MP proposed that this ward be named Coast. However, the ward would contain only a small part of the district's coastline. We consider, therefore, a better alternative is Wenhaston & Westleton. These are the parishes which contain the largest electorates within the ward.

44 Our draft recommendations for the rural north are, therefore, single-member Peasenhall & Yoxford and Wenhaston & Westleton wards having a 0% variance and 6% fewer electors per councillor than the district average by 2019, respectively.

## Rural west

45 This area is currently covered by the Earl Soham, Framlingham, Grundisburgh, Hacheston, Otley and Wickham Market wards.

46 The Council proposed a two-member ward which would largely combine the existing Framlingham and Earl Soham wards. It would comprise the parishes of Brandeston, Creetingham, Dennington, Earl Soham, Easton, Framlingham, Hoo, Kettleburgh, Monewden and Saxtead. It would have 2% more electors than the average by 2019. Therese Coffey MP proposed a Framlingham ward which was similar to the Council's proposed ward but would not include Easton parish. The Council's proposed ward would have 3% fewer electors than the average by 2019.

47 Daniel Poulter MP proposed a single-member Framlingham ward for that parish alone which would have 23% more electors than the average by 2019, and a single-member Deben ward containing 13 parishes to the west of Framlingham, with 11% more electors than the average by 2019. Daniel Poulter MP described Framlingham as a central point for rural parishes in the area. We do not consider he has provided sufficiently strong evidence to justify adopting wards with 23% and 11% more electors than the average by 2019, especially in light of the fact that the knock-on effect would be significant for surrounding wards.

48 We consider that Therese Coffey MP's proposal will provide for good electoral equality. The Council's proposed Framlingham ward would also provide good electoral equality but Therese Coffey MP's proposed ward is slightly better in terms of electoral equality and, given that we are basing a number of our wards on her proposals in order to secure good levels of electoral equality across the district, we consider it should be adopted as part of our draft recommendations.

49 Therese Coffey MP proposed a single-member Central ward comprising the parishes of Badingham, Bruisyard, Cransford, Easton, Great Glemham, Hacheston, Little Glemham, Marlesford, Parham, Rendham, Stratford St Andrew and Sweffling. This would have a number of electors very close to the average per councillor for the district as a whole. The Council proposed a similar ward, excluding Easton but including Farnham. This would have 6% fewer electors than the average for the district by 2019. Daniel Poulter MP proposed a grouping of Badingham, Bruisyard, Cransford, Dennington, Great Glemham, Heveningham, Little Glemham, Peasenhall, Rendham, Sibton, Stratford St Andrew, Sweffling and Ubbeston parishes which would result in a ward with 13% more electors than the average for the district. He stated that the A12 should be used broadly as a boundary between wards.

50 One resident described the existing Hacheston ward as an area of villages equally served by Saxmundham, Framlingham and Wickham Market. This respondent proposed that the parishes be appended to wards centred on the town closest to each. We received no further evidence of community linkages in these parishes.

51 We consider that Therese Coffey MP's proposal provided better electoral equality than the Council's and Daniel Poulter MP's proposal. However, we recognise that Farnham and Stratford St Andrew are parishes served by a common parish council and consider that the two parishes should continue to be in a single ward. We also consider that the name 'Central' would not identify geographically the location and area of the ward.

52 Accordingly, our draft recommendation is for a single-member Hacheston ward for the parishes of Badingham, Bruisyard, Cransford, Easton, Farnham, Great Glemham, Hacheston, Little Glemham, Marlesford, Parham, Rendham, Stratford St Andrew and Sweffling. We consider that the ward should be named Hacheston as this parish has the largest electorate of those in our proposed ward.

53 Therese Coffey MP proposed a single-member South West ward comprising the parishes of Boulge, Burgh, Clopton, Debach, Grundisburgh and Otley. This ward would have 4% fewer electors than the average by 2019. The Council made a similar proposal but included the parishes of Culpho and Hasketon. This ward would have 11% more electors than the average for the district by 2019. Daniel Poulter MP proposed a Grundisburgh ward comprising the parishes of Boulge, Burgh, Culpho, Great Bealings, Grundisburgh, Hasketon, Little Bealings and Playford, having 4% more electors than the average by 2019.

54 Grundisburgh and Culpho Parish Council proposed that the parishes of Burgh and Hasketon be added to the existing Grundisburgh ward which is comprising Culpho, Great Bealings, Grundisburgh and Little Bealings parishes. The Parish Council gave no explanation for its proposal. We acknowledge that this would result in a ward with only 3% fewer electors than the average by 2019.

55 We note that Therese Coffey MP's proposal would also provide for good electoral equality. However, we recognise that Grundisburgh and Culpho are parishes served by a common parish council and consider that the two parishes should continue to be in a single ward. Accordingly, our draft recommendation is for a single-member Grundisburgh ward for the parishes of Boulge, Burgh, Clopton, Culpho, Debach, Grundisburgh and Otley, with 2% fewer electors than the average by 2019.

56 The Council and Therese Coffey MP made identical proposals to combine the parishes of Charsfield, Dallinghoo, Letheringham, Pettistree and Wickham Market in a single-member Wickham Market ward having, very nearly, the average number of electors per councillor for the district. Daniel Poulter MP proposed a Wickham Market ward comprising Bredfield, Debach, Wickham Market, Dallinghoo and Pettistree. This would result in a ward with 2% more electors than the average per councillor for the district. He referred to the role of Wickham Market as a service centre for neighbouring parishes and has commented that the inclusion of Pettistree in a ward with Wickham Market would be appropriate.

57 We consider that Therese Coffey MP's and the Council's proposal will provide for excellent electoral equality and we propose to adopt it. While Daniel Poulter MP's proposed ward would also provide for excellent electoral equality, it would not be possible to adopt it without adopting wards in surrounding areas which would have poorer levels of electoral equality or which have not been generated locally. We propose to adopt the name Wickham Market for this ward, reflecting the role of the town as a service centre for those other parishes in our recommended ward.

