

Draft recommendations on the
future electoral arrangements for
Suffolk Coastal

January 2001

LOCAL GOVERNMENT COMMISSION FOR ENGLAND

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 local authorities' electoral arrangements.

Members of the Commission are:

Professor Malcolm Grant (Chairman)
Professor Michael Clarke CBE (Deputy Chairman)
Peter Brokenshire
Kru Desai
Pamela Gordon
Robin Gray
Robert Hughes CBE

Barbara Stephens (Chief Executive)

We are statutorily required to review periodically the electoral arrangements – such as the number of councillors representing electors in each area and the number and boundaries of wards and electoral divisions – of every principal local authority in England. In broad terms our objective is to ensure that the number of electors represented by each councillor in an area is as nearly as possible the same, taking into account local circumstances. We can recommend changes to ward boundaries, and the number of councillors and ward names. We can also make recommendations for change to the electoral arrangements of parish and town councils in the district.

© Crown Copyright 2001

Applications for reproduction should be made to: Her Majesty's Stationery Office Copyright Unit.

The mapping in this report is reproduced from OS mapping by the Local Government Commission for England with the permission of the Controller of Her Majesty's Stationery Office, © Crown Copyright.

Unauthorised reproduction infringes Crown Copyright and may lead to prosecution or civil proceedings.
Licence Number: GD 03114G.

This report is printed on recycled paper. ♻️

CONTENTS

	page
SUMMARY	<i>v</i>
1 INTRODUCTION	<i>1</i>
2 CURRENT ELECTORAL ARRANGEMENTS	<i>5</i>
3 REPRESENTATIONS RECEIVED	<i>9</i>
4 ANALYSIS AND DRAFT RECOMMENDATIONS	<i>13</i>
5 NEXT STEPS	<i>45</i>
APPENDICES	
A Draft Recommendations for Suffolk Coastal Detailed Mapping	<i>47</i>
B Proposed Electoral Arrangements from: – Suffolk Coastal District Council – Suffolk Coastal Liberal Democrats – Councillors Hall and Howard	<i>51</i>
C The Statutory Provisions	<i>57</i>

A large map illustrating the existing and proposed ward boundaries for Kesgrave, Martlesham and Woodbridge is inserted inside the back cover of the report.

SUMMARY

The Commission began a review of the electoral arrangements for Suffolk Coastal on 27 June 2000.

- **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 Suffolk Coastal:

- **In 34 of the 42 wards the number of electors represented by each councillor varies by more than 10 per cent from the average for the district and 24 wards vary by more than 20 per cent from the average.**
- **By 2005 this unequal representation 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 37 wards and by more than 20 per cent in 23 wards.**

Our main draft recommendations for future electoral arrangements (Figures 1 and 2 and paragraphs 176-177) are that:

- **Suffolk Coastal District Council should have 55 councillors, as at present;**
- **there should be 34 wards, instead of 42 as at present;**
- **the boundaries of 40 of the existing wards should be modified, resulting in a net reduction of eight, and two wards should retain their existing boundaries;**
- **whole-council elections should continue to take place every four years.**

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

- **In 32 of the proposed 34 wards the number of electors per councillor would vary by no more than 10 per cent from the district average.**
- **This improved level of electoral equality is expected to continue with the number of electors per councillor in all 34 wards expected to vary by no more than 10 per cent from the average for the district in 2005.**

Recommendations are also made for changes to parish and town council electoral arrangements which provide for:

- **revised warding arrangements and the redistribution of councillors for the towns of Felixstowe and Woodbridge.**
- **new warding arrangements and the redistribution of councillors for Kesgrave and Martlesham parishes.**

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

- **We will consult on our draft recommendations for eight weeks from 9 January 2001. Because we take this consultation very seriously, we may move away from our draft recommendations in the light of Stage Three responses. It is therefore important 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 also determine when any changes come into effect.**

You should express your views by writing directly to the Commission at the address below by 5 March 2001:

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

**Fax: 020 7404 6142
E-mail: reviews@lgce.gov.uk
Website: www.lgce.gov.uk**

Figure 1: The Commission's Draft Recommendations: Summary

Ward name	Number of councillors	Constituent areas	Map reference
1 Aldeburgh	2	Aldeburgh ward (Aldeburgh Town); Buxlow ward (part – Aldringham cum Thorpe parish)	Map 2
2 Earl Soham	1	Earl Soham ward (part – Brandeston, Earl Soham, Easton, Kettleburgh and Letheringham parishes); Hasketon ward (part – Charsfield parish); Otley ward (part – Cretingham, Hoo and Monewden parishes)	Map 2
3 Farlingaye (in Woodbridge)	1	Woodbridge Farlingaye ward (Farlingaye ward of Woodbridge Town); Woodbridge Central ward (part – Central ward of Woodbridge Town (part)); Woodbridge Seckford ward (part – Seckford ward of Woodbridge Town (part))	Large map and Map 2
4 Felixstowe East	2	Felixstowe East ward (part – East ward of Felixstowe Town (part)); Felixstowe North ward (part – North ward of Felixstowe Town (part)); Felixstowe South East ward (part – South East ward of Felixstowe Town (part))	Map 2 and Map A3
5 Felixstowe North	2	Felixstowe Central ward (part – Central ward of Felixstowe Town (part)); Felixstowe North ward (part – North ward of Felixstowe Town (part)); Felixstowe South East ward (part – South East ward of Felixstowe Town (part))	Map 2 and Map A3
6 Felixstowe South	2	Felixstowe Central ward (part – Central ward of Felixstowe Town (part)); Felixstowe South ward (part – South ward of Felixstowe Town (part)); Felixstowe West ward (part – West ward of Felixstowe Town (part))	Map 2 and Maps A2 and A3
7 Felixstowe South East	2	Felixstowe Central ward (part – Central ward of Felixstowe Town (part)); Felixstowe East ward (part – East ward of Felixstowe Town (part)); Felixstowe South ward (part – South ward of Felixstowe Town (part)); Felixstowe South East ward (part – South East ward of Felixstowe Town (part))	Map 2 and Map A3
8 Felixstowe West	3	Felixstowe Central ward (part – Central ward of Felixstowe Town (part)); Felixstowe West ward (part – West ward of Felixstowe Town (part))	Map 2 and Map A2
9 Framlingham	2	Framlingham ward (Framlingham Town); Dennington ward (part – Dennington and Badingham parishes); Earl Soham ward (part – Saxtead parish)	Map 2
10 Grundisburgh	1	Bealings ward (part – Great Bealings and Little Bealings parishes); Grundisburgh & Winesham ward (part – Culpho and Grundisburgh parishes)	Map 2

Ward name	Number of councillors	Constituent areas	Map reference
11 Hacheston	1	Dennington ward (part – Bruisyard, Cransford, Rendham and Sweffling parishes); Glemham ward (Great Glemham, Hacheston, Little Glemham, Marlesford and Parham parishes)	Map 2
12 Hollesley with Eyke	1	Hollesley ward (Boyton, Butley, Capel St Andrew, Hollesley and Wantisden parishes); Tunstall ward (part – Chillesford parish); Ufford ward (part – Eyke parish)	Map 2
13 Kesgrave East	3	Kesgrave ward (part – Kesgrave East ward of Kesgrave Town as proposed); Martlesham ward (part – Martlesham West ward of Martlesham parish as proposed)	Large map and Map 2
14 Kesgrave West	2	Kesgrave ward (part – West ward of Kesgrave Town as proposed)	Large map and Map 2
15 Kyson (in Woodbridge)	1	Woodbridge Kyson ward (Kyson ward of Woodbridge Town); Woodbridge Seckford ward (part – Seckford ward of Woodbridge Town (part))	Large map and Map 2
16 Leiston	3	Buxlow ward (part – Knodishall parish); Leiston ward (Leiston Town)	Map 2
17 Martlesham	2	Martlesham ward (part – Martlesham Heath and Martlesham Village wards of Martlesham parish as proposed)	Large map and Map 2
18 Melton & Ufford	2	Melton ward (Melton parish); Ufford ward (part – Ufford parish)	Map 2
19 Nacton	2	Kirton ward (part – Hemley, Newbourne and Waldringfield parishes); Nacton ward (Brightwell, Bucklesham, Foxhall, Levington, Nacton, Purdis Farm and Stratton Hall parishes)	Map 2
20 Orford & Tunstall	1	Orford ward (Gedgrave, Iken, Orford and Sudbourne parishes); Tunstall ward (part – Blaxhall and Tunstall parishes)	Map 2
21 Otley	1	Hasketon ward (part – Boulge, Bredfield, Burgh, Dallinghoo, Debach and Hasketon parishes); Otley ward (part – Clopton and Otley parishes)	Map 2
22 Peasenhall	1	Bramfield & Cratfield ward (part – Chediston, Cookley, Cratfield, Heveningham, Huntingfield, Linstead Magna, Linstead Parva, Ubbeston and Walpole parishes); Yoxford ward (part – Peasenhall and Sibton parishes)	Map 2
23 Rendlesham	1	Tunstall ward (part – Campsey Ash and Rendlesham parishes); Ufford ward (part – Pettistree parish)	Map 2

Ward name	Number of councillors	Constituent areas	Map reference
24 Riverside (in Woodbridge)	1	Martlesham ward (part – Martlesham North ward of Martlesham parish as proposed); Woodbridge Central ward (part – Central ward of Woodbridge Town (part)); Woodbridge Riverside ward (part – Riverside ward of Woodbridge Town (part)); Woodbridge Seckford ward (part – Seckford ward of Woodbridge Town (part))	Large map and Map 2
25 Rushmere St Andrew	3	Rushmere ward (Rushmere St Andrew parish)	Large map and Map 2
26 Saxmundham	2	Kelsale ward (Kelsale cum Carlton and Theberton parishes); Saxmundham ward (Saxmundham Town)	Map 2
27 Seckford (in Woodbridge)	1	Woodbridge Seckford ward (part – Seckford ward of Woodbridge Town (part)); Woodbridge Central ward (part – Central ward of Woodbridge Town (part)); Woodbridge Riverside ward (part – Riverside ward of Woodbridge Town (part))	Large map and Map 2
28 Snape	1	Buxlow ward (part – Friston parish); Snape ward (Benhall, Farnham, Snape, Sternfield and Stratford St Andrew parishes)	Map 2
29 Sutton	1	Alderton & Sutton ward (Alderton, Bawdsey, Ramsholt, Shottisham and Sutton parishes); Ufford ward (part – Bromeswell parish)	Map 2
30 Trimleys with Kirton	3	Kirton ward (part – Falkenham and Kirton parishes); Trimleys ward (Trimley St Martin and Trimley St Mary parishes)	Map 2
31 Walberswick & Wenhaston	1	Bramfield & Cratfield ward (part – Bramfield and Thorington parishes); Walberswick ward (Blythburgh, Walberswick and Wenhaston with Mells Hamlet parishes)	Map 2
32 Wickham Market	1	<i>Unchanged</i> (Wickham Market parish)	Map 2
33 Witlesham	1	Bealings ward (part – Playford, Tuddenham St Martin and Westerfield parishes); Grundisburgh & Witlesham ward (part – Swilland and Witlesham parishes)	Map 2
34 Yoxford	1	Westleton ward (Darsham, Dunwich, Middleton and Westleton parishes); Yoxford ward (part – Yoxford parish)	Map 2

Notes: 1 The whole district is parished.

2 Map 2, Appendix A and the large map in the back of the report illustrate the proposed wards outlined above.

Figure 2: The Commission's Draft Recommendations for Suffolk Coastal

Ward name	Number of councillors	Electorate (2000)	Number of electors per councillor	Variance from average %	Electorate (2005)	Number of electors per councillor	Variance from average %
1 Aldeburgh	2	3,235	1,618	-2	3,690	1,845	8
2 Earl Soham	1	1,685	1,685	2	1,725	1,725	1
3 Farlingaye (in Woodbridge)	1	1,582	1,582	-4	1,600	1,600	-6
4 Felixstowe East	2	3,459	1,730	4	3,527	1,764	3
5 Felixstowe North	2	3,347	1,674	1	3,363	1,682	-1
6 Felixstowe South	2	3,550	1,775	7	3,593	1,797	5
7 Felixstowe South East	2	3,625	1,813	9	3,598	1,799	6
8 Felixstowe West	3	5,008	1,669	1	5,094	1,698	0
9 Framlingham	2	3,440	1,720	4	3,535	1,768	4
10 Grundisburgh	1	1,812	1,812	9	1,825	1,825	7
11 Hacheston	1	1,689	1,689	2	1,680	1,680	-1
12 Hollesley with Eyke	1	1,641	1,641	-1	1,625	1,625	-5
13 Kesgrave East	2	3,837	1,279	-23	4,825	1,608	-6
14 Kesgrave West	3	3,060	1,530	-8	3,060	1,530	-10
15 Kyson (in Woodbridge)	1	1,600	1,600	-3	1,632	1,632	-4
16 Leiston	3	4,789	1,596	-4	4,870	1,623	-5
17 Martlesham	2	3,842	1,921	16	3,602	1,801	6
18 Melton & Ufford	2	3,460	1,730	5	3,555	1,778	4
19 Nacton	2	3,330	1,665	1	3,385	1,693	-1
20 Orford & Tunstall	1	1,624	1,624	-2	1,680	1,680	-1
21 Otley	1	1,785	1,785	8	1,835	1,835	8
22 Peasenhall	1	1,709	1,709	3	1,695	1,695	-1
23 Rendlesham	1	1,508	1,508	-9	1,660	1,660	-3
24 Riverside (in Woodbridge)	1	1,636	1,636	-1	1,613	1,613	-5
25 Rushmere St Andrew	3	4,591	1,530	-8	4,640	1,547	-9

Ward name	Number of councillors	Electorate (2000)	Number of electors per councillor	Variance from average %	Electorate (2005)	Number of electors per councillor	Variance from average %
26 Saxmundham	2	3,072	1,536	-7	3,390	1,695	-1
27 Seckford (in Woodbridge)	1	1,614	1,614	-2	1,608	1,608	-6
28 Snape	1	1,567	1,567	-5	1,600	1,600	-6
29 Sutton	1	1,615	1,615	-2	1,645	1,645	-3
30 Trimleys with Kirton	3	5,452	1,817	10	5,505	1,835	8
31 Walberswick & Wenhaston	1	1,701	1,701	3	1,820	1,820	7
32 Wickham Market	1	1,797	1,797	9	1,805	1,805	6
33 Winesham	1	1,646	1,646	-1	1,635	1,635	-4
34 Yoxford	1	1,731	1,731	5	1,815	1,815	7
Totals	55	91,038	-	-	93,730	-	-
Averages	-	-	1,655	-	-	1,704	-

Source: Electorate figures are based on Suffolk Coastal District 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 district. 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 district of Suffolk Coastal in Suffolk on which we are now consulting. We are reviewing the seven districts in Suffolk as part of our programme of periodic electoral reviews (PERs) of all 386 principal local authority areas in England. Our programme started in 1996 and is currently expected to be completed by 2004.