58 Our draft recommendations for the rural west are, therefore, single-member Grundisburgh, Hacheston and Wickham Market wards having 2% fewer, 4% more and equal to the average number of electors for the district by 2019, respectively, and a two-member Framlingham ward having 3% fewer electors than the district average by 2019.

## Rural east and the coast

59 This area is currently represented by the Aldeburgh, Hollesley with Eyke, Leiston, Orford & Tunstall, Rendlesham, Saxmundham and Snape wards.

60 Therese Coffey MP proposed a two-member Aldeburgh ward comprising the parishes of Aldringham-cum-Thorpe, Aldeburgh, Snape, Friston, Farnham and Knodishall and having 10% fewer electors per councillor than the average by 2019.

61 Both Daniel Poulter MP and the Council proposed that the existing two-member Aldeburgh ward comprising Aldringham-cum-Thorpe and Aldeburgh parishes be represented by a single member. It would have 12% more electors than the average for the district. Aldeburgh Town Council and Councillor Fellowes also proposed the retention of the existing ward but considered that it should be represented by two councillors. This ward would have 43% fewer electors per councillor than the average by 2019. They noted the impact of visitors to the area, attracted throughout the year but reaching a peak during the summer when it estimates that the local population reaches 10,000, creating considerable demands for services. They considered these additional visitors justified the additional councillor. They also describe a potential further increase in the workload of district councillors for the area should a proposed new power station be built at Sizewell.

62 The Town Council considered that if there were to be a single-member ward, then this should be the parish of Aldeburgh alone. A ward comprising Aldeburgh parish only would have 14% fewer electors than the average by 2019.

63 Aldringham-cum-Thorpe Parish Council asserted that it should be included in a ward with the similar rural parishes of Knodishall and Friston. However, the Parish

Council did not provide any details regarding the nature of community linkages or common identity with those parishes. A ward comprising those three parishes alone would have 34% fewer electors than the average by 2019. The Parish Council acknowledged that it shares common issues with Aldeburgh arising from the visitor economy but asserted that it shared no issues with Leiston-cum-Sizewell parish immediately to the north.

64 We have carefully considered all of the representations received about this area. We consider that the 14% variance that a single-member ward consisting solely of Aldeburgh parish would have is not justified. We note the view that the impact of visitors during the summer is significant and that there should therefore be an additional member to reflect this. However, we do not consider visitors to the area even in significant numbers override the need to provide for electoral equality on the basis of the forecast registered electorate. We have not received evidence of community identity that is persuasive to justify such a level of electoral inequality.

65 Accordingly, we considered what parishes should be combined with Aldeburgh to provide a two-member ward with satisfactory electoral equality, having regard to the representations received. We note the proposal for a two-member Aldeburgh ward from the Council and Daniel Poulter MP would have 12% more electors than the average by 2019. We also note that this would not be the first preference of Aldringham-cum-Thorpe Parish Council.

66 We have based our draft recommendation on the proposal made by Therese Coffey MP. We propose to exclude from her proposed ward the parish of Farnham as we consider it should be represented in a Hacheston ward along with Stratford St Andrew parish with which it has a common parish council. Our proposed Aldeburgh ward comprises Aldringham-cum-Thorpe, Aldeburgh, Snape, Friston and Knodishall parishes. This ward will have 12% more electors than the average by 2019. While this level of electoral equality is the same as that in the ward proposed by the Council and Daniel Poulter MP, our proposals to adopt Therese Coffey MP's proposals in surrounding areas do not facilitate the adoption of their proposals.

67 To the north of Aldeburgh, Therese Coffey MP proposed a two-member Leiston ward combining Leiston-cum-Sizewell with the neighbouring parishes of Middleton and Theberton & Eastbridge. This would have a similar number of electors per councillor to the average for the district. Daniel Poulter MP excluded Middleton from that grouping with the effect that the ward would have 6% fewer electors than the average. The Council proposed combining Leiston-cum-Sizewell and Knodishall parishes in a two-member ward having 3% more electors per councillor than the average by 2019.

68 Leiston-cum-Sizewell Town Council proposed a two-member ward consisting of the parish alone. This would have 12% fewer electors per councillor than the average for the district. However, the Town Council did not provide strong evidence of the particular issues which would justify adopting a ward with significantly poorer electoral equality than another locally developed scheme.

69 Councillor Gower and Theberton & Eastbridge Parish Council commented that Theberton & Eastbridge parish has links with Middleton, but also with other rural parishes to the north rather than with Leiston-cum-Sizewell which, the Parish Council argues, is the focus of urban issues. However, the Parish Council did not provide any

details regarding the nature of community linkages or common identity with the parishes to the north.

70 One member of the public proposed including both Theberton & Eastbridge and Knodishall parishes in a ward with Leiston-cum-Sizewell, whilst another described at length a strong relationship between Theberton & Eastbridge and Leiston-cum-Sizewell. This respondent said that 'local villagers have historically used Leiston for shopping, doctors, pubs and schools.... Everyone over the age of fifty went to Leiston High School, and indeed most children that are born in Theberton still go to Alde Valley School.... I still feel that Alde Valley School is part of our community.... Theberton is definitely a 'part' of Leiston'. Commenting on proposals for its own area, Saxmundham Town Council asserted that Theberton's links are with Leiston rather than Saxmundham.

71 Therese Coffey MP's proposal will provide for excellent electoral equality and we propose to adopt her proposed Leiston ward comprising Leiston-cum-Sizewell, Middleton and Theberton & Eastbridge parishes without amendment. We recognise that this does not reflect all of the submissions we received regarding the area but we consider that it reflects the evidence which we described in paragraph 70 above and forms part of a pattern of wards which provides good electoral equality in the rural east and coast area as a whole. In particular, we note that while a number of parish councils asserted their view about with which other parishes they should be included in a ward, the majority did not provide persuasive evidence in relation to community identities.

72 Therese Coffey MP proposed a two-member Saxmundham ward comprising Saxmundham, Kelsale-cum-Carlton, Benhall and Sternfield parishes. This ward would have 4% fewer electors per councillor than the average by 2019. The Council proposed a ward comprising Saxmundham, Kelsale-cum-Carlton and Theberton & Eastbridge parishes. This ward would have 10% fewer electors than the average.