2 This is our second review of the electoral arrangements of Suffolk Coastal District Council. The Commission began a periodic electoral review of the district in 1992. However, as a result of the Secretary of State adopting an accelerated timetable for the structural reviews, we were directed to discontinue the review of Suffolk Coastal. An earlier review was undertaken by our predecessor, the Local Government Boundary Commission (LGBC), which reported to the Secretary of State in November 1979 (Report No. 365). The electoral arrangements of Suffolk County Council were last reviewed in June 1982 (Report No. 429). We expect to review the County Council's electoral arrangements in 2002.

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

- the statutory criteria contained in section 13(5) of the Local Government Act 1992, ie the need to:
 - (a) reflect the identities and interests of local communities; and
 - (b) secure effective and convenient local government;
- the *Rules to be Observed in Considering Electoral Arrangements* contained in Schedule 11 to the Local Government Act 1972 (see Appendix C).

4 We are required to make recommendations to the Secretary of State on the number of councillors who should serve on the District Council, and the number, boundaries and names of wards. We can also make recommendations on the electoral arrangements for parish and town councils in the district.

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

6 In our *Guidance*, we state that we wish wherever possible to build on schemes which have been prepared locally on the basis of careful and effective consultation. Local interests are normally in a better position to judge what council size and ward configuration are most likely to secure effective and convenient local government in their areas, while allowing proper reflection of the identities and interests of local communities.

7 The broad objective of PERs is to achieve, as far as possible, equality of representation across the district as a whole. Having regard to the statutory criteria, our aim is to achieve as low a level

of electoral imbalance as is practicable. We will require particular justification for schemes which would result in, or retain, an electoral imbalance of over 10 per cent in any ward. Any imbalances of 20 per cent or more should only arise in the most exceptional circumstances, and will require the strongest justification.

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

9 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

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

11 Following publication of the White Paper, we advised all authorities in our 1999/2000 PER programme, including the Suffolk districts, that the Commission would continue to maintain its current approach to PERs as set out in the October 1999 *Guidance*. Nevertheless, we considered that local authorities and other interested parties might wish to have regard to the Secretary of State’s intentions and legislative proposals in formulating electoral schemes as part of PERs of their areas. The proposals have been taken forward in the Local Government Act 2000 which, among other matters, provides that the Secretary of State may make Orders to change authorities’ electoral cycles. However, until such time as the Secretary of State makes any Order under the

2000 Act, we will continue to operate on the basis of existing legislation, which provides for elections by thirds or whole-council elections in two-tier areas, and our present *Guidance*.

12 Stage One began on 27 June 2000, when we wrote to Suffolk Coastal District Council inviting proposals for future electoral arrangements. We also notified Suffolk County Council, Suffolk Constabulary, the local authority associations, Suffolk Association of Local Councils, parish and town councils in the district, the Members of Parliament with constituency interests in the district, the Members of the European Parliament for the Eastern Region, and the headquarters of the main political parties. We placed a notice in the local press, issued a press release and invited the District Council to publicise the review further. The closing date for receipt of representations, the end of Stage One, was 3 October 2000.

13 At Stage Two we considered all the representations received during Stage One and prepared our draft recommendations.

14 Stage Three began on 9 January 2001 and will end on 5 March 2001. This stage involves publishing 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.**

15 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

16 The district of Suffolk Coastal is located in the south-eastern corner of Suffolk, and is bounded by Waveney to the north, Mid Suffolk to the west and Ipswich to the south-west. The district has a population of over 120,000 and is predominantly rural in nature, containing many villages and settlements. Felixstowe is the largest town in Suffolk Coastal and comprises 20 per cent of the district's total electorate, while Woodbridge is the district's administrative centre. The main geographical features of the district are the River Deben, River Alde and Butley River, which divide the south-eastern part of the district into a number of peninsulas. The A12 trunk road divides the district, linking it with Lowestoft and Great Yarmouth to the north and Colchester and London to the south. The district contains 117 parishes and is entirely parished.

17 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 district average in percentage terms. In the text which follows this calculation may also be described using the shorthand term 'electoral variance'.

18 The electorate of the district is 91,038 (February 2000). The Council presently has 55 members who are elected from 42 wards. Two of the wards are each represented by three councillors, nine are each represented by two councillors and 31 are single-member wards.

19 Since the last electoral review there has been an increase in the electorate in Suffolk Coastal District, with around 41 per cent more electors than two decades ago as a result of new housing developments.

20 At present, each councillor represents an average of 1,655 electors, which the District Council forecasts will increase to 1,704 by the year 2005 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 34 of the 42 wards varies by more than 10 per cent from the district average, 24 wards by more than 20 per cent and 13 wards by more than 30 per cent. The worst imbalance is in Martlesham ward where the councillor represents 158 per cent more electors than the district average.

Map 1: Existing Wards in Suffolk Coastal

Figure 4: Existing Electoral Arrangements

Ward name	Number of councillors	Electorate (2000)	Number of electors per councillor	Variance from average %	Electorate (2005)	Number of electors per councillor	Variance from average %
1 Aldeburgh	2	2,494	1,247	-25	2,820	1,410	-17
2 Alderton & Sutton	1	1,384	1,384	-16	1,405	1,405	-18
3 Bealings	1	1,442	1,442	-13	1,450	1,450	-15
4 Bramfield & Cratfield	1	1,499	1,499	-9	1,470	1,470	-14
5 Buxlow	1	1,719	1,719	4	1,845	1,845	8
6 Dennington	1	1,507	1,507	-9	1,535	1,535	-10
7 Earl Soham	1	1,360	1,360	-18	1,380	1,380	-19
8 Felixstowe Central	2	2,799	1,400	-15	2,840	1,420	-17
9 Felixstowe East	2	3,097	1,549	-6	3,160	1,580	-7
10 Felixstowe North	2	2,935	1,468	-11	2,955	1,478	-13
11 Felixstowe South	2	2,861	1,431	-14	2,880	1,440	-16
12 Felixstowe South East	2	3,042	1,521	-8	3,010	1,505	-12
13 Felixstowe West	2	4,255	2,128	29	4,330	2,165	27
14 Framlingham	1	2,334	2,334	41	2,430	2,430	43
15 Glemham	1	997	997	-40	970	970	-43
16 Grundisburgh & Witesham	1	2,016	2,016	22	2,010	2,010	18
17 Hasketon	1	1,294	1,294	-22	1,290	1,290	-24
18 Hollesley	1	1,271	1,271	-23	1,260	1,260	-26
19 Kelsale	1	1,074	1,074	-35	1,110	1,110	-35
20 Kesgrave	3	6,711	2,237	35	7,700	2,567	51
21 Kirton	1	1,677	1,677	1	1,715	1,715	1
22 Leiston	3	4,080	1,360	-18	4,175	1,392	-18
23 Martlesham	1	4,270	4,270	158	4,030	4,030	136
24 Melton	1	2,819	2,819	70	2,910	2,910	71
25 Nacton	1	2,694	2,694	63	2,750	2,750	61
26 Orford	1	1,018	1,018	-38	1,095	1,095	-36

Ward name	Number of councillors	Electorate (2000)	Number of electors per councillor	Variance from average %	Electorate (2005)	Number of electors per councillor	Variance from average %
27 Otley	1	1,107	1,107	-33	1,170	1,170	-31
28 Rushmere	2	4,591	2,296	39	4,640	2,320	36
29 Saxmundham	1	1,998	1,998	21	2,280	2,280	34
30 Snape	1	1,298	1,298	-22	1,320	1,320	-23
31 Trimleys	2	4,411	2,206	33	4,425	2,213	30
32 Tunstall	1	2,040	2,040	23	2,175	2,175	28
33 Ufford	1	1,316	1,316	-20	1,320	1,320	-23
34 Walberswick	1	1,317	1,317	-20	1,445	1,445	-15
35 Westleton	1	1,151	1,151	-30	1,190	1,190	-30
36 Wickham Market	1	1,797	1,797	9	1,805	1,805	6
37 Woodbridge Centre	1	1,447	1,447	-13	1,435	1,435	-16
38 Woodbridge Farlingaye	1	1,482	1,482	-10	1,495	1,495	-12
39 Woodbridge Kyson	1	953	953	-42	950	950	-44
40 Woodbridge Riverside	1	1,194	1,194	-28	1,155	1,155	-32
41 Woodbridge Seckford	1	1,113	1,113	-33	1,175	1,175	-31
42 Yoxford	1	1,174	1,174	-29	1,225	1,225	-28
Totals	55	91,038	-	-	93,730	-	-
Averages	-	-	1,655	-	-	1,704	-

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 varies from the average for the district. The minus symbol (-) denotes a lower than average number of electors. For example, in 2000, electors in Glemham ward were relatively over-represented by 40 per cent, while electors in Framlingham ward were relatively under-represented by 41 per cent. Figures have been rounded to the nearest whole number.

3 REPRESENTATIONS RECEIVED

21 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 Suffolk Coastal District Council and its constituent parish and town councils.

22 During this initial stage of the review, officers from the Commission visited the area and met officers and members from the District Council. We are grateful to all concerned for their co-operation and assistance. We received 21 representations during Stage One, including district-wide schemes from the District Council, the Liberal Democrats and Councillors Hall and Howard, all of which may be inspected at the offices of the District Council and the Commission.

Suffolk Coastal District Council

23 The District Council proposed retaining the current council size of 55, and a mixed pattern of wards (19 single-member, 15 two-member and two three-member wards), 36 in total. It proposed a substantial revision of warding arrangements throughout the district. The Council proposed that the Felixstowe area should be represented by 12 councillors, and divided into six two-member wards. To address high levels of electoral inequality in the south-west of the district, it proposed creating new single-member West Kesgrave & East Rushmere St Andrew and Woodbridge South & Martlesham North wards, new two-member Kesgrave East and Kesgrave West wards and a revised two-member Rushmere St Andrew ward. The Council also proposed a new two-member Melton & Hasketon ward, a new three-member Trimleys with Kirton ward and two-member Aldeburgh, Framlingham and Saxmundham wards on revised boundaries.

24 The District Council's proposals would result in five of the proposed 36 wards having electoral variances of more than 10 per cent currently. By 2005, however, no ward would have an electoral variance of more than 10 per cent from the average. The Council's proposal is summarised at Appendix B.

Suffolk Coastal Liberal Democrats

25 Suffolk Coastal Liberal Democrats ('the Liberal Democrats') also proposed retaining the existing council size of 55, and a mixed pattern of wards (18 single-member, 10 two-member and four three-member wards), 33 in total. They supported the District Council's proposals for the north and south-west of the district, as well as its proposed Wickham Market and Aldeburgh wards. They proposed, however, that Felixstowe should be represented by 11 councillors, rather than 12 as at present, and that Kesgrave should be represented by five councillors. The Liberal Democrats' scheme would provide for a substantial revision of ward boundaries throughout the district, including the creation of a two-member Melton & Ufford ward and single-member Rendlesham and Hacheston wards.

26 The Liberal Democrats' proposals would result in two of the proposed 33 wards having electoral variances of more than 10 per cent currently. By 2005, however, no ward would have

an electoral variance of more than 10 per cent from the average. The Liberal Democrats' proposal is summarised at Appendix B.

Parish and Town Councils

27 We received representations from 14 parish and town councils. Bawdsey Parish Council favoured retaining the existing Alderton & Sutton ward, arguing that the increased use of the housing available at RAF Woodbridge, Sutton, was likely to increase the electorate of this area. Dennington Parish Council opposed the District Council's proposed Framlingham ward and proposed retaining the existing Dennington ward, arguing that it combines rural parishes of a similar nature.

28 Aldringham cum Thorpe Parish Council opposed the District Council's proposal to include the parish in a revised Aldeburgh ward and favoured retaining the existing Buxlow ward, arguing that the Friston, Knodishall and Aldringham cum Thorpe parishes have much in common. Knodishall Parish Council also opposed the Council's proposals for its area and favoured retaining the existing Buxlow ward. Leiston-cum-Sizewell Town Council favoured retaining the existing Leiston ward, albeit with an electoral variance of 18 per cent, arguing that "the status quo [is] the most practical and entirely fair arrangement for both now and the future."

29 Yoxford Parish Council proposed that the parish should be combined with Darsham, Middleton, Peasenhall and Sibton, rather than being combined with areas further to its east, as proposed by the District Council. Wickham Market Parish Council supported the District Council's proposal to retain a single-member Wickham Market ward. Campsea Ashe Parish Council argued that they do not have much affinity with the population living north of the A12 and that they share an affinity with Rendlesham, Blaxhall and Tunstall parishes. It strongly favoured retaining the former Bentwaters airbase within the ward.

30 Kirton & Falkenham Parish Council opposed the District Council's proposed Trimleys & Kirton ward and proposed retaining the existing Kirton ward and revised warding arrangements for the surrounding wards of Nacton and Trimleys. Alternatively, it proposed combining Kirton ward with Bucklesham parish to its west and Nacton with Trimleys ward, or uniting the existing Nacton and Kirton wards in one ward and combining Trimleys with part of Felixstowe.

31 Kesgrave Town Council accepted the District Council's proposal to retain a council size of 55 but opposed its proposed West Kesgrave & East Rushmere ward which, it argued, would result in unnecessary confusion for electors and illogical ward boundaries. It proposed retaining the existing Rushmere St Andrew ward, increasing its representation from two to three councillors, and creating a two-member West Kesgrave and a three-member East Kesgrave ward, utilising the western side of Ropes Drive as the boundary between these two wards.

32 Rushmere St Andrew Parish Council proposed retaining the existing Rushmere St Andrew ward and increasing its representation from two to three councillors, arguing that this would provide for a reasonable level of electoral equality and would avoid artificial ward boundaries and unnecessary parish warding. Martlesham Parish Council opposed any proposal which would divide Martlesham parish and stated that its preference would be to reduce council size

to 50 (five fewer than at present) and retain a two-member Martlesham ward. If this was not possible, it proposed joining the northern part of Martlesham with Woodbridge in a new North Martlesham & South Woodbridge ward, with a boundary along Private Road and Three Stiles Lane.

33 Felixstowe Town Council proposed retaining 12 councillors for the Felixstowe area, arguing that the existing structure of six two-member wards “form a robust basis for a new warding structure”. It proposed a number of changes to warding arrangements to provide for improved electoral equality, identical to those proposed by the District Council.

Other Representations

34 We received a further six representations from local political parties and local residents. In a joint submission, Councillors Hall (Wickham Market) and Howard (Glemham ward) argued that the current council size of 55 is large, unwieldy and inefficient, and proposed reducing it to 44. Under their scheme, Felixstowe and Woodbridge (including Hasketon) would be represented by nine and three councillors respectively, although they did not provide detailed warding proposals. Their proposals are summarised in Appendix B.

35 A local resident argued that the Seckford Heights area in the north of Martlesham ward is a continuation of the Woodbridge area and should form part of Woodbridge. One local resident opposed the District Council’s proposal to include Cransford parish in a revised Framlingham ward arguing that the district councillor could not effectively represent both town and village interests. Three local residents opposed the Council’s proposal to combine Knodishall and Theberton parishes with Leiston town, and favoured retaining the existing Buxlow ward. Another resident also favoured retaining the existing Buxlow ward and opposed the District Council’s proposal to transfer Friston parish to a revised Snape ward.

4 ANALYSIS AND DRAFT RECOMMENDATIONS

36 As described earlier, our prime objective in considering the most appropriate electoral arrangements for Suffolk Coastal is, so far as reasonably practicable and consistent with the statutory criteria, to achieve electoral equality. In doing so we have regard to section 13(5) of the Local Government Act 1992 – the need to secure effective and convenient local government, and reflect the identities and interests of local communities – and Schedule 11 to the Local Government Act 1972, which refers to the number of electors per councillor being “as nearly as may be, the same in every ward of the district or borough”.

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

38 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.

39 Our *Guidance* states that we accept that the achievement of absolute electoral equality for the authority as a whole is likely to be unattainable. However, we consider that, if electoral imbalances are to be kept to the minimum, the objective of electoral equality should be the starting point in any review. We therefore strongly recommend that, in formulating electoral schemes, local authorities and other interested parties should start from the standpoint of electoral equality, and then make adjustments to reflect relevant factors, such as community identity and interests. Regard must also be had to five-year forecasts of changes in electorates.

Electorate Forecasts

40 The District Council submitted electorate forecasts for the year 2005, projecting an increase in the electorate of almost 3 per cent from 91,038 to 93,730 over the five-year period from 2000 to 2005. It expects most of the growth to be in Kesgrave ward, due to new housing developments. The Council has estimated rates and locations of housing development with regard to structure and local plans, the expected rate of building over the five-year period and assumed occupancy rates.

41 We received three further submissions regarding electorate forecasts at Stage One. Leiston cum Sizewell Town Council argued that the District Council had underestimated the projected electorate for the existing Leiston ward by up to 200 electors. Felixstowe Town Council argued that a number of new planning permissions, including the former Felixstowe College site, had not been considered by the District Council and that the projected electorate figures for the area had therefore been underestimated. Rushmere St Andrew Parish Council considered that the projected electorate of the existing Rushmere ward for 2005 had been underestimated by 700 electors.

42 The District Council recognised that its electorate forecasts had been subject to comment by a number of parish and town councils. However, in its submission, it argued that its forecasts remained the best estimate available. We accept that forecasting electorates is an inexact science and are content that, on the basis of the evidence received at Stage One, they represent the best estimates that can reasonably be made at this time. However, we would welcome further evidence on electorate forecasts during Stage Three of the review.

Council Size

43 As already explained, the Commission’s starting point is to assume that the current council size facilitates effective and convenient local government, although we are willing to look carefully at arguments why this might not be the case.

44 Suffolk Coastal District Council presently has 55 members. At Stage One, the District Council proposed retaining the existing council size of 55. Its submission stated that the Council’s sub-committee had agreed that the council size should not be increased to more than 55 members and that any significant decrease “could have an adverse effect particularly on councillors representing a large number of rural parishes”. The Council therefore considered a number of warding options based on council sizes ranging between 49 and 55, and submitted a district-wide scheme based on the existing council size of 55 which, it argued, would provide the most equitable warding arrangements as well as reflecting community ties.

45 Suffolk Coastal Liberal Democrats also proposed retaining the existing council size of 55. They argued that 55 members “is an appropriate number to ensure efficient representation across a wide and diverse area”.

46 Councillors Hall and Howard proposed reducing the size of the council to 44, 11 fewer than at present. They argued that the current council size of 55 is large and unwieldy and that local parties have difficulty finding dedicated members to run for council election. They also considered that a smaller council size would be more cost effective and the resultant increase in the average number of electors per councillor would not adversely affect the representational role of councillors.

47 We received two other representations which made specific reference to the issue of council size. Kesgrave Town Council accepted the District Council’s proposal to retain the existing council size of 55. Martlesham Parish Council expressed a preference for reducing the current council size by five to 50, in order to facilitate the retention of a two-member Martlesham ward.

48 We have carefully considered the representations received in relation to the most appropriate council size for Suffolk Coastal district. In formulating our recommendations on council size, we start from the general assumption that the existing number of councillors already secures effective and convenient local government, although we are willing to look carefully at arguments why this might not be the case. While we have noted the views of Councillors Hall and Howard, we have not been persuaded by the evidence received that the existing council size fails to secure effective and convenient local government. Furthermore, we have found no evidence of significant local support for a reduction in council size. Indeed, both the District Council and the Liberal

Democrats argued for the retention of the current council size. In addition, we note that the District Council conducted an extensive consultation exercise on its 55-member scheme and that its proposals in relation to council size were broadly accepted with the exception of Martlesham Parish Council. While we recognise that a 50-member scheme would significantly improve the level of electoral equality for Martlesham, we are not able to consider any single area in isolation and must consider what council size would provide the best warding arrangements for the district as a whole.

49 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 achievement of electoral equality and the statutory criteria would best be met by a council of 55 members.

Electoral Arrangements

50 We have carefully considered the representations received at Stage One, including district-wide schemes submitted by the District Council, the Liberal Democrats, and Councillors Hall and Howard. From these representations a number of considerations have emerged which have assisted us in preparing our draft recommendations.

51 We note that all three district-wide schemes received at Stage One would provide for a significant improvement in the level of electoral equality for the district as a whole. However, our proposed council size of 55 limits the extent to which we are able to consider the proposals submitted by Councillors Hall and Howard, which were based on a council size of 44.

52 We note that the District Council and the Liberal Democrats concurred in their proposals for retaining the existing council size and proposed warding arrangements for the northern and south-western parts of the district. However, the District Council proposed retaining 12 councillors for the town of Felixstowe, while the Liberal Democrats proposed that Felixstowe should be represented by 11 councillors. As a result of their proposals for Felixstowe, the allocation of councillors for the remaining part of the district would also differ under the two proposals, with an additional councillor being allocated to the rural areas of the district under the Liberal Democrats' scheme.

53 We note that, under our proposed council size of 55, Felixstowe is entitled to 11.5 councillors currently and 11.2 councillors by 2005. The District Council's proposal for 12 councillors for Felixstowe would result in a degree of over-representation in an area which is unlikely to experience any significant growth in electorate in the near future. We consider that the Liberal Democrats' proposal for 11 councillors representing the Felixstowe town area would result in the most reasonable balance between electoral equality and the statutory criteria for the district as a whole.

54 In the light of these considerations, we propose basing our draft recommendations on the Liberal Democrats' submission. We note that their proposals would take into account the strong boundary of the A12 and would better reflect community ties in a number of areas of the district than the other proposals submitted at Stage One. However, to improve electoral equality further

and having regard to local community identities and interests, we have decided to move away from the Liberal Democrats' proposals in the south-western part of the district. We are also putting forward our own proposals in the Felixstowe area, as the Liberal Democrats' submission did not provide detailed warding proposals for this area.

55 For district warding purposes, the following areas, based on existing wards, are considered in turn:

- (a) Felixstowe Town (six wards);
- (b) Kirton, Nacton and Trimleys wards;
- (c) Rushmere, Kesgrave and Martlesham wards;
- (d) Woodbridge (five wards);
- (e) Bealings, Grundisburgh & Wivesham, Hasketon and Otley wards;
- (f) Alderton & Sutton, Melton, Ufford and Wickham Market wards;
- (g) Hollesley, Orford and Tunstall wards;
- (h) Dennington, Earl Soham, Framlingham and Glemham wards;
- (i) Aldeburgh, Buxlow and Snape wards;
- (j) Kelsale, Leiston and Saxmundham wards;
- (k) Bramfield & Cratfield, Walberswick, Westleton and Yoxford wards.

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

Felixstowe town (six wards)

57 The town of Felixstowe is located along the south-eastern coast of the district and currently comprises six wards, each represented by two councillors. Under existing arrangements, Felixstowe East, Felixstowe North and Felixstowe South East have 6 per cent, 8 per cent and 11 per cent fewer electors per councillor than the district average (7 per cent, 12 per cent and 13 per cent fewer by 2005). Felixstowe Central and Felixstowe South wards are also over-represented with 15 per cent and 14 per cent fewer electors per councillor than the district average (17 per cent and 16 per cent fewer by 2005). Due to recent housing developments, Felixstowe West ward has 29 per cent more electors per councillor than the district average (27 per cent more than the average by 2005).

58 The District Council based its proposals on those submitted by Felixstowe Town Council which proposed that the Felixstowe area should be represented by 12 district councillors. It proposed broadly retaining the existing pattern of six two-member wards, arguing that they "form a robust basis for the new warding structure". The Council proposed a revised Felixstowe West ward comprising the existing ward less Grange Close, Haven Close and the area to the north-east of Coronation Drive, which it proposed transferring to a revised Felixstowe Central ward. Under its proposals, Felixstowe Central ward would comprise the existing ward, less the area to the south of Crescent Road and east of Princes Road which it proposed transferring to a revised Felixstowe South ward. This ward would also comprise the existing Felixstowe South ward and the part of Felixstowe South East ward to the south of Cobbold Road. The Council also proposed enlarging Felixstowe North ward to include the electors of Hall Pond Way, Grange Farm Avenue,

Brackley Close, Hall Field, Garden Field, Crossgate Field, Beacon Field and Broom Field (currently in Felixstowe West ward).

59 The Council proposed a revised two-member Felixstowe South East ward comprising the existing ward (less the area transferred to Felixstowe South ward), as well as the parts of Links Avenue and Cliff Road currently located in Felixstowe East ward. It also proposed a revised Felixstowe East ward, comprising the remaining part of the existing ward and Rosemary Avenue, Looe Road, Quintons Lane and Carol Close, currently located in Felixstowe South East ward.

60 Felixstowe Town Council also submitted an alternative option for Felixstowe West ward (Option Two). This would involve the transfer of 141-147 Coronation Drive to Felixstowe Central Ward, and the incorporation of Pond Drive and Hall Pond Way in Felixstowe North Ward, resulting in the detachment of the Elizabeth Way/ Dovedale and Cricket Hill Road areas from the remainder of Felixstowe West ward.

61 Under the District Council's proposals, Felixstowe East, Felixstowe North and Felixstowe South would each have 5 per cent fewer electors per councillor than the district average (6 per cent, 8 per cent and 7 per cent fewer than the average respectively by 2005). Felixstowe Central and Felixstowe South East ward would have 6 per cent and 1 per cent fewer electors per councillor than the district average respectively (8 per cent and 5 per cent fewer than the average by 2005). Felixstowe West ward would have 3 per cent fewer electors per councillor than the average, both now and in five years' time.

62 The Liberal Democrats proposed that the Felixstowe should be represented by 11 councillors, rather than 12 as at present. They proposed a three-member Felixstowe West ward and two-member Felixstowe East, Felixstowe North, Felixstowe South and Felixstowe South East wards, but did not provide any detailed warding arrangements for this area.

63 Councillors Hall and Howard proposed that Felixstowe should be represented by nine councillors, based on a council size of 44, although they did not provide detailed warding arrangements. As detailed above, Felixstowe Town Council's proposals were adopted by the District Council.

64 We have carefully considered the representations received during Stage One and a number of considerations have emerged. We note that there was a lack of consensus regarding the most appropriate number of councillors to represent the Felixstowe area. Based on our proposed council size of 55, we note that Felixstowe is entitled to 11.5 councillors currently and 11.2 councillors in five years' time. Therefore, the District Council's proposals would result in an over-representation of Felixstowe, an area which is unlikely to experience any significant growth in electorate in the near future. As we seek to recommend warding arrangements which improve over time, we consider that Felixstowe should be represented by 11 councillors, as proposed by the Liberal Democrats. Additionally, as detailed in our guidance, we consider that the use of detached wards is undesirable, and we were therefore unable to consider Felixstowe Town Council's Option Two.

65 We note, however, that the Liberal Democrats did not provide detailed warding proposals for Felixstowe, and we are therefore putting forward our own proposals for this area, building on the existing warding structure. We propose a revised Felixstowe West ward, comprising the existing ward and the area to the west of the Ipswich to Felixstowe Dock railway line, currently located in Felixstowe Central ward. As we take the view that the use of detached wards is undesirable, we were unable to consider Felixstowe Town Council's Option Two. We also propose a revised Felixstowe South ward, comprising the existing ward, less the area to the east of Hamilton Road, and the part of Felixstowe Central to the east of the Ipswich to Felixstowe Dock railway line and west of and including Princes Road. Under our proposals the whole of Orwell Road would be united within Felixstowe South ward.