73 Saxmundham Town Council stated its preference for a single-member ward for the town as proposed by Daniel Poulter MP. Such a ward would, however, have 37% more electors than the average for the district. Neither Daniel Poulter MP nor the Town Council provided strong evidence of the particular issues which would justify such a poor level of electoral equality. The Town Council expressed agreement with Therese Coffey MP's proposal as the next-best option.

74 We consider that Therese Coffey MP's proposal will provide for good electoral equality. We do not consider that the Council's proposed ward is supported by sufficient community identity evidence to justify the poorer level of inequality. Accordingly, we propose to adopt Therese Coffey MP's proposed Saxmundham ward. This ward will have 4% fewer electors per councillor than the average by 2019.

75 The estuaries of the Rivers Alde and Deben form strong boundaries in the coastal part of the district between Felixstowe and Aldeburgh and we do not propose breaching them. Therese Coffey MP proposed two single-member wards for this area. She proposed a single-member East ward comprising Blaxhall, Butley, Campsea Ashe, Chillesford, Eyke, Gedgrave, Iken, Orford, Sudbourne, Tunstall and Wantisden parishes. This ward would have a number of electors similar to the average per councillor for the district by 2019. She also proposed a Deben ward comprising Alderton, Bawdsey, Boyton, Capel St Andrew, Hollesley, Ramsholt,

Shottisham and Sutton parishes. This ward would have 7% fewer electors than the average for the district.

76 The Council and Daniel Poulter MP proposed different combinations of parishes in this area with others to the north and west to form single-member wards. They both proposed a Hollesley ward comprising Boyton, Butley, Capel St Andrew, Chillesford, Gedgrave, Hollesley, Iken, Orford, Sudbourne and Wantisden parishes having 2% fewer electors than the average by 2019. The Council also proposed a ward comprising Benhall, Blaxhall, Campsea Ashe, Friston, Snape, Sternfield and Tunstall. This would also result in good levels of electoral equality, having 2% more electors than the average for the district. The Council additionally proposed a ward comprising Alderton, Bawdsey, Bromeswell, Eyke, Ramsholt, Shottisham, Sutton, and Sutton Heath having 5% fewer electors than the average by 2019.

77 Daniel Poulter MP proposed a Snape ward comprising Benhall, Blaxhall, Farnham, Friston, Knodishall, Snape, Sternfield and Tunstall. This ward would have 17% more electors than the average by 2019.

78 The proposals we received for the area between the River Alde and the River Deben as a whole do not present strong evidence of community linkages or shared community identity. We did receive representations from individual parish councils which presented their preferences for the wards in which they would lie. However, in most cases, expressions of preference were not accompanied by strong or clear evidence to support the configurations of the individual wards proposed. Those proposals would result in poor levels of electoral equality of the ward proposed or in adjacent areas.

79 Bawdsey Parish Council asserted that estuarine, coastal and tourist issues mean that the existing Sutton ward comprising Alderton, Bawdsey, Bromeswell, Ramsholt, Shottisham, Sutton and Sutton Heath parishes should be retained. It argued that the area has a number of key issues facing district and parish councillors – coastal erosion and flood defence; visitor and traffic management; second-home ownership; parking; and refuse collections – in addition to ‘normal’ duties. This would, however, mean a ward with 17% fewer electors than the average for the district and we do not consider that it has provided sufficient evidence of community identity evidence to justify this level of electoral inequality.

80 The Chair of Chillesford Parish Meeting identified that Chillesford parish shares community interests with five neighbouring parishes which look towards Orford for social, shopping and community purposes. He acknowledged that his preferred grouping of Butley, Chillesford, Iken, Orford, Sudbourne and Wantisden would not have enough electors to form a ward without the addition of other parishes but expressed no preference for which other parishes should be added. Therese Coffey MP’s proposal meets the preference expressed by Chillesford Parish Meeting.

81 Eyke Parish Council stated that it ‘wishes to maintain its historic links within the Hollesley ward, with which it has more in common than with its neighbour, Rendlesham’. However, the Parish Council did not provide any details regarding the nature of community linkages or common identity with the other parishes in the ward.

82 Sutton Parish Council agreed with the Council’s proposal, described in paragraph 76, to add Eyke to the current Sutton ward. Again, the Parish Council did

not provide any details regarding the nature of community linkages or common identity with the other parishes in the ward.

83 Bromeswell Parish Council considered that the existing Sutton ward in which it currently is included should be retained, stating that it has similarities with other parishes close to the Deben estuary. However, the Parish Council did not provide any details regarding the nature of community linkages or common identity with those parishes.

84 We have based our draft recommendations in this area on the proposal made by Therese Coffey MP. We propose to modify her proposed East ward by including the parish of Capel St Andrew. We consider that the parish should be included in the same ward as Butley and Wantisden parishes as they are grouped under a common parish council. We consider that including the three parishes in the same district ward will help to provide for effective and convenient local government.

85 Eyke Parish Council stated that it wished to retain the links which the parish has within the existing Hollesley with Eyke ward. Whilst the Parish Council did not provide any details regarding the nature of community linkages or common identity with those parishes, our proposal would ensure that Eyke parish continues to be represented together with four of the parishes which lie in that ward, retaining some of the links which Eyke Parish Council desires.

86 We do not consider that East is the most appropriate name for the ward proposed by Therese Coffey MP and instead propose naming it Orford & Eyke reflecting the largest parishes in the ward.

87 We propose to adopt Therese Coffey MP's proposed Deben ward, without amendment. We recognise that this does not reflect all of the submissions we received regarding the area but we consider that it reflects the evidence which we received and forms part of a pattern of wards which provides good electoral equality in the rural east and coast area as a whole.

88 Both Therese Coffey MP and the Council proposed that Rendlesham parish should constitute a single-member district ward having 1% fewer electors than the average for the district. Daniel Poulter MP proposed that the current ward which combines Rendlesham with Campsea Ashe be retained as a single-member ward. This would have 13% more electors than the average for the district. We consider that Therese Coffey MP's and the Council's proposal will provide for good electoral equality. We have not received any community identity arguments which would persuade us to favour any alternative scheme. Accordingly, we propose to adopt their proposed Rendlesham ward.