66 We propose a revised two-member Felixstowe North ward comprising the existing ward and the area to the west of Beatrice Avenue, currently located in Felixstowe South East ward. We also propose including 51 electors on High Road West, currently located in Felixstowe Central ward, thereby uniting the whole road within Felixstowe North ward. Under our proposals, Felixstowe Central ward would no longer exist.

67 We propose enlarging Felixstowe East ward to include the electors on Links Avenue, Colneis Road, Rosemary Avenue, Looe Road, Quintons Lane and Carol Close, currently in Felixstowe South East ward. We propose a revised two-member Felixstowe South East ward containing the remaining part of the existing ward, the area to the east of Princes Road, currently in Felixstowe Central ward, and the area to the east of Hamilton Road, currently located in Felixstowe South ward.

68 Under our draft recommendations, Felixstowe East, Felixstowe South and Felixstowe South East wards would initially have 4 per cent, 7 per cent and 9 per cent more electors per councillor than the district average respectively, improving to 3 per cent, 5 per cent and 6 per cent more than the average by 2005. Felixstowe North and Felixstowe West wards would have 1 per cent more electors per councillor than the district average (1 per cent fewer and equal to the average respectively by 2005). We recognise that our proposals for this area differ from those submitted at Stage One and we would particularly welcome local views regarding this area at Stage Three. Our draft proposals for the Felixstowe area are outlined on Map 2 and Maps A2 and A3 in Appendix A.

Kirton, Nacton and Trimleys wards

69 The three wards of Kirton, Nacton and Trimleys are located in the south of the district, to the north-west of Felixstowe town. Kirton ward is represented by a single councillor and comprises the five parishes of Falkenham, Hemley, Kirton, Newbourne and Waldringfield. Nacton ward is also represented by a single councillor and contains the seven parishes of Brightwell, Bucklesham, Foxhall, Levington, Nacton, Purdis Farm and Stratton Hall. Trimleys ward is represented by two councillors and comprises Trimley St Martin and Trimley St Mary parishes. Under existing arrangements, Nacton and Trimleys wards are significantly under-represented with 63 per cent and 33 per cent more electors per councillor than the district average respectively (61 per cent and 30 per cent more by 2005). Kirton ward has 1 per cent more electors per councillor

than the district average and this level of electoral equality is expected to remain unchanged over the next five years.

70 The District Council proposed creating a new three-member Trimleys & Kirton ward comprising the existing Trimleys ward and Falkenham and Kirton parishes, currently located in Kirton ward. It proposed combining the remaining part of Kirton ward – Hemley, Newbourne and Waldringfield parishes – with the existing Nacton ward to form a revised two-member Nacton ward. Under the District Council’s proposals, Nacton and Trimleys & Kirton wards would have 1 per cent and 10 per cent more electors per councillor than the district average respectively (1 per cent fewer and 8 per cent more than the average by 2005).

71 The Liberal Democrats supported the District Council’s proposals for this area and submitted identical warding arrangements as part of their district-wide proposal. They argued that the rural central area of the Colneis Peninsula is “an obvious option for district warding”. While they noted that there is a marked difference between the more urban Trimleys and the rural communities of Falkenham and Kirton, they argued that their proposed warding arrangements addressed the requirement of electoral equality in this area.

72 However, the Liberal Democrats also noted that, as part of the District Council’s own consultation exercise, Kirton & Falkenham Parish Council had emphasised the east/west orientation of community identities in this area. In order to reflect this view, they proposed additional alternative warding arrangements for this area, retaining the existing Kirton ward, creating a single-member Purdis ward, comprising Brightwell, Foxhall and Purdis Farm parishes, and a three-member Trimleys with Nacton ward comprising Trimleys ward and the remaining part of Nacton ward (Bucklesham, Levington, Nacton and Stratton Hall parishes). Under the Liberal Democrats’ alternative proposals, Kirton, Purdis Farm and Trimleys with Nacton wards would have 1 per cent more, 9 per cent fewer and 13 per cent more electors per councillor than the district average respectively (1 per cent more, 5 per cent fewer and 9 per cent more than the district average respectively by 2005).

73 Councillors Hall and Howard proposed retaining a two-member Trimleys ward and a single-member Kirton & Waldringfield ward, comprising the existing ward and Bucklesham parish, currently located in Nacton parish. They also proposed a single-member Nacton ward comprising Levington, Nacton, Purdis Farm and Stratton Hall parishes. Under their proposed council size of 44, the three proposed wards would have electoral variances of no more than 4 per cent from the average by 2005.

74 Kirton & Falkenham Parish Council opposed the District Council’s proposed Trimleys & Kirton ward, arguing that the parishes in Kirton ward are predominantly rural, whereas the Trimleys are predominantly urban. It favoured retaining the existing Kirton ward and creating a three-member Trimleys with Nacton ward and a single-member ward comprising Brightwell, Foxhall and Purdis Farm parishes. Its proposals were identical to the Liberal Democrats’ alternative proposals for this area. Kirton & Falkenham Parish Council also proposed two alternative options for this area. It proposed combining Nacton ward (less Nacton and Stratton Hall parishes) in a revised Kirton ward and transferring Nacton and Stratton Hall parishes to a

revised Trimleys ward. Alternatively, it suggested combining the existing Nacton and Kirton wards in a new three-member ward and combining Trimleys with part of Felixstowe.

75 Having carefully considered the representations received, we note that our proposed council size of 55 limits the extent to which we are able to consider the proposals submitted by Councillors Hall and Howard. We have also considered the concerns expressed by Kirton & Falkenham Parish Council regarding the District Council's proposal to combine the relatively urban Trimleys ward with the rural parishes of Kirton ward. We note, however, that their preferred option, identical to the Liberal Democrats' alternative option, would result in the combination of rural parishes in Nacton ward with the more urbanised Trimleys ward. In addition, we note that while their proposals would significantly improve electoral equality in this area, they would result in relatively higher electoral variances than the warding arrangements proposed by District Council and supported by the Liberal Democrats.

76 In the light of these considerations we are content to put forward the District Council's and the Liberal Democrats' proposed two-member Nacton and three-member Trimleys & Kirton wards as part of our draft recommendations. Under our proposed council size of 55, Nacton and Trimleys & Kirton wards would have 1 per cent and 10 per cent more electors per councillor than the district average respectively (1 per cent fewer and 8 per cent more than the average by 2005).

Rushmere, Kesgrave and Martlesham wards

77 The three wards of Kesgrave, Martlesham and Rushmere are located in the south-western part of the district and comprise the parishes of the same names. These wards cover established urban areas on the eastern fringe of Ipswich borough. Kesgrave is a three-member ward, Martlesham is a single-member ward and Rushmere is represented by two councillors. Under existing warding arrangements, Kesgrave and Rushmere are under-represented with 35 per cent and 39 per cent more electors per councillor than the district average respectively (51 per cent and 36 per cent more by 2005). Martlesham ward has the highest electoral variance in the district, with 158 per cent more electors per councillor than the district average (136 per cent more in five years' time).

78 The District Council proposed creating five new wards for this area. It proposed a two-member Rushmere St Andrew ward comprising the southern part of Rushmere ward to the south of Woodbridge Road, Mendip Drive and Blackdown Avenue, including the recent housing development area in the south of the ward. It proposed combining the remaining part of Rushmere ward with an adjoining area of Kesgrave ward (Holly Road, Histon Close and Trinity Close) containing 280 electors, to form a one-member Kesgrave West & East Rushmere St Andrew ward. The Council proposed that the remaining part of the existing Kesgrave ward should form two two-member wards, Kesgrave Central and Kesgrave East. Under its proposals, the boundary between these two wards would follow southwards to the eastern side of Ashdale Road, westwards along Grange Lane and southwards to the eastern side of Bell Lane to the parish boundary.

79 With regard to the existing Martlesham ward, the District Council proposed a revised two-member Martlesham ward covering the Martlesham Heath area and part of Martlesham village. It proposed combining the remaining part of Martlesham ward, including part of Martlesham

village and the Seckford Heights area, with the adjoining area of Woodbridge Riverside ward to form a new single-member Woodbridge South & Martlesham North ward, as discussed in further detail below. Under its proposals the boundary between these two wards would run eastwards from the parish boundary to the rear of the properties of Shaw Valley Road, Private Road and Main Road and eastwards along Three Stiles Lane and Church Lane.

80 Under the District Council's proposals, Kesgrave Central and Kesgrave East wards would have 12 per cent more and 18 per cent fewer electors per councillor than the district average respectively (9 per cent more than the average in both wards by 2005). Kesgrave West & East Rushmere St Andrew and Martlesham wards would both have 11 per cent more electors per councillor than the district average initially (8 per cent and 1 per cent more than the average respectively by 2005). Rushmere St Andrew ward would have 8 per cent fewer electors per councillor than the district average (10 per cent fewer by 2005).

81 The Liberal Democrats supported the District Council's proposals for the existing Martlesham ward area and put them forward as part of their own district-wide submission. They did not submit detailed arrangements for Kesgrave and Rushmere wards. They argued, however, that the area should be represented by eight councillors in total and noted that improved levels of electoral equality could be achieved by creating a combined Rushmere/Kesgrave ward., although they recognised that there may be "some conflict of interest between the two parishes" under such an arrangement.

82 Based on a council size of 44, Councillors Hall and Howard proposed retaining a two-member Martlesham ward, incorporating Brightwell parish (currently in Nacton ward) and proposed that the existing Rushmere and Kesgrave wards and Foxhall parish (currently in Nacton ward) should be represented by six councillors in total, although they did not provide any detailed warding arrangements.

83 Rushmere St Andrew Parish Council strongly opposed the District Council's proposals to combine parts of Rushmere St Andrew and Kesgrave parishes in a single ward, arguing that this would be confusing for electors and would result in "an artificial ward that attempts to serve both Rushmere St Andrew and Kesgrave Town". It proposed creating a three-member Rushmere St Andrew ward coterminous with the parish of the same name. It also suggested the option of combining Rushmere St Andrew parish with either The Bealings or Nacton wards, but noted that this would result in relatively high electoral variances.

84 Kesgrave Town Council also opposed the District Council's proposed West Kesgrave & East Rushmere ward, arguing that the proposed ward boundaries would result in unnecessary confusion for electors. It proposed that Kesgrave parish should be represented by five district councillors, divided into a two-member West Kesgrave and three-member East Kesgrave ward. Under its proposals the boundary between these two wards would follow southwards along Ropes Drive to the parish boundary. Kesgrave Parish Council also favoured retaining a separate ward for Rushmere St Andrew parish, to be represented by three councillors.

85 Martlesham Parish Council stated it would "regret any division of the parish" and that its preference would be to retain a two-member Martlesham ward, based on a reduction in council

size from 55 to 50 members for the district. It argued that this would allow for more rural areas to be better represented. The Parish Council noted, however, that if the parish had to be divided between district wards, the most logical ward boundary would follow Private Road and Three Stiles Lane. A local resident argued that the Seckford Heights area in the north of Martlesham ward has more in common with Woodbridge than other parts of Martlesham, and that it should form part of a Woodbridge ward.

86 We have carefully considered the representations received at Stage One and a number of considerations have emerged. We note that our proposed council size of 55 limits the extent to which we are able to consider Councillors Hall and Howard's proposals for this area.

87 We note that there was some opposition to the District Council's proposed West Kesgrave & East Rushmere St Andrew ward, on the basis that it would result in unnecessary local confusion and illogical ward boundaries. We also note that, under a council size of 55, the existing Rushmere ward would have a reasonable level of electoral equality if its representation was increased from two to three councillors. Further, we note that both Rushmere and Kesgrave parish councils favoured retaining a Rushmere ward (renamed Rushmere St Andrew) which was coterminous with Rushmere St Andrew parish.

88 In the light of these considerations, we propose retaining the existing Rushmere ward and increasing its representation from two to three councillors. We also propose that it should be renamed Rushmere St Andrew ward, as proposed by the District Council, the Liberal Democrats and Rushmere St Andrew Parish Council.

89 We have noted Kesgrave Parish Council's proposals for the Kesgrave area and consider that they would provide for a reasonable balance between electoral equality and the statutory criteria. We also note that our proposed Rushmere St Andrew ward limits the extent to which we are able to consider, in some respects, the District Council's proposals for this area. We therefore propose creating two wards for the Kesgrave area: a two-member Kesgrave West ward and a three-member Kesgrave East ward, as broadly proposed by Kesgrave Parish Council. We note that Dobbs Lane and Gayfer Avenue are currently divided between Kesgrave and Martlesham wards, and that these roads, together with Deben Avenue, are relatively isolated from the remainder of Martlesham ward. We therefore propose transferring all the electors on these roads from the existing Martlesham ward to our proposed Kesgrave East ward. We consider that this change would better reflect community ties in this area, in addition to providing for a more clearly identifiable boundary.

90 We note that the District Council and the Liberal Democrats concurred with regard to their proposals in the Martlesham area. We concur with their assessment that the northern part of Martlesham ward, comprising the Seckford Heights area, has a stronger affinity with the adjoining area of Woodbridge ward than with other settlements in Martlesham. We have also noted Martlesham Parish Council's preference for retaining the existing Martlesham ward, and note that the District Council's and the Liberal Democrats' proposals would result in the division of the Martlesham village area between district wards.

91 In view of these considerations we propose revised warding arrangements which we consider would better reflect the balance of the evidence submitted at Stage One. We propose a revised two-member Martlesham ward comprising the part of the existing ward to the south of the Ipswich to Lowestoft railway line, less the area transferred to Kesgrave East ward, as discussed previously. We consider that our proposed ward would provide for a reasonable level of electoral equality by 2005 and would retain the whole of the Martlesham Heath and Martlesham Village communities within one ward, in addition to utilising the strong boundary of the Ipswich to Lowestoft railway line. We propose that the remaining part of the existing Martlesham ward, to the north of the Ipswich to Lowestoft railway line, should form part of a new Riverside ward, together with part of the existing Woodbridge Riverside ward, as discussed in further detail below.