89 Our draft recommendations for the rural east and the coast are, therefore: single-member Deben, Orford & Eyke and Rendlesham wards having 9% fewer, 3% more and 1% fewer electors per councillor than the average for the district by 2019, respectively, and two-member Aldeburgh, Leiston and Saxmundham wards having 12% fewer, a 0% variance and 4% fewer electors than the average for the district by 2019, respectively.

## Woodbridge and the rural south

90 This area is currently covered by the Kesgrave East, Kesgrave West, Martlesham, Melton & Ufford, Nacton, Rushmere St Andrew, Trimleys with Kirton, Witnesham, Woodbridge Farlingaye, Woodbridge Kyson, Woodbridge Riverside and Woodbridge Seckford wards.

91 Therese Coffey MP proposed a three-member Woodbridge ward which would combine the parishes of Woodbridge, Hasketon, Great Bealings and Little Bealings together with the existing Martlesham North parish ward which is part of Martlesham parish. This would have 1% more electors per councillor than the average for the district by 2019.

92 The Council and Woodbridge Town Council both proposed that the parish of Woodbridge and the Martlesham North parish ward should, together, be represented in three single-member wards but did not propose any specific boundaries. Daniel Poulter MP proposed a three-member Woodbridge ward comprising only the parish of Woodbridge. This ward would have 15% fewer electors per councillor than the average.

93 Woodbridge Town Council also proposed that the parish boundary of Woodbridge be amended to include the existing Martlesham North parish ward, which appears to be overspill from Woodbridge. However, we have no power to alter parish boundaries as part of this review.

94 Little Bealings Parish Council opposed the inclusion of its parish in a ward with either Woodbridge or Kesgrave. Its view was that the appropriate parishes to be included in a ward with Little Bealings are Great Bealings, Playford, Culpho and Grundisburgh as those parishes are all located north of the A1214 and have similar concerns and issues.

95 Therese Coffey MP's proposal provided for the best level of electoral equality of the schemes proposed. We agree that the existing Martlesham North parish ward should be included in a ward with the whole or part of Woodbridge parish as we agree it is overspill from the town. However, without any specific boundaries being proposed we do not consider that Woodbridge should be divided into three single-member wards.

96 Accordingly, we propose to adopt Therese Coffey MP's proposed Woodbridge ward which is forecast to have a 1% variance by 2019.

97 Therese Coffey MP proposed a two-member Melton ward comprising Bredfield, Melton, Ufford, Bromeswell and Sutton Heath parishes. This ward would have 5% more electors per councillor than the average for the district. The Council proposed a two-member ward comprising Bredfield, Melton and Ufford parishes. This ward would have 16% fewer electors per councillor than the average for the district. Daniel Poulter MP proposed a Melton, Ufford & Eyke ward comprising Bromeswell, Eyke, Melton and Ufford parishes having 10% fewer electors per councillor than the average for the district.

98 Melton Parish Council proposed a two-member Upper Deben ward comprising Melton, Bromeswell, Ufford, Sutton and either Bredfield, Eyke or Hasketon. Wards

created in this way would have 5%, 4% or 4% fewer electors than the average by 2019. We recognise that each of these combinations of parishes would provide a good level of electoral equality for a Melton ward, although each would have unfavourable knock-on effects for the composition of wards in adjoining areas. The Parish Council gave a number of reasons for its proposal. It stated that Melton is identified in the District Council's Local Plan as the key service centre for surrounding parishes, that it shares a bus route with the parishes it wishes to see combined in its proposed ward, that its rail station provides a service for parishes in the Deben Estuary area with which it has common interests expressed in the Deben Estuary Plan and that it is paired with Bromeswell in a playspace fund.

99 Bromeswell Parish Council opposed Melton Parish Council's view, arguing that the review 'should not entirely be an exercise in creating wards with the same numbers of electors and that full weight needs to be given to ensuring that where there are shared interests for neighbouring villages these should be accommodated within the new ward boundaries'. It stated that it shares common interests with the small rural communities that typify the Deben Peninsula such as Sutton, Shottisham and Boyton. The Parish Council proposed a ward which would combine the existing Sutton and Hollesley with Eyke wards and have 58% more electors than the average by 2019.

100 Councillor Kathryn Jones of Ufford Parish Council also opposed being combined in a ward with Melton stating that Ufford's community and service linkages mean that the parish should be included in a ward with Wickham Market. She also proposed that Melton be combined with Woodbridge. She considered that were a total of four councillors to represent the combined area of Melton and Woodbridge, good electoral equality would be achieved with, overall, 4% fewer electors per councillor than the average by 2019. One resident of the Melton Grange area who lives closer to Woodbridge than to Melton expressed a preference to vote in a Woodbridge ward than to vote in an area associated with Ufford or Wickham Market because they use the facilities of Woodbridge but do not have the opportunity to vote for its councillors. However, this respondent did not provide a specific proposal for ward boundaries within Woodbridge and Melton.

101 We acknowledge the proposals we have received for the configuration of individual wards. However, we note that whilst some proposals do suggest good levels for electoral equality in those individual wards, they have knock-on effects on the composition of wards in adjacent areas. We consider that Therese Coffey MP's proposal provides for good electoral equality in Melton and in the Woodbridge and Rural South area generally. The alternative schemes would result in poorer levels of electoral equality in Woodbridge and the Rural South area. We do not consider that they are accompanied by sufficiently strong evidence that they would lead to a better reflection of community identity or lead to more effective and convenient local government than Therese Coffey MP's proposal. Accordingly, we propose to adopt her proposed Melton ward which differs from one of the alternatives proposed by Melton Parish Council only by the inclusion of Sutton Heath parish instead of Sutton parish. We acknowledge that the Parish Council's proposals would offer good electoral equality and have been supported by good examples of community identity evidence. However, we consider that adopting any of its alternatives in full would result in wards for adjacent areas which would not provide acceptable levels of electoral equality.