92 Under our draft recommendations, Kesgrave West and Rushmere St Andrew wards would both have 8 per cent fewer electors per councillor than the district average (10 per cent and 9 per cent fewer than the average by 2005). Kesgrave East and Martlesham wards would initially have 23 per cent fewer and 16 per cent more electors per councillor than the district average respectively, improving significantly to 6 per cent fewer and 6 per cent more than the average by 2005. Our draft proposals for this area are outlined on Map 2 and on the large map inserted inside the back cover of this report.

Woodbridge (five wards)

93 The Woodbridge town area is currently represented by five district wards, each represented by a single councillor. Under existing arrangements, Woodbridge Centre and Woodbridge Farlingaye wards have 13 per cent and 10 per cent fewer electors per councillor than the district average (16 per cent and 12 per cent fewer than the average by 2005). Woodbridge Kyson, Woodbridge Riverside and Woodbridge Seckford wards are significantly over-represented, with 42 per cent, 28 per cent and 33 per cent fewer electors per councillor than the district average (44 per cent, 32 per cent and 31 per cent fewer in five years' time).

94 The District Council proposed significant changes in this area and proposed creating four new single-member wards. It argued that "there is a clear community of interest between the southern area of Woodbridge and the northern part of Martlesham", including Seckford Heights, and proposed creating a new single-member Woodbridge South & Martlesham North ward. Its proposed ward would combine the part of Martlesham ward to the north of Private Road, Three Stiles Lane and Church Lane with the majority of the existing Woodbridge Riverside ward and the part of Woodbridge Kyson and Woodbridge Seckford wards to the east of and including Drybridge Hill, Kings Close and Old Barrack Road (to the north of Warren Hill Road). The Council proposed transferring the area to the north-east of and including Abbey Grounds from the existing Woodbridge Riverside ward to a new Seckford ward, together with the existing Woodbridge Central ward and the part of Woodbridge Seckford ward to the east of Queen's Head Lane.

95 The District Council proposed a new single-member Kyson ward, comprising the existing Woodbridge Kyson ward, less the area transferred to Woodbridge South & Martlesham North ward, and the remaining part of Woodbridge Seckford ward, less Grove Gardens, Hawthorn

Place, Prentice Lane and part of Grove Road, which it proposed transferring to a new Farlingaye ward. Under its proposals, Farlingaye ward would also contain the existing Woodbridge Farlingaye ward and around 20 electors on North Hill and Woodnough Road, currently located in Woodbridge Central ward.

96 The District Council's proposed Farlingaye, Kyson, Seckford and Woodbridge South & North Martlesham wards would have 1 per cent, 4 per cent, 1 per cent and 3 per cent more electors per councillor than the district average respectively (1 per cent fewer, 1 per cent more, 1 per cent more and 2 per cent fewer than the average by 2005).

97 The Liberal Democrats expressed support for the District Council's proposals for the Woodbridge town area and put them forward as part of their own proposals. Based on a council size of 44, Councillors Hall and Howard proposed that three councillors should represent the Woodbridge town area, together with Hasketon parish, but they did not provide any detailed warding proposals. They also proposed transferring 150 electors from Woodbridge to a new two-member ward comprising Melton, Ufford and Bromeswell parishes, as detailed below.

98 Having carefully considered the representations received at Stage One, we note that our proposed Martlesham ward, as previously discussed, limits the extent to which we are able to consider the District Council's proposed Woodbridge South and Martlesham North ward in its entirety. We recognise that the northern part of Martlesham ward has a strong affinity with the adjoining area of Woodbridge and consider that they should form part of the same ward. We note that since the last review, the town of Woodbridge has effectively expanded southwards into Martlesham parish. As outlined above, we considered that rather than retain this area's links with Martlesham village for district warding purposes, this area should be combined with part of Woodbridge. This change would not effect parish boundaries. However, at a future parishing review, residents of this area could decide which parish they wish to form part of.

99 We therefore propose creating a single-member Riverside ward similar to that proposed by the District Council, but with the addition of part of Martlesham parish. The new ward would comprise the part of Martlesham ward to the north of the Ipswich to Lowestoft railway line, part of Woodbridge Seckford ward (Bridgewood Road, Drybridge Hill, Old Barrack Road, Portland Crescent and Warren Hill Road) and the majority of the existing Woodbridge Riverside. We propose that an area containing around 50 electors in the north of the existing Woodbridge Riverside ward be transferred to a new Seckford ward, as detailed below.

100 We consider that the District Council's proposed single-member Kyson, Farlingaye and Seckford wards would provide for a reasonable balance between electoral equality and the statutory criteria and are content to put them forward as part of our draft recommendations, subject to a number of amendments. We propose that Seckford ward should include the part of Woodbridge Riverside ward to the north-east of Abbey Grounds, encompassing Quay Street, Church Street, Turn Lane, Bakers Lane and Carmelites Place, thereby uniting both sides of Quay Street within one ward. We also propose a minor boundary amendment in the south-eastern corner of the ward, in order to tie the boundary between Riverside and Seckford wards to ground detail. This change would have no effect on electoral equality.

101 With regard to Farlingaye ward, we propose that it should include those properties on Woolnough Road (currently in Central ward), and that the part of the existing Seckford ward to the west of Grove Road and Yarmouth Wood Lane should form part of Kyson ward. As previously discussed, we also propose that Bridgewood Road should form part of Riverside ward, rather than Kyson ward, as proposed by the District Council. We consider that these amendments would provide for improved electoral equality for the Woodbridge area as a whole under our draft recommendations.

102 Under our draft recommendations, Farlingaye, Kyson, Riverside and Seckford wards would have 4 per cent, 3 per cent, 1 per cent and 2 per cent fewer electors per councillor than that district average respectively (6 per cent, 4 per cent, 5 per cent and 6 per cent fewer than the average by 2005). We recognise that our proposals for this area depart, to an extent, from the proposals submitted at Stage One and would particularly welcome further local views at Stage Three. Our draft proposals for this area are outlined on Map 2 and on the large map inserted inside the back cover of this report.

Bealings, Grundisburgh & Wivesham, Hasketon and Otley wards

103 Bealings, Grundisburgh & Wivesham, Hasketon and Otley wards are located in the western part of Suffolk Coastal, adjacent to the district boundary with Mid Suffolk district. Each ward is currently represented by a single councillor. Bealings ward comprises the five parishes of Great Bealings, Little Bealings, Playford, Tuddenham St Martin and Westerfield, while Grundisburgh & Wivesham ward contains the four parishes of Culpho, Grundisburgh, Swilland and Wivesham. Otley ward contains Clopton, Cretingham, Hoo, Monewden and Otley parishes, while Hasketon ward contains Burgh, Boulge, Bredfield, Charsfield, Dallinghoo, Debach and Hasketon parishes. Under existing arrangements, Bealings, Hasketon and Otley wards have 13 per cent, 22 per cent and 33 per cent fewer electors per councillor than the district average respectively (15 per cent, 24 per cent and 31 per cent fewer than the average by 2005). Grundisburgh & Wivesham ward is under-represented, with 22 per cent more electors per councillor than the district average (18 per cent more in five years' time).

104 The District Council argued that the existing Otley ward was geographically "illogical" and proposed a revised single-member Otley ward comprising Clopton and Otley parishes (currently in Otley ward), Boulge, Bredfield, Burgh, Dallinghoo and Debach parishes (currently in Hasketon ward) and Pettistree parish (currently in Ufford ward). It proposed a new single-member Grundisburgh ward comprising Culpho and Grundisburgh parishes (currently in Grundisburgh & Wivesham ward) and Great Bealings and Little Bealings parishes (currently in Bealings ward). It proposed combining the remaining parts of the existing Bealings and Grundisburgh & Wivesham wards – Playford, Swilland, Tuddenham St Martin, Westerfield and Wivesham parishes – in a new single-member Wivesham ward. The Council proposed combining Hasketon parish with the existing Melton ward to form a new two-member Melton & Hasketon ward and transferring Charsfield, Cretingham, Monewden and Hoo parishes to a revised Earl Soham ward, as detailed below.

105 Under the District Council's proposals, Grundisburgh and Wivesham wards would have 9 per cent more and 1 per cent fewer electors per councillor than the district average respectively

(7 per cent more and 4 per cent fewer than the average by 2005). Otley ward would have 2 per cent fewer electors per councillor than the district average both now and in five years' time.

106 The Liberal Democrats proposed a revised single-member Otley ward comprising Clopton and Otley parishes (currently in Otley ward) and Boulge, Bredfield, Burgh, Dallinghoo, Debach and Hasketon parishes (currently in Hasketon ward). They strongly opposed the District Council's proposals to combine the rural parish of Hasketon with the much larger urban area of Melton, arguing that "links between local communities have long been established within this area" and that there is no evidence of community ties between the Hasketon and Melton areas. Under the Liberal Democrats' proposals Pettistree parish would form part of a new Rendlesham ward and Charsfield, Cretingham, Monewden and Hoo parishes would form part of a revised Earl Soham ward, as detailed below.

107 The Liberal Democrats submitted three alternative options for the existing Bealings and Grundisburgh & Witnesham wards. Option One proposed two new single-member Grundisburgh and Witnesham wards, identical to the District Council's proposals for this area. Option Two proposed a revised two-member Grundisburgh & Witnesham ward comprising the existing Bealings and Grundisburgh & Witnesham wards. Option Three proposed a revised two-member Grundisburgh & Witnesham ward comprising the existing Bealings and Grundisburgh & Witnesham wards and Burgh parish (currently in Hasketon ward).

108 Under the Liberal Democrats' proposals, Otley ward would have 8 per cent more electors per councillor than the district average both now and in five years' time. The single-member Grundisburgh and Witnesham wards, as proposed under Option One, would have 9 per cent more and 1 per cent fewer electors per councillor than the district average respectively (7 per cent more and 4 per cent fewer than the average by 2005). A two-member Grundisburgh & Witnesham ward, as proposed under the Liberal Democrats' Option Two, would have 4 per cent more electors per councillor than the district average (2 per cent more than the average by 2005). A two-member Grundisburgh & Witnesham ward including Burgh parish, as proposed under the Liberal Democrats' Option Three, would have 9 per cent more electors per councillor than the district average (6 per cent more than the average by 2005). The thereby revised Otley ward would have 1 per cent fewer electors per councillor than the district average both initially and in five years time.

109 Councillors Hall and Howard proposed creating a single-member Witnesham & Bealings ward comprising the existing Bealings ward and Culpho and Witnesham parishes (currently in Grundisburgh & Witnesham ward). They proposed creating a single-member Otley & Grundisburgh ward comprising Clopton, Grundisburgh, Otley and Swiland parishes. They also proposed creating a single-member ward comprising the existing Hasketon ward (less Hasketon parish), Cretingham, Hoo and Monewden parishes (currently in Otley ward), Brandeston, Easton and Letheringham parishes (currently in Earl Soham ward) and Hacheston parish (currently in Glemham ward). Under their proposed council size of 44, their proposed wards would have electoral variances of no more than 3 per cent from the average by 2005.

110 We have carefully considered the representations received and note that all the proposals submitted at Stage One would provide for a significant improvement in electoral equality in this

area. We note, however, that our proposed council size of 55 limits the extent to which we are able to consider Councillors Hall and Howard's proposals for this area.

111 We note that the District Council and the Liberal Democrats differed with regard to their proposals for Otley ward. The District Council proposed that Pettistree parish should be included in Otley ward, whereas the Liberal Democrats proposed including Hasketon parish and transferring Pettistree parish to a new Rendlesham ward, as detailed below. We have considered the Liberal Democrats' opposition to the District Council's proposed Melton & Hasketon ward and concur with their assessment that Hasketon appears to have no community ties with Melton. We also note that the two areas are separated by the significant boundary of the A12 trunk road and consider that community interests and identities would be better served by including Hasketon parish in a largely rural ward. In the light of these considerations, we are content to put forward the Liberal Democrats' proposed Otley ward as part of our draft recommendations.

112 We note that the District Council's proposed Grundisburgh and Winesham wards were supported by the Liberal Democrats (Option One) and would provide for a significant improvement in electoral equality in this area. We note that the Liberal Democrats' Option Two would also provide for improved levels of electoral equality, but consider that in the absence of significant evidence in favour of a two-member Grundisburgh & Winesham ward, community interests and identities in this rural area would be better represented by two single-member wards. In the light of these considerations, we are content to put forward the District Council's and the Liberal Democrats' (Option One) proposed single-member Grundisburgh and Winesham wards as part of our draft recommendations. We also propose that Charsfield, Cretingham, Monewden and Hoo parishes should form part of a revised Earl Soham ward, as discussed in further detail below.

113 Under our draft recommendations, Grundisburgh and Winesham wards would have 9 per cent more and 1 per cent fewer electors per councillor than the district average respectively (7 per cent more and 4 per cent fewer than the average by 2005). Otley ward would have 8 per cent more electors per councillor than the district average both now and in five years' time.

Alderton & Sutton, Melton, Ufford and Wickham Market wards

114 The three wards of Melton, Ufford and Wickham Market are situated to the north of Woodbridge town, around the A12 trunk road, and are each represented by a single councillor. Alderton & Sutton ward is located to the east of the River Deben and is traversed by the B1083 from south to north. Melton and Wickham Market wards are each coterminous with the parishes of the same name. Alderton & Sutton ward comprises the five parishes of Alderton, Bawdsey, Ramsholt, Shottisham and Sutton, while Ufford ward comprises the four parishes of Bromeswell, Eyke, Pettistree and Ufford. Under existing arrangements, Alderton & Sutton and Ufford wards have 16 per cent and 20 per cent fewer electors per councillor than the district average respectively (18 per cent and 23 per cent fewer than the average by 2005). Melton ward is significantly under-represented with 70 per cent more electors per councillor than the district average (71 per cent more by 2005), while Wickham Market ward has 9 per cent more electors per councillor than the average (6 per cent more in five years' time).