102 Therese Coffey MP proposed the retention of the current two-member Martlesham ward which is made up of those parts of Martlesham parish not currently included in the Woodbridge Riverside or Kesgrave East wards. This would result in the ward having 10% more electors per councillor than the average for the district.

103 The Council proposed retaining the two-member Martlesham ward with the addition of Martlesham West parish ward. This would result in a ward with 14% more electors per councillor than the average for the district. We consider, however, that the residential properties in the Martlesham West ward are more closely related to the adjacent residential area on the eastern edge of Kesgrave parish, with which they share road access, than to the remainder of Martlesham. Both Daniel Poulter MP and Martlesham Parish Council wished to see the ward boundary coterminous with the parish boundary. The Parish Council acknowledged that this would result in a two-member ward with 21% more electors per councillor than the district average by 2019 but asserted that this variance from the average is acceptable.

104 We consider that Therese Coffey MP's proposal provides for an acceptable level of electoral equality. We do not consider that the alternative proposals are supported by sufficient evidence of community identity to justify the poorer levels of electoral equality. Accordingly, we propose to adopt her proposed Martlesham ward.

105 The Council proposed that Kesgrave be divided into two two-member wards. The Council submitted a proposed ward boundary prepared by one of its members for Kesgrave. Daniel Poulter MP also proposed that the parish of Kesgrave be divided into two-member Kesgrave West and Kesgrave East wards but did not propose a specific boundary between the two. Therese Coffey MP proposed that the Martlesham West parish ward should continue to be represented in Kesgrave wards but did not propose detailed ward boundaries for this area.

106 Kesgrave Town Council proposed a two-member Kesgrave West ward comprising broadly the west of Kesgrave parish and 333 electors from Rushmere St Andrew parish who live in the area which lies between the Rushmere Golf Club and Kesgrave. This ward would have 17% fewer electors than the average by 2019. The Town Council also proposed a three-member Kesgrave East ward comprising the remainder of Kesgrave parish. This ward would have 10% fewer electors per councillor than the average for the district.

107 Two residents from Kesgrave advocated a four-member ward for Kesgrave. Our policy is not normally to recommend wards of principal authorities with more than three members and there are currently no such wards in England. One of these respondents proposed, as an alternative, a single-member Kesgrave West ward and a three-member Kesgrave East ward but did not propose detailed ward boundaries.

108 We have considered carefully the submissions made and consider that Kesgrave parish together with the existing Martlesham West parish ward should be divided into a Kesgrave East and Kesgrave West ward. We consider that the Martlesham West parish ward should be included in a Kesgrave ward because it shares characteristics with the residential area in Kesgrave which immediately adjoins it and with which it shares road access. We have sought to identify a boundary between these wards on the basis of observations made during our visit to the area and what respondents have said to us, in addition to providing the best balance of electoral equality. Our proposed Kesgrave East ward would have 6%

more electors than the average by 2019. Our proposed Kesgrave West ward would have 9% more electors than the average by 2019

109 Therese Coffey MP proposed a three-member Rushmere ward consisting of the parishes of Culpho, Playford, Rushmere St Andrew, Swilland, Tuddenham St Martin, Westerfield and Witnesham. This would have 2% fewer electors per councillor than the average for the district. Both the Council and Daniel Poulter MP proposed that the parish of Rushmere St Andrew form a two-member ward having 12% more electors than the average for the district.

110 Rushmere St Andrew Parish Council stated that its preference was for the parish not to be warded. To meet this requirement, the entire parish would have to lie within a single district ward and a single electoral division.

111 The Parish Council recognised that the forecast electorates prepared by the District Council indicate that the parish electorate will, in 2019, be too great for a two-member ward and too small for a three-member ward. The Parish Council stated that it believes the electorate forecasts to underestimate the likely growth in the electorate of the parish, but has provided no clear evidence to support this assertion and we are content to make recommendations on the basis of the Council's forecast electorate.

112 The Parish Council suggested three possible approaches. The first was that Rushmere St Andrew could be combined with a small number of electors from other neighbouring parishes to justify a three-member ward. The Parish Council did not indicate which other parishes might be included in such a ward. However, the proposal is broadly similar to that proposed by Therese Coffey MP. This would meet the Parish Council's preference that the parish not be divided into parish wards.

113 The Parish Council also considered that the southern, more urban, part of the parish could be combined with Kesgrave or Purdis Farm to form a two-member ward whilst the northern, more rural, part of the parish could be combined with either Tuddenham St Martin and/or Playford to form a single-member ward.

114 Finally, the Parish Council suggested that the A1214 road might provide an alternative ward boundary. The Parish Council's alternatives to a three-member ward would, however, mean that Rushmere St Andrew would have to be divided into parish wards.

115 We consider that Therese Coffey MP's proposal for a three-member Rushmere ward will provide for good electoral equality. We have not received any community identity arguments which would persuade us to favour any alternative scheme. We propose to adopt her proposed Rushmere ward subject to one modification. We propose to include the parish of Culpho in the Grundisburgh ward as we describe in paragraph 55. This is to ensure that the parishes of Grundisburgh and Culpho, served by a common parish council, are represented in the same ward.

116 We would, however, be particularly interested to receive views about Rushmere St Andrew Parish Council's suggestion that this area be divided along the line of the A1214 to create a single-member ward for the northern part of the parish together with the parishes of Playford, Swilland, Tuddenham, Westerfield and Witnesham. This would enable the creation of a two-member ward for the southern part of the Rushmere St Andrew parish.

117 The electorate forecasts for Purdis Farm have been revised by the Council. This followed comments made by Therese Coffey MP and Councillor Susan Harvey who questioned the forecasts. The Council has considered when development may be expected to commence, and the rate of dwelling completions which may be expected, and concluded that the increase in the electorate will be 200. As indicated in paragraph 19, we have accepted the Council's revised forecast for this area.

118 Therese Coffey MP proposed a single-member ward containing Purdis Farm, Foxhall and Nacton parishes, having 6% more electors than the average by 2019. The Council and one member of the public proposed the addition of Brightwell parish to this grouping. This addition would ensure that Purdis Farm, Foxhall and Brightwell, served by a common parish council, would be contained within a single ward. In this combination, the ward would have 7% more electors than the average by 2019. Daniel Poulter MP proposed a single-member ward comprising Nacton and Purdis Farm parishes. This would have 11% fewer electors than the average by 2019.

119 Both Therese Coffey MP's proposal and that made by the Council would provide for good electoral equality. However, we note that the Council's proposal provides for the three parishes in the Purdis Farm, Foxhall and Brightwell group to be represented in the same ward and therefore propose to adopt the Council's proposal as part of our draft recommendations. We also propose to adopt the local resident's proposal that the ward for this area be named Nacton & Purdis Farm.

120 The Council and a local resident proposed a single-member ward comprising Bucklesham, Falkenham, Hemley, Kirton, Levington, Newbourne, Stratton Hall and Waldringfield parishes having 2% fewer electors than the average for the district. Therese Coffey MP made a similar proposal but would include Brightwell parish and name the ward South. This combination would have the average number of electors for a single-member ward. Daniel Poulter MP proposed a Kirton ward comprising Brightwell, Bucklesham, Falkenham, Foxhall, Hemley, Kirton, Levington, Newbourne, and Stratton Hall parishes. The ward would have 6% fewer electors than the average by 2019.

121 Councillor Falconer proposed a single-member ward for Purdis Farm and a two-member ward for the smaller parishes in the rural south. Such wards would, however, provide poor levels of electoral equality, having over 30% fewer electors per councillor than the average for the district.

122 Kirton & Falkenham Parish Council proposed that both Kirton and Falkenham be part of a ward including Trimley S. Martin and Trimley St Mary. This would have 16% more electors than the average by 2019. The Parish Council argued that it has strong common interests with the Trimleys. These include the catchment area of Trimley St Martin School, the physical and social divide in the peninsula created by the A14, issues of congestion and emergencies on the A14, and proposals for additional port facilities. Councillor Harvey made the same proposal. Levington & Stratton Hall Parish Council took a different view, arguing that its area should be warded with Kirton & Falkenham whilst Daniel Poulter MP also argued that Kirton is different in character to Trimley St Martin and Trimley St Mary.

123 We consider that the Council's proposal provides for good electoral equality. It is similar to Therese Coffey MP's for a two-member ward having 7% fewer electors per councillor than the average for the district but is consistent with our conclusion that Brightwell should be represented in the same ward as other parishes in its parish

council grouping, which we described in paragraph 119. We propose to adopt the name Kirton for this ward as the largest parish in the ward, as proposed by Daniel Poulter.

124 Therese Coffey MP, Daniel Poulter MP and the Council proposed that Trimley St Martin and Trimley St Mary parishes should be combined to form a two-member ward having 7% fewer electors than the average by 2019. Daniel Poulter MP proposed that this ward should be named The Trimleys. The Council and Therese Coffey MP both proposed that the ward be called Trimleys.

125 We consider that the proposal made by the Council, Therese Coffey MP and Daniel Poulter MP would provide for good electoral equality. The community identity arguments which we have received do not persuade us to favour any alternative scheme. Accordingly, we propose a ward combining Trimley St Martin and Trimley St Mary and the name The Trimleys suggested by Daniel Poulter MP, as this is more indicative of the composition of the ward being two separate parishes than the name Trimleys.

126 We consider, however, that a three-member ward combining our proposed single-member Kirton ward and two-member The Trimleys ward would also provide good electoral equality and we would be particularly interested to receive views about such a ward as part of this consultation.

127 Our draft recommendations for Woodbridge and the rural south are, therefore: single-member Kirton, Nacton & Purdis Farm and Rendlesham wards having 2% fewer, 7% more and 1% fewer electors per councillor than the average for the district by 2019, respectively; two-member Kesgrave East, Kesgrave West, Martlesham, Melton and The Trimleys wards having 6% more, 9% more, 10% more, 5% more and 7% fewer electors than the average for the district by 2019, respectively; and three-member Rushmere and Woodbridge wards having 3% fewer and 1% more electors than the average for the district by 2019, respectively.

## Felixstowe

128 The town of Felixstowe is currently represented in the Felixstowe East, North, South, South East and West wards. In the Council's revision of its electoral forecast, it expects the total electorate of the town to increase from 18,703 in 2012 to 19,863 by 2019.

129 Daniel Poulter MP proposed that the town be represented by 10 councillors. He argued that the growth of the town and its port, urban deprivation and a seasonal economy result in additional workload for the town's representatives. Therese Coffey MP proposed that Felixstowe be represented by a total of eight councillors but did not propose ward boundaries within the town. The Town Council agrees with the District Council that the town should be divided into four two-member district council wards.

130 The District Council presented two proposals for warding in Felixstowe. We recognise that both proposals were prepared before the Council revised its electorate forecasts. The first was developed by a cross-party working group of Felixstowe ward members but did not receive approval of all members of the working group. An alternative warding proposal was prepared by Labour Party councillors for Felixstowe wards.

131 Both proposals included the retention of the boundaries of the current Felixstowe West ward. As a two-member ward, this would have 2% more electors than the average by 2019. The Labour Group describe the ward as mainly bounded on one side by the railway line, accessed across two road bridges and two footbridges, and on the other by the A14. We consider that the current ward boundaries provide for good electoral equality and we propose therefore to include the present Felixstowe West ward as a two-member ward in our draft recommendations.

132 The Council's working group proposal is for Felixstowe East, Felixstowe North and Felixstowe South wards having 3% more, 7% fewer and 5% more electors than the average by 2019. The Labour Group members' proposal is for wards of the same names having 5% more, 14% fewer and 9% more electors than the average by 2019.

133 Having visited the area, we note that the proposal prepared by the Council's working group presents a single ward embracing the whole of Felixstowe's Town Centre. It also ensures that the residential area which lies immediately to the south of the railway line which serves the town centre would be represented in the same ward as the residential area which it adjoins. We consider this to form the basis of a more clearly-defined ward pattern and stronger boundaries than does the alternative proposal. Accordingly, we have based our draft recommendation on the Felixstowe wards proposed by the Council's Working Group. We have identified as a ward boundary a footpath running to the rear of properties on the eastern side of Rosemary Avenue and which crosses Colneis Road and Links Avenue as this provides a distinct and continuous boundary to the eastern edge of our proposed Felixstowe North ward.