115 The District Council proposed retaining a single-member Wickham Market ward, arguing that the existing ward provides for a reasonable level of electoral equality, and proposed creating a two-member Melton & Hasketon ward comprising Melton and Hasketon parishes. The Council recognised that its proposals had been opposed by Hasketon and Melton parish councils as part of its own consultation exercise, but argued that Melton ward had to be combined with an adjoining parish or parishes in order to achieve a reasonable level of electoral equality. The Council proposed transferring Pettistree parish to a revised Otley ward, as detailed above. It proposed combining Ufford and Bromeswell parishes with Sutton parish (currently in Alderton & Sutton) to form a new single-member Sutton ward and including Eyke parish in a new single-member Rendlesham ward, as detailed below. Under the District Council's proposals, Melton & Hasketon, Sutton and Wickham Market wards would have 5 per cent fewer, 8 per cent fewer and 9 per cent more electors per councillor than the district average respectively (5 per cent fewer, 7 per cent fewer and 6 per cent more than the average by 2005).

116 The Liberal Democrats proposed combining Melton and Ufford parishes to form a new two-member Melton & Ufford ward. They strongly opposed the District Council's proposal to combine the rural parish of Hasketon with the much larger urban area of Melton, arguing that there is no evidence of community ties between the two areas. They also argued that "topographically, Ufford and Melton are logical parishes to form a joint ward", with the northern edge of Melton running into Ufford along the B1438 and both their populations being located between the A12 and the River Deben. The Liberal Democrats proposed retaining the existing single-member Wickham Market ward, as also proposed by the District Council, and creating a new single-member Sutton ward comprising the existing Alderton & Sutton ward and Bromeswell parish (currently in Ufford ward). They also proposed transferring Eyke parish to a new single-member Hollesley with Eyke ward, as detailed below.

117 Under the Liberal Democrats' proposals, Melton & Ufford, Sutton and Wickham Market wards would have 5 per cent more, 2 per cent fewer and 9 per cent more electors per councillor than the district average respectively (4 per cent more, 3 per cent fewer and 6 per cent more than the average by 2005).

118 Councillors Hall and Howard proposed creating a single-member ward comprising Wickham Market ward, Pettistree parish and part of Hasketon parish. They proposed combining Melton ward with Ufford, Bromeswell and the northern part of Alderton & Sutton ward in a new two-member ward, and creating a new single-member ward comprising the southern part of Sutton ward and Hollesley parish (currently in Hollesley ward). Under their proposals, Eyke parish would form part of a single-member Rendlesham ward, as detailed below. Under Councillor Hall and Howard's proposed council size of 44, these wards would have electoral variances of no more than 5 per cent from the district average by 2005.

119 Wickham Market Parish Council supported the District Council's proposal to retain the existing Wickham Market ward, arguing that it would have a good level of electoral equality and would provide for "good continuity for the parish". Bawdsey Parish Council favoured retaining the existing warding arrangements in their area, arguing that any changes should be made along the coast, rather than in inland areas.

120 We have carefully considered the representations received at Stage One. We note that our proposed council size of 55 limits the extent to which we are able to consider the proposals put forward by Councillors Hall and Howard. We also note that, as a result of our proposal to include Hasketon parish in a revised Otley ward, as detailed previously, we are unable to put forward the District Council's proposals for the existing Melton and Ufford wards. We note, however, that the District Council, the Liberal Democrats and Wickham Market Parish Council proposed retaining the existing Wickham Market ward. Under a council size of 55, this ward would have a reasonable level of electoral equality both now and in five years' time, and are content to put it forward as part of our draft recommendations.

121 We note that the Liberal Democrats' proposals would provide for a significant improvement in electoral equality for this area and concur with their assessment that combining Melton and Ufford parishes for district warding purposes would provide for a good balance between the electoral equality and the statutory criteria. We note that the two areas are linked by the B1438 road, and consider that community ties would be better reflected under this arrangement than under the District Council's proposed Melton & Hasketon ward. We also note that the Liberal Democrats' proposed Sutton ward would retain all the parishes in the existing Alderton & Sutton ward within the same ward, thereby reflecting, to an extent, the views of Bawdsey Parish Council. We are content therefore to put forward their proposals for this area as part of our draft recommendations.

122 Under our draft recommendations, Melton & Ufford and Wickham Market wards would have 5 per cent and 9 per cent more electors per councillor than the district average respectively, improving to 4 per cent and 6 per cent more than the average by 2005. Sutton ward would have 2 per cent fewer electors per councillor than the district average (3 per cent fewer in five years' time).

Hollesley, Orford and Tunstall wards

123 The three wards of Hollesley, Orford and Tunstall are located in the south-east of the district, in the area surrounding the Butley River and to the south of the River Alde. Each ward is currently represented by a single councillor. Hollesley ward contains the five parishes of Boyton, Butley, Capel St Andrew, Hollesley and Wantisden. Orford ward comprises the four parishes of Gedgrave, Iken, Orford and Sudbourne, while Tunstall contains the five parishes of Blaxhall, Campsey Ash, Chillesford, Rendlesham and Tunstall. Under existing arrangements Hollesley and Orford wards are over-represented, with 23 per cent and 38 per cent fewer electors per councillor than the district average respectively (26 per cent and 36 per cent fewer than the average by 2005). Tunstall ward is under-represented with 23 per cent more electors per councillor than the district average (28 per cent more than the average in five years' time).

124 The District Council proposed a revised single-member Orford ward comprising the existing ward and Chillesford and Tunstall parishes of the existing Tunstall ward, which it argued "builds on the current [warding] structure". It proposed a revised single-member Hollesley ward comprising Boyton and Hollesley parishes (currently in Hollesley) and Alderton, Bawdsey, Ramsholt and Shottisham parishes (currently in Alderton & Sutton ward). The Council also proposed a new single-member Rendlesham ward comprising Butley, Capel St Andrew and

Wantisden parishes (currently in Hollesley ward), Rendlesham parish (currently in Tunstall ward) and Eyke parish (currently in Ufford ward). It stated that there is a strong case for this ward, arguing that “the RAF Bentwaters site and the issues arising from it dominate the area”. Under the District Council’s proposals, Blaxhall parish would form part of a revised single-member Snape ward and Campsey Ash parish would form part of a new single-member Campsea Ashe ward, as detailed below.

125 The District Council’s proposed Hollesley, Orford and Rendlesham wards would have 7 per cent more, 8 per cent fewer and 6 per cent fewer electors per councillor than the district average respectively (2 per cent more, 7 per cent fewer and equal to the district average by 2005).

126 The Liberal Democrats stated that in formulating their proposals for the Deben Peninsulas, they took account of the geographical boundaries of the sea, the River Alde to the north and the River Deben to the south. They proposed a new single-member Orford & Tunstall ward comprising the existing ward and Blaxhall and Tunstall parishes (currently in Tunstall ward). They proposed a new single-member Hollesley with Eyke ward comprising the existing ward, Chillesford parish (currently in Tunstall ward) and Eyke parish (currently in Ufford ward). Under their proposals Rendlesham, Campsey Ash and Pettistree parishes would form a new single-member Rendlesham ward. They argued that Rendlesham parish has a more urban identity, and for this reason they did not propose combining it with the much smaller settlements of Wantisden, Capel St Andrew and Butley. They also argued that Campsey Ash parish has closer ties with Rendlesham than with parishes to the north of the A12.

127 The Liberal Democrats’ proposed Hollesley with Eyke, Orford & Tunstall and Rendlesham wards would have 1 per cent, 2 per cent and 9 per cent fewer electors per councillor than the district average respectively (5 per cent, 1 per cent and 3 per cent fewer than the average by 2005).

128 Councillors Hall and Howard proposed creating a single-member Rendlesham ward comprising Boyton, Butley, Campsey Ash, Capel St Andrew, Eyke, Rendlesham and Wantisden parishes. They proposed a new single-member Snape & Orford ward comprising the eight parishes of Blaxhall, Chillesford, Gedgrave, Iken, Orford, Snape, Sudbourne and Tunstall. As discussed previously, they proposed including Hollesley parish in a revised Sutton ward. Under Councillors Hall and Howard’s proposals, Rendlesham and Snape & Orford ward would each have electoral variances of no more than 9 per cent from the district average by 2005.

129 Campsea Ashe Parish Council argued that the parish has little affinity with the area to the north of the A12. It also favoured retaining the parish’s current association with Rendlesham and the more established villages of Blaxhall and Tunstall, and favoured remaining in the same ward as the RAF Bentwaters airbase.

130 We have given careful consideration to the submissions received at Stage One. We note that the proposals submitted by the District Council, the Liberal Democrats and Councillors Hall and Howard would all result in a significant improvement in electoral equality in this area. We note, however, that our proposed council size of 55 limits the extent to which we are able to consider Councillors Hall and Howard’s proposals for this area.

131 We note that the Liberal Democrats' proposed Rendlesham ward would retain Campsey Ashe parish in the same ward as Rendlesham, whereas the District Council proposed combining it with areas to the north of the A12. We have also noted the views expressed by Campsey Ashe Parish Council and concur with their assessment that the parish has little affinity with the areas to the north of the A12, which we consider is a significant boundary in this area. In light of these considerations, and in view of our proposals for a single-member Sutton ward, as discussed previously, we propose basing our draft recommendations on the Liberal Democrats' submission for this area. We consider that their proposals would provide for the most reasonable balance between electoral equality and the statutory criteria.

132 Under our draft recommendations, Hollesley with Eyke and Orford & Tunstall wards would have 1 per cent and 2 per cent fewer electors per councillor than the district average respectively (5 per cent and 1 per cent fewer than the average by 2005). Rendlesham ward would initially have 9 per cent fewer electors per councillor than the district average, improving to 3 per cent fewer in five years' time.

Dennington, Earl Soham, Framlingham and Glemham wards

133 These four wards are located in the western part of the district. Framlingham ward contains the large village of Framlingham, while Dennington, Earl Soham and Glemham wards are largely rural and surround Framlingham village. Dennington contains the six parishes of Badingham, Bruisyard, Cransford, Dennington, Rendham and Swefling. Earl Soham ward also contains six parishes – Brandeston, Earl Soham, Easton, Kettleburgh, Letheringham and Saxtead – while Glemham ward contains the five parishes of Great Glemham, Hacheston, Little Glemham, Marlesford and Parham. Framlingham ward contains the Framlingham Town Council area. Under existing arrangements each ward is represented by a single councillor. Dennington, Earl Soham and Glemham wards are currently over-represented and have 9 per cent, 18 per cent and 40 per cent fewer electors per councillor than the district average respectively. These are expected to worsen to 10 per cent, 19 per cent and 43 per cent fewer than the average over the next five years. Due to recent growth, Framlingham ward is under-represented and has 41 per cent more electors per councillor than the district average (43 per cent more by 2005).

134 The District Council proposed a revised two-member Framlingham ward comprising the existing ward and the majority of the existing Dennington ward (Badingham, Bruisyard, Cransford and Dennington parishes). It recognised that Framlingham is currently a "single-parish ward", but noted that council size would need to be decreased to 42 in order to retain the existing ward and argued that this would result in unacceptably large wards elsewhere in the district. The Council proposed a revised single-member Earl Soham ward, comprising the existing Earl Soham ward (less Easton parish), Cretingham, Hoo and Monewden parishes (currently in Otley ward) and Charsfield parish (currently in Hasketon ward). It argued that, in geographic terms, its proposed ward "makes more sense than the previous arrangements". It also noted that the former Parish Council of Easton & Letheringham had been dissolved and argued that there was no need for these two parishes to remain in the same ward.

135 The District Council proposed a new single-member Campsey Ashe ward, comprising the existing Glemham ward, Swefling parish (currently in Dennington ward), Easton parish (currently

in Earl Soham ward), Campsey Ash parish (currently in Tunstall ward) and Stratford St Andrew parish (currently in Snape ward). It argued that the A12 acts as a “spine” linking the communities within its proposed ward.

136 Under the District Council’s proposals, Campsea Ashe, Earl Soham and Framlingham wards would have 11 per cent, 4 per cent and 5 per cent more electors per councillor than the district average respectively (7 per cent, 2 per cent and 5 per cent more in than the average in 2005).

137 The Liberal Democrats proposed a revised two-member Framlingham ward comprising the existing ward, as well as Badingham and Dennington parishes (currently in Dennington ward) and Saxtead parish (currently in Earl Soham ward) . They proposed a revised Earl Soham ward comprising the existing ward (less Saxtead parish), Cretingham, Hoo and Monewden parishes (currently in Otley ward) and Charsfield parish (currently in Hasketon ward). They argued that their proposed Earl Soham ward forms a sensible grouping of “interlocking rural parishes” along the valley of the river Deben.

138 The Liberal Democrats argued that the A12 trunk road forms a significant boundary between communities in this area, and they proposed linking the rural villages along and to the west of the A12 within one ward. They proposed a new single-member Hacheston ward, comprising the existing Glemham ward and Bruisyard, Cransford, Rendham and Swefling parishes (currently in Dennington ward). They further argued that the parishes of Rendham and Swefling share community facilities and opposed the District Council’s proposal to transfer Rendham parish to a revised Saxmundham ward, as detailed below.

139 The Liberal Democrats’ proposed Earl Soham, Framlingham and Hacheston wards would have 2 per cent, 4 per cent and 2 per cent more electors per councillor than the district average respectively (1 per cent more, 4 per cent more and 1 per cent fewer than the average by 2005).

140 Councillors Hall and Howard proposed creating a two-member ward comprising Framlingham ward and the six surrounding parishes of Badingham, Dennington, Earl Soham, Kettleburgh, Parham and Saxtead. They also proposed creating a single member ward comprising the 11 parishes of Benhall, Bruisyard, Cransford, Farnham, Great Glemham, Little Glemham, Marlesford, Rendham, Stratford St Andrew, Sternfield and Swefling. Their proposed wards would have electoral variances of no more than 3 per cent from the district average in 2005.