134 Our draft recommendations for Felixstowe are, therefore: two-member Felixstowe East, Felixstowe North, Felixstowe South and Felixstowe West wards having 2% fewer, 1% fewer, 4% more and 2% more electors per councillor than the average for the district by 2019, respectively.

# Conclusions

135 Table 1 shows the impact of our draft recommendations on electoral equality, based on 2012 and 2019 electorate figures.

**Table 1: Summary of electoral arrangements**

	Draft recommendations	
	2012	2019
Number of councillors	42	42
Number of electoral wards	25	25
Average number of electors per councillor	2,311	2,468
Number of wards with a variance more than 10% from the average	3	1
Number of wards with a variance more than 20% from the average	0	0

**Draft recommendation**  
 Suffolk Coastal District Council should comprise 42 councillors serving 25 wards as detailed and named in Table A1 and illustrated on the large map accompanying this report.

## Parish electoral arrangements

136 As part of an electoral review, we are required to have regard to the statutory criteria set out in Schedule 2 to the Local Democracy, Economic Development and Construction Act 2009 (the 2009 Act). The Schedule provides that if a parish is to be divided between different wards it must also be divided into parish wards, so that each parish ward lies wholly within a single ward. We cannot recommend changes to the external boundaries of parishes as part of an electoral review.

137 Under the 2009 Act we only have the power to make changes to parish electoral arrangements where these are as a direct consequence of our recommendations for principal authority warding arrangements. However, Suffolk Coastal District Council has powers under the Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act 2007 to conduct community governance reviews to effect changes to parish electoral arrangements.

138 To meet our obligations under the 2009 Act, we propose consequential parish warding arrangements for the parishes of Felixstowe, Kesgrave and Martlesham.

139 As a result of our proposed ward boundaries and having regard to the statutory criteria set out in Schedule 2 to the 2009 Act, we propose revised parish electoral arrangements for Felixstowe parish.

**Draft recommendation**

Felixstowe Town Council should return 16 parish councillors, the same number as at present, representing five wards: Felixstowe Allenby (returning 1 member), Felixstowe East (returning four members), Felixstowe South (returning four members), Felixstowe West (returning four members) and Felixstowe Walton (returning three members). The proposed parish ward boundaries are illustrated and named on Map 1.

140 As a result of our proposed ward boundaries and having regard to the statutory criteria set out in Schedule 2 to the 2009 Act, we propose revised parish electoral arrangements for Kesgrave parish.

**Draft recommendation**

Kesgrave Town Council should return 15 parish councillors, the same number as at present, representing two wards: Kesgrave East (returning seven members) and Kesgrave West (returning eight members). The proposed parish ward boundaries are illustrated and named on Map 1.

141 As a result of our proposed ward boundaries and having regard to the statutory criteria set out in Schedule 2 to the 2009 Act, we propose revised parish electoral arrangements for Martlesham parish.

**Draft recommendation**

Martlesham Parish Council should return 15 parish councillors, the same number as at present, representing three wards: Martlesham (returning 13 members), Martlesham North (returning one member) and Martlesham West (returning one member). The proposed parish ward boundaries are illustrated and named on Map 1.



### 3 What happens next?

142 There will now be a consultation period of 12 weeks, during which everyone is invited to comment on the draft recommendations on future electoral arrangements for Suffolk Coastal District Council contained in this report. We will take into account fully all submissions received by 28 April 2014. Any received after this date may not be taken into account.

143 We have not finalised our conclusions on the electoral arrangements for Suffolk Coastal and welcome comments from interested parties relating to the proposed ward boundaries, number of councillors, ward names and parish electoral arrangements. We would welcome alternative proposals backed up by demonstrable evidence during the consultation on our draft recommendations. We will consider all the evidence submitted to us during the consultation period before preparing our final recommendations.

144 Express your views by writing directly to:

**Review Officer**  
**Suffolk Coastal Review**  
**The Local Government Boundary Commission for England**  
**Layden House**  
**76–86 Turnmill Street**  
**London EC1M 5LG**

Submissions can also be made by using the consultation section of our website, <http://consultation.lgbce.org.uk> or by emailing [reviews@lgbce.org.uk](mailto:reviews@lgbce.org.uk)

145 Please note that the consultation stages of an electoral review are public consultations. In the interests of openness and transparency, we make available for public inspection full copies of all representations the Commission takes into account as part of a review. Accordingly, copies of all representations received during the consultation on our draft recommendations will be placed on deposit locally at the offices of Suffolk Coastal District Council and at our offices in Layden House (London) and on our website at [www.lgbce.org.uk](http://www.lgbce.org.uk) A list of respondents will be available from us on request after the end of the consultation period.

146 If you are a member of the public and not writing on behalf of a council or organisation we will remove any personal identifiers, such as postal or email addresses, signatures or phone numbers from your submission before it is made public. We will remove signatures from all letters, no matter who they are from.

147 In the light of representations received, we will review our draft recommendations and consider whether they should be altered. As indicated earlier, it is therefore important that all interested parties let us have their views and evidence, **whether or not** they agree with the draft recommendations. We will then publish our final recommendations.

148 After the publication of our final recommendations, the changes we have proposed must be approved by Parliament. An Order – the legal document which brings into force our recommendations – will be laid in draft in Parliament. The draft

Order will provide for new electoral arrangements to be implemented at the next elections for Suffolk Coastal District Council in 2015.

## 4 Mapping

### Draft recommendations for Suffolk Coastal

149 The following maps illustrate our proposed ward boundaries for Suffolk Coastal District Council:

- **Sheet 1, Map 1** illustrates in outline form the proposed wards for Suffolk Coastal District Council.