141 Dennington Parish Council opposed the District Council’s proposals to include the parish in a revised Framlingham ward, arguing that urban interests in the proposed ward would dominate those of rural areas. It also argued that the “attitudes and aspirations” of Dennington parish are similar to those of other rural parishes in the existing Dennington ward, rather than Framlingham ward. Cransford Parish Meeting argued that there are profound differences between urban and rural parishes, including cultural, environmental and planning issues, and opposed the District Council’s proposal to include Cransford parish in a revised Framlingham ward.

142 We have carefully considered the submission received at Stage One and a number of considerations have emerged. We note that the District Council, the Liberal Democrats and

Councillors Hall and Howard all proposed a revised Framlingham ward which would contain at least two of the parishes surrounding Framlingham town. We note that the existing single-member Framlingham ward is significantly under-represented, but that increasing its representation to two councillors, on its present boundaries, would result in the ward being significantly over-represented (29 per cent fewer electors per councillor than the district average by 2005). Furthermore, we have received no evidence which would justify such a high level of electoral inequality in this area.

143 We note that the Liberal Democrats' proposed Framlingham ward would include the larger parishes of Badington, Dennington and Saxtead, while the District Council's proposed ward would also include the smaller parishes of Bruisyard and Cransford. We also note that the Liberal Democrats' proposal would provide for marginally better electoral equality than the District Council's proposal. In the light of these considerations, we consider that the Liberal Democrats' proposed Framlingham ward would provide for the most reasonable balance between electoral equality and the statutory criteria, and are content to put it forward as part of our draft recommendations.

144 Our proposed Framlingham ward limits the extent to which we are able to consider the District Council's proposals in the adjoining areas in their entirety. We note, however, that there were some similarities between their proposals and those of the Liberal Democrats. They both proposed broadly similar Earl Soham wards and both their proposals for the existing Glemham ward would retain its constituent parishes within the same ward.

145 We consider, however, that the Liberal Democrats' proposed Hacheston ward would have the advantage of retaining the four smaller parishes of the existing Dennington ward – Cransford, Bruisyard, Rendham and Swefling – within a rural ward together with other parishes of a similar nature and size. Furthermore, we consider that the A12 constitutes a significant boundary in this area and have not been persuaded that the District Council's proposal to combine Rendham parish with areas to the east of the A12 in a revised Saxmundham ward, as detailed below, would adequately reflect local community ties. In the light of these considerations, we are content to put forward the Liberal Democrats' proposed Earl Soham and Hacheston wards as part of our draft recommendations.

146 Under our draft recommendations, Earl Soham and Hacheston ward would both have 2 per cent more electors per councillor than the district average (1 per cent more and 1 per cent fewer than the average respectively by 2005). Framlingham ward would have 4 per cent more electors per councillor than the district average both now and in five years' time.

Aldeburgh, Buxlow and Snape wards

147 The three wards of Aldeburgh, Buxlow and Snape are located to the north of the River Alde, and are broadly bounded by the A12 in the west and the North Sea in the east. Aldeburgh ward is represented by two councillors and comprises Aldeburgh town. Buxlow ward is represented by a single councillor and comprises the three parishes of Aldringham cum Thorpe, Friston and Knodishall. Snape is also represented by a single councillor and comprises the five parishes of Benhall, Farnham, Snape, Stratford St Andrew and Sternfield. Under existing arrangements

Aldeburgh and Snape wards are significantly over-represented with 25 per cent and 22 per cent fewer electors per councillor than the district average (17 per cent and 23 per cent fewer than the average by 2005). Buxlow ward has 4 per cent more electors per councillor than the district average and is projected to increase to 8 per cent more than the average by 2005.

148 The District Council proposed a revised two-member Aldeburgh ward comprising the existing ward and Aldringham parish (currently in Buxlow ward). It argued that the coastal road “provides a logical link between Aldeburgh and the Thorpeness part of Aldringham cum Thorpe” and that the River Alde presents a significant barrier between Aldeburgh town and areas to the south of it. It also proposed a revised single-member Snape ward comprising the existing ward (less Stratford St Andrew parish), Blaxhall parish (currently in Tunstall ward) and Friston parish (currently in Buxlow ward). The Council proposed including Stratford St Andrew parish in a new Campsea Ashe ward, as previously discussed. It also proposed transferring Knodishall parish to a revised Leiston ward, as detailed below. Under the District Council’s proposals, Aldeburgh and Snape wards would both have 2 per cent fewer electors per councillor than the district average (8 per cent more and 3 per cent fewer than the average by 2005).

149 The Liberal Democrats proposed a revised two-member Aldeburgh ward, identical to the District Council’s proposed ward, and a revised single-member Snape ward comprising the existing ward and Friston parish (currently in Buxlow ward). The Liberal Democrats argued that retaining Stratford St Andrew within Snape ward would ensure that “the close interrelationship between the centre of that village and the centre of Farnham is maintained”. Under their proposals, Knodishall parish would be transferred to a revised Leiston ward, as detailed below. The Liberal Democrats’ proposed Aldeburgh and Snape wards would have 2 per cent and 5 per cent fewer electors per councillor than the district average respectively (8 per cent more and 6 per cent fewer than the average by 2005).

150 Councillors Hall and Howard proposed a two-member Aldeburgh & Knodishall ward comprising the existing Aldeburgh ward and the three parishes of Aldringham cum Thorpe, Friston and Knodishall. They proposed including Benhall, Farnham, Stratford St Andrew and Sternfield parishes in a new single-member ward, together with the seven parishes of Bruisyard, Cransford, Great Glemham, Little Glemham, Marlesford, Rendham and Swefling, and transferring Snape parish to a new Snape & Orford ward, as previously discussed. Their proposed Aldeburgh & Knodishall ward would have 10 per cent more electors per councillor than the district average in 2005.

151 Knodishall Parish Council opposed the District Council’s proposal to transfer their parish to a revised Leiston ward and favoured retaining its current warding arrangements with Friston and Aldringham parishes in Buxlow ward, arguing that the parishes share strong community ties. Aldringham cum Thorpe Parish Council opposed the District Council’s proposal to include the parish in the same ward as Aldeburgh town, arguing that Aldeburgh town has different interests and needs to those of the more rural Aldringham cum Thorpe parish.

152 Three local residents opposed the Council’s proposal to combine Knodishall and Theberton parishes with Leiston town, and favoured retaining the existing Buxlow ward. Another resident

also favoured retaining the existing Buxlow ward and opposed the District Council's proposal to transfer Friston parish to a revised Snape ward.

153 We have carefully considered the representations received at Stage One. We have given careful consideration to the views expressed by Aldringham cum Thorpe and Knodishall parish councils and note that the existing Buxlow ward has an acceptable level of electoral equality. However, in formulating our recommendations, we must have a view to the district as a whole. We consider that significant changes are needed to warding arrangements in this area in order to achieve improved electoral equality for the district as a whole and we have not been persuaded by the evidence received at Stage One that this aim could be achieved by retaining the existing Buxlow ward.

154 We note that the District Council and the Liberal Democrats concurred with respect to their proposals for a revised Aldeburgh ward. We also note that under a council size of 55, this ward would have a reasonable level of electoral equality both now and in five years' time. We are content therefore to put forward a revised two-member Aldeburgh ward as part of our draft recommendations, as proposed by the District Council and the Liberal Democrats.

155 We note that the District Council and the Liberal Democrats proposed broadly similar Snape wards. Under both proposals Snape ward would contain Benhall, Farnham, Friston, Snape and Sternfield parishes. However, while the District Council proposed also including Blaxhall parish, the Liberal Democrats proposed retaining Stratford St Andrew parish within Snape ward. However, we note that our proposal to include Blaxhall parish in a new Orford & Tunstall ward, as discussed previously, limits the extent to which we are able to put forward the District Council's proposed Snape ward. We therefore propose putting forward the Liberal Democrats' proposed single-member Snape ward as part of our draft recommendations.

156 Under our draft recommendations, Aldeburgh and Snape wards would have 2 per cent and 5 per cent fewer electors per councillor than the district average respectively (8 per cent more and 6 per cent fewer than the average by 2005).

Kelsale, Leiston and Saxmundham wards

157 The three wards of Kelsale, Leiston and Saxmundham are located in the northern part of the district, broadly to the east of the A12 trunk road. Leiston is a three-member ward and comprises Leiston cum Sizewell parish. Kelsale is a single-member ward and comprises the two parishes of Kelsale cum Carlton and Theberton, while Saxmundham is also a single-member ward and comprises the town of Saxmundham. Under existing arrangements, Kelsale and Leiston wards are over-represented, with 35 per cent and 18 per cent fewer electors per councillor than the district average both now and in five years' time. Saxmundham ward is under-represented, with 21 per cent more electors per councillor than the district average. The level of electoral equality in this ward is projected to worsen to 34 per cent fewer than the average by 2005.

158 The District Council proposed a revised three-member Leiston ward comprising the existing ward, plus Theberton parish (currently in Kelsale ward) and Knodishall parish (currently in Buxlow ward). It also proposed a revised two-member Saxmundham ward comprising the

existing ward, plus Kelsale cum Carlton parish (currently in Kelsale ward) and Rendham parish (currently in Dennington ward). The District Council stated that it recognised that Leiston and Saxmundham towns have each historically comprised separate wards, but argued that they would need to be combined with one or more of the surrounding parishes in order to ensure a reasonable level of electoral equality under a council size of 55. It further argued that Knodishall and Theberton parishes were the most logical choices to be combined with Leiston town, and that Kelsale cum Carlton parish and Saxmundham town have very strong community links.

159 Under the District Council's proposals, Leiston and Saxmundham wards would have 2 per cent more and 9 per cent fewer electors per councillor than the district average respectively, improving to 1 per cent more and 3 per cent fewer than the average by 2005.

160 The Liberal Democrats also proposed revised Leiston and Saxmundham wards. Under their proposals, Leiston ward would be enlarged to include Knodishall parish, while a two-member Saxmundham ward would comprise the existing Saxmundham and Kelsale wards. The Liberal Democrats argued that Knodishall parish is geographically very close to Leiston town and that the two areas share links in terms of employment, shopping and leisure. They also argued that "Knodishall is large enough (unlike Theberton) to be able to retain its own identity and ensure that its views are taken into account."

161 Under the Liberal Democrats' proposals, Leiston and Saxmundham wards would have 4 per cent and 7 per cent fewer electors per councillor than the district average respectively (5 per cent and 1 per cent fewer by 2005).

162 Councillors Hall and Howard, under their 44-member scheme, proposed retaining the existing single-member Saxmundham ward and creating a new two-member Leiston & Theberton ward comprising Leiston cum Sizewell and Theberton parishes. They proposed combining Kelsale cum Carlton parish in new single-member Kelsale & Yoxford ward, together with Darsham, Middleton and Yoxford parishes. Councillors Hall and Howard's proposed wards would have electoral variances of no more than 7 per cent from the district average by 2005.

163 Leiston cum Sizewell Town Council strongly opposed the District Council's proposed Leiston ward, arguing that "the status quo was the most practical and entirely fair arrangement" and justified an electoral variance of 18 per cent both now and in 2005. They also argued that the projected electorate for Leiston ward in 2005 had been underestimated by the Council, by possibly up to 200 electors.

164 We have carefully considered the representations received at Stage One. We have noted the views of Leiston cum Sizewell Town Council and have found no evidence in its submission or that of the District Council which would indicate that the electoral projections for Leiston are fundamentally flawed. Furthermore, we have not been persuaded by the evidence received that retaining the status quo in this area would provide the most reasonable balance between electoral equality and the statutory criteria, having regard to the district as a whole.

165 We note that the proposals submitted by the District Council, the Liberal Democrats and Councillors Hall and Howard would provide for a significant improvement in electoral equality

both now and in five years' time. We note however, that our proposed council size of 55 limits the extent to which we are able to consider Councillors Hall and Howard's proposals, which were based on a council size of 44. We note that the District Council and the Liberal Democrats both proposed revised Leiston and Saxmundham wards. However, as a result of our proposal to include Rendham parish in a single-member Hacheston ward, as discussed previously, we are unable to put forward the District Council's proposals for this area. We consider that the Liberal Democrats' proposals would provide the most reasonable balance between electoral equality and the statutory criteria and are content to put them forward as part of our draft recommendations.

166 Under our draft recommendations, Leiston and Saxmundham wards would have 4 per cent and 7 per cent fewer electors per councillor than the district average respectively (5 per cent and 1 per cent fewer by 2005).

Bramfield & Cratfield, Walberswick, Westleton and Yoxford wards

167 The four wards of Bramfield & Cratfield, Walberswick, Westleton and Yoxford are located in the northern part of the district and are each represented by a single councillor. Bramfield & Cratfield ward contains the 11 parishes of Bramfield, Chediston, Cookley, Cratfield, Heveningham, Huntingfield, Linstead Magna, Linstead Parva, Thorington, Ubbeston and Walpole. Walberswick ward contains the three parishes of Blythburgh, Walberswick and Wenhaston with Mells Hamlet, while Westleton ward comprises the four parishes of Darsham, Dunwich, Middleton and Westleton. Yoxford ward comprises Peasehall, Sibton and Yoxford parishes. Under existing arrangements, all four wards are over-represented. Bramfield & Cratfield, Walberswick and Yoxford wards have 9 per cent, 20 per cent and 29 per cent fewer electors per councillor than the district average respectively (14 per cent, 15 per cent and 28 per cent fewer than the average by 2005). Westleton ward has 30 per cent fewer electors per councillor than the district average and this level of electoral variance is projected to remain unchanged in five years' time.

168 The District Council proposed creating three wards for this area. It proposed a revised single-member Walberswick ward, comprising the existing ward and Bramfield and Thorington parishes (currently in Bramfield & Cratfield ward). It also proposed a revised single-member Yoxford ward, comprising the existing Westleton ward and Yoxford parish (currently in Yoxford ward). Finally it proposed a new single-member Peasehall ward, comprising the existing Bramfield & Cratfield ward (less Bramfield and Thorington parishes) and Peasehall and Sibton parishes (currently in Yoxford ward). Under the District Council's proposals, Peasehall, Walberswick and Yoxford wards would have 3 per cent, 3 per cent and 5 per cent more electors per councillor than the district average respectively (1 per cent fewer, 7 per cent more and 7 per cent more than the average by 2005).