You can also view our draft recommendations for Suffolk Coastal District Council on our interactive maps at <http://consultation.lgbce.org.uk>



## Appendix A

**Table A1: Draft recommendations for Suffolk Coastal District Council**

	<b>Ward name</b>	<b>Number of councillors</b>	<b>Electorate (2012)</b>	<b>Number of electors per councillor</b>	<b>Variance from average %</b>	<b>Electorate (2019)</b>	<b>Number of electors per councillor</b>	<b>Variance from average %</b>
1	Aldeburgh	2	4,139	2,070	-10%	4,329	2,165	-12%
2	Deben	1	2,070	2,070	-10%	2,237	2,237	-9%
3	Felixstowe East	2	4,321	2,161	-7%	4,812	2,406	-2%
4	Felixstowe North	2	4,687	2,344	1%	4,887	2,444	-1%
5	Felixstowe South	2	4,712	2,356	2%	5,146	2,573	4%
6	Felixstowe West	2	4,983	2,492	8%	5,018	2,509	2%
7	Framlingham	2	4,309	2,155	-7%	4,799	2,400	-3%
8	Grundisburgh	1	2,343	2,343	1%	2,412	2,412	-2%
9	Hacheston	1	2,506	2,506	8%	2,567	2,567	4%
10	Kesgrave East	2	5,132	2,566	16%	5,209	2,605	6%
11	Kesgrave West	2	5,359	2,680	11%	5,365	2,683	9%
12	Kirton	1	2,402	2,402	4%	2,430	2,430	-2%
13	Leiston	2	4,636	2,318	0%	4,945	2,473	0%
14	Martlesham	2	4,078	2,039	-12%	5,425	2,713	10%
15	Melton	2	5,028	2,514	9%	5,161	2,581	5%
16	Nacton & Purdis Farm	1	2,370	2,370	3%	2,651	2,651	7%

**Table A1 (cont.): Draft recommendations for Suffolk Coastal District Council**

	<b>Ward name</b>	<b>Number of councillors</b>	<b>Electorate (2012)</b>	<b>Number of electors per councillor</b>	<b>Variance from average %</b>	<b>Electorate (2019)</b>	<b>Number of electors per councillor</b>	<b>Variance from average %</b>
17	Orford & Eyke	1	2,317	2,317	0%	2,534	2,534	3%
18	Peasenhall & Yoxford	1	2,331	2,331	1%	2,466	2,466	0%
19	Rendlesham	1	2,218	2,218	-4%	2,446	2,446	-1%
20	Rushmere	3	6,638	2,213	-4%	7,193	2,398	-3%
21	Saxmundham	2	4,210	2,105	-9%	4,761	2,381	-4%
22	The Trimleys	2	4,395	2,198	-5%	4,612	2,306	-7%
23	Wenhaston & Westleton	1	2,256	2,256	-2%	2,313	2,313	-6%
24	Wickham Market	1	2,287	2,287	-1%	2,465	2,465	0%
25	Woodbridge	3	7,332	2,444	6%	7,455	2,485	1%
<b>Totals</b>		<b>42</b>	<b>97,059</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>103,638</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>
<b>Averages</b>		<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>2,311</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>2,468</b>	<b>-</b>

Source: Electorate figures are based on information provided by Suffolk Coastal District Council.

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

## Appendix B

### Glossary and abbreviations

AONB (Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty)	A landscape whose distinctive character and natural beauty are so outstanding that it is in the nation's interest to safeguard it
Constituent areas	The geographical areas that make up any one ward or division, expressed in parishes or existing wards or divisions, or parts of either
Council size	The number of councillors elected to serve on a council
Electoral Change Order (or Order)	A legal document which implements changes to the electoral arrangements of a local authority
Division	A specific area of a county, defined for electoral, administrative and representational purposes. Eligible electors can vote in whichever division they are registered for the candidate or candidates they wish to represent them on the county council
Electoral fairness	When one elector's vote is worth the same as another's
Electoral imbalance	Where there is a difference between the number of electors represented by a councillor and the average for the local authority
Electorate	People in the authority who are registered to vote in elections. For the purposes of this report, we refer specifically to the electorate for local government elections

Local Government Boundary Commission for England or LGBCE	The Local Government Boundary Commission for England is responsible for undertaking electoral reviews. The Local Government Boundary Commission for England assumed the functions of the Boundary Committee for England in April 2010
Multi-member ward or division	A ward or division represented by more than one councillor and usually not more than three councillors
National Park	The 13 National Parks in England and Wales were designated under the National Parks and Access to the Countryside Act of 1949 and can be found at <a href="http://www.nationalparks.gov.uk">www.nationalparks.gov.uk</a>
Number of electors per councillor	The total number of electors in a local authority divided by the number of councillors
Over-represented	Where there are fewer electors per councillor in a ward or division than the average
Parish	A specific and defined area of land within a single local authority enclosed within a parish boundary. There are over 10,000 parishes in England, which provide the first tier of representation to their local residents
Parish council	A body elected by electors in the parish which serves and represents the area defined by the parish boundaries. See also 'Town council'
Parish (or Town) council electoral arrangements	The total number of councillors on any one parish or town council; the number, names and boundaries of parish wards; and the number of councillors for each ward

Parish ward	A particular area of a parish, defined for electoral, administrative and representational purposes. Eligible electors vote in whichever parish ward they live for candidate or candidates they wish to represent them on the parish council
PER (or periodic electoral review)	A review of the electoral arrangements of all local authorities in England, undertaken periodically. The last programme of PERs was undertaken between 1996 and 2004 by the Boundary Commission for England and its predecessor, the now-defunct Local Government Commission for England
Political management arrangements	The Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act 2007 enabled local authorities in England to modernise their decision making process. Councils could choose from two broad categories; a directly elected mayor and cabinet or a cabinet with a leader
Town council	A parish council which has been given ceremonial 'town' status. More information on achieving such status can be found at <a href="http://www.nalc.gov.uk">www.nalc.gov.uk</a>
Under-represented	Where there are more electors per councillor in a ward or division than the average
Variance (or electoral variance)	How far the number of electors per councillor in a ward or division varies in percentage terms from the average
Ward	A specific area of a district or district, defined for electoral, administrative and representational purposes. Eligible electors can vote in whichever ward they are registered for the candidate or candidates they wish to represent them on the district or district council