169 The Liberal Democrats proposed revised single-member Walberswick and Yoxford wards and a new single-member Peasehall ward, identical to those proposed by the District Council.

170 Councillors Hall and Howard proposed a new single-member Cratfield & Peasehall ward comprising the existing Bramfield & Cratfield ward (less Thorington parish) and Peasehall and Sibton parishes (currently in Yoxford ward). They proposed a new single-member Wenhaston

& Westleton ward comprising the existing Walberswick ward, Thorington parish (currently in Bramfield & Cratfield ward) and Dunwich and Westleton parishes (currently in Westleton ward). Finally, they proposed a single-member Kelsale & Yoxford ward, as previously discussed. Councillors Hall and Howard's proposed wards would have electoral variances of no more than 5 per cent from the average by 2005.

171 Yoxford Parish Council argued that Yoxford has always been considered the trade centre of the geographical area that covers Peasenhall, Sibton, Yoxford, Middleton and Darsham parishes and proposed that these parishes should be combined within a single ward. It opposed combining Yoxford with parishes to the east.

172 We have carefully considered the representations received at Stage One and note that our proposed council size of 55 limits the extent to which we are able to consider the proposals submitted by Councillors Hall and Howard's for this area. We have noted Yoxford Parish Council's preference for retaining Yoxford's current connections with areas to its west, rather than to its east. However, in the absence of alternative proposals for the whole of this area which would provide for improved electoral equality, we are unable to put forward Yoxford Parish Council's proposals as part of our draft recommendations.

173 We note that the District Council and the Liberal Democrats concurred with regard to their proposals for this area and note that they would provide for a significant improvement in electoral equality, both now and in five years time. In the light of these considerations, we are content to put forward their proposed Peasenhall, Walberswick and Yoxford wards as part of our draft recommendations.

174 Under our draft recommendations, Peasenhall and Walberswick wards would both have 3 per cent more electors per councillor than the district average (1 per cent fewer and 7 per cent more than the average respectively by 2005). Yoxford ward would have 5 per cent more electors per councillor than the district average initially and 7 per cent more than the average in five years' time.

Electoral Cycle

175 At Stage One we received no proposals in relation to the electoral cycle of the district. Accordingly, we make no recommendation for change to the present system of whole-council elections every four years.

Conclusions

176 Having considered all the evidence and representations received during the initial stage of the review, we propose that:

- a council of 55 members should be retained;
- there should be 34 wards;

- the boundaries of 40 of the existing wards should be modified, resulting in a net reduction of eight wards;
- whole-council elections should continue to be held every four years.

177 As already indicated, we have based our draft recommendations on the Liberal Democrats' proposals, but propose to depart from them in the following areas:

- in Felixstowe we propose revised warding arrangements based on 11 councillors for the area, in order to provide for improved electoral equality;
- in the south west of the district we propose a new three-member Rushmere St Andrew, a two-member Kesgrave West, a three-member Kesgrave East ward and a revised two-member Martlesham ward, based on a combination of the proposals received at Stage One and our own proposals;
- in Woodbridge we propose creating four single-member wards – Farlingaye, Kyson, Riverside and Seckford – based on a combination of the proposals received at Stage One and our own proposals.

178 Figure 5 shows the impact of our draft recommendations on electoral equality, comparing them with the current arrangements, based on 2000 electorate figures and with forecast electorates for the year 2005.

Figure 5: Comparison of Current and Recommended Electoral Arrangements

	2000 electorate		2005 forecast electorate	
	Current arrangements	Draft recommendations	Current arrangements	Draft recommendations
Number of councillors	55	55	55	55
Number of wards	42	34	42	34
Average number of electors per councillor	1,655	1,655	1,704	1,704
Number of wards with a variance more than 10 per cent from the average	34	2	37	0
Number of wards with a variance more than 20 per cent from the average	24	1	23	0

179 As shown in Figure 5, our draft recommendations for Suffolk Coastal District Council would result in a reduction in the number of wards varying by more than 10 per cent from the district average from 34 to two. By 2005 no wards are forecast to vary by more than 10 per cent from the average for the district.

Draft Recommendation

Suffolk Coastal District Council should comprise 55 councillors serving 34 wards, as detailed and named in Figures 1 and 2, and illustrated on Map 2, Appendix A, and the large map inserted inside the back cover of this report. The Council should continue to hold whole-council elections every four years.

Parish and Town Council Electoral Arrangements

180 In undertaking reviews of electoral arrangements, we are required to comply as far as possible with the provisions set out in Schedule 11 to the 1972 Act. The Schedule provides that if a parish is to be divided between different district wards it must also be divided into parish wards, so that each parish ward lies wholly within a single ward of the district. Accordingly, we propose consequential warding arrangements for the parishes of Felixstowe, Kesgrave, Martlesham and Woodbridge to reflect the proposed district wards.

181 The town of Felixstowe is currently served by 18 councillors representing six three-member wards: Felixstowe Central, Felixstowe East, Felixstowe North, Felixstowe South, Felixstowe South East and Felixstowe West.

182 In our draft recommendations we have proposed that the town should in future be divided between five district wards, Felixstowe East, Felixstowe North, Felixstowe South, Felixstowe South East and Felixstowe West. In order to reflect the revised district warding arrangements we propose that the number of town councillors and boundaries of East, North, South, South East and West Town Council wards should be amended. Central ward of Felixstowe Town Council would no longer exist.

183 We recognise that our proposals for this area differ from those expressed at Stage One, including those of Felixstowe Town Council, and would particularly welcome further local views at Stage Three.

Draft Recommendation

Felixstowe Town Council should comprise 17 councillors, one fewer than at present, and five wards – Felixstowe East, Felixstowe North, Felixstowe South and Felixstowe South East (returning three councillors) and Felixstowe West ward (returning five councillors). The parish ward boundaries should reflect the proposed district ward boundaries in the area, as illustrated and named on Maps A2 and A3 in Appendix A.

184 The town of Kesgrave is currently served by 15 councillors and is not warded. In our draft recommendations we have proposed that the town should in future be divided between two district wards, Kesgrave East and Kesgrave West. In order to reflect revised district warding

arrangements we propose creating two new wards in Kesgrave town – Kesgrave East (returning nine councillors) and Kesgrave West (returning six councillors).

Draft Recommendation
Kesgrave Town Council should comprise 15 councillors, as at present, representing two wards: Kesgrave East (returning nine councillors) and Kesgrave West (returning six councillors). The boundary between the two parish wards should reflect the proposed district ward boundary, as illustrated and named on the large map at the back of this report.

185 The parish of Martlesham is currently represented by 15 councillors and is not warded. In our draft recommendations we have proposed a new three-member Kesgrave East ward, containing the Deben Avenue area of Martlesham parish; a revised two-member Martlesham ward, containing the Martlesham village and Martlesham Heath areas; and a new single-member Riverside ward, containing that part of the parish to the north of the Ipswich to Lowestoft railway line. In order to reflect the revised district warding arrangements, we propose creating four new wards in Martlesham parish – Martlesham West (returning one councillor), Martlesham North (returning two councillors), Martlesham Heath (returning six councillors) and Martlesham Village (returning six councillors).

186 We recognise that our proposals for this area differ from those expressed at Stage One, including those of Martlesham Parish Council, and would particularly welcome further local views at Stage Three.

Draft Recommendation
Martlesham Parish Council should comprise 15 parish councillors, as at present, representing four wards: Martlesham West (returning one councillor), Martlesham North (two), Martlesham Heath (six) and Martlesham Village (six). The boundaries between the proposed parish wards should reflect the proposed district ward boundaries, as illustrated and named on the large map inserted inside the back cover of this report.

187 The town of Woodbridge is currently served by 15 councillors representing five three-member wards: Woodbridge Central, Woodbridge Farlingaye, Woodbridge Kyson, Woodbridge Riverside and Woodbridge Seckford. In our draft recommendations we proposed that the town should in future be divided between four district wards, Farlingaye, Kyson, Riverside and Seckford. In order to reflect the revised district warding arrangements we propose that the number of town councillors and boundaries of Woodbridge Farlingaye, Woodbridge Kyson, Woodbridge Riverside and Woodbridge Seckford wards should be amended. Woodbridge Central ward would no longer exist.

188 We recognise that our proposals for this area differ from those expressed at Stage One, and would welcome further local views, including those of Woodbridge Town Council, at Stage Three.

Draft Recommendation

Woodbridge Town Council should comprise 16 councillors, one more than at present, representing four wards, each returning four councillors: Woodbridge Farlingaye, Woodbridge Kyson, Woodbridge Riverside and Woodbridge Seckford. The boundaries between the four parish wards should reflect the proposed district ward boundary, as illustrated and named on the large map at the back of this report.

189 We are not proposing any change to the electoral cycle of parish and town councils in the district.

Draft Recommendation

For parish and town councils, whole-council elections should continue to take place every four years, on the same cycle as that of the District Council.

190 We have not finalised our conclusions on the electoral arrangements for Suffolk Coastal and welcome comments from the District Council and others relating to the proposed ward boundaries, number of councillors, electoral cycle, ward names and parish and town council electoral arrangements. 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 Suffolk Coastal

5 NEXT STEPS

191 We are putting forward draft recommendations on future electoral arrangements for consultation. We will take fully into account all representations received by 5 March 2001. 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 Commission and the District Council, and a list of respondents will be available on request from the Commission after the end of the consultation period.

192 Views may be expressed by writing directly to us:

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

Fax: 020 7404 6142

E-mail: reviews@lgce.gov.uk

Website: www.lgce.gov.uk

193 In the light of representations received, we will review our draft recommendations to 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 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

Draft Recommendations for Suffolk Coastal: Detailed Mapping

The following maps illustrate the Commission's proposed ward boundaries for the Suffolk Coastal area.

Map A1 illustrates, in outline form, the proposed ward boundaries within the district and indicates the areas which are shown in more detail in Maps A2 and A3 and the large map at the back of the report.

Map A2 illustrates the proposed warding arrangements in the western part of Felixstowe town.

Map A3 illustrates the proposed warding arrangements in the central and eastern part of Felixstowe town.

The **large map** inserted in the back of the report illustrates the existing and proposed warding arrangements for Kesgrave, Martlesham and Woodbridge.

Map A1: Draft Recommendations for Suffolk Coastal: Key Map

Map A2: Proposed Warding in the Western Part of Felixstowe Town

Map A3: Proposed Warding in the Central and Eastern part of Felixstowe Town

APPENDIX B

Suffolk Coastal Liberal Democrats' Proposed Electoral Arrangements

Figure B1: Suffolk Coastal Liberal Democrats' Proposals: Number of Councillors and Electors by Ward

Ward name	Number of councillors	Electorate (2000)	Number of electors per councillor	Variance from average %	Electorate (2005)	Number of electors per councillor	Variance from average %
Farlingaye	1	1,672	1,672	1	1,685	1,685	-1
Felixstowe *	11	18,989	1,726	4	19,175	1,743	2
Kesgrave	5	6,712	1,342	-19	7,700	1,540	-10
Kyson	1	1,722	1,722	4	1,719	1,719	1
Martlesham	2	3,683	1,842	11	3,444	1,722	1
North Martlesham & South Woodbridge	1	1,703	1,703	3	1,664	1,664	-2
Seckford	1	1,678	1,678	1	1,728	1,728	1

Source: Electorate figures are based on Suffolk Coastal Liberal Democrats' 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 district. The minus symbol (-) denotes a lower than average number of electors. Figures have been rounded to the nearest whole number.

** The figures shown are indicative as no detailed proposals were received for these areas.*

Suffolk Coastal District Council's Proposed Electoral Arrangements

Figure B2: Suffolk Coastal District Council's Proposals: Number of Councillors and Electors by Ward

Ward name	Number of councillors	Electorate (2000)	Number of electors per councillor	Variance from average	Electorate (2005)	Number of electors per councillor	Variance from average
Aldeburgh	2	3,235	1,618	-2	3,690	1,845	8
Campsea Ash	1	1,837	1,837	11	1,825	1,825	7
Earl Soham	1	1,722	1,722	4	1,730	1,730	2
Farlingaye	1	1,672	1,672	1	1,685	1,685	-1
Felixstowe Central	2	3,106	1,553	-6	3,147	1,574	-8
Felixstowe East	2	3,134	1,567	-5	3,197	1,599	-6
Felixstowe North	2	3,130	1,565	-5	3,150	1,575	-8
Felixstowe South	2	3,135	1,568	-5	3,154	1,577	-7
Felixstowe South East	2	3,266	1,633	-1	3,234	1,617	-5
Felixstowe West	2	3,218	1,609	-3	3,293	1,647	-3
Framlingham	2	3,463	1,732	5	3,590	1,795	5
Grundisburgh	1	1,812	1,812	9	1,825	1,825	7
Hollesley	1	1,770	1,770	7	1,730	1,730	2
Kesgrave East	2	2,716	1,358	-18	3,704	1,852	9
Kesgrave Central	2	3,715	1,858	12	3,715	1,858	9
West Kesgrave & East Rushmere St Andrew	1	1,841	1,841	11	1,841	1,841	8
Kyson	1	1,722	1,722	4	1,719	1,719	1
Leiston	3	5,055	1,685	2	5,145	1,715	1
Martlesham	2	3,683	1,842	11	3,444	1,722	1
Melton & Hasketon	2	3,154	1,577	-5	3,245	1,623	-5
Nacton	2	3,330	1,665	1	3,385	1,693	-1
Orford	1	1,530	1,530	-8	1,590	1,590	-7
Otley	1	1,625	1,625	-2	1,670	1,670	-2

Ward name	Number of councillors	Electorate (2000)	Number of electors per councillor	Variance from average	Electorate (2005)	Number of electors per councillor	Variance from average
Peasenhall	1	1,709	1,709	3	1,695	1,695	-1
Rendlesham	1	1,558	1,558	-6	1,710	1,710	0
Rushmere St Andrew	2	3,031	1,516	-8	3,080	1,540	-10
Saxmundham	2	3,017	1,509	-9	3,320	1,660	-3
Seckford	1	1,678	1,678	1	1,728	1,728	1
Snape	1	1,618	1,618	-2	1,660	1,660	-3
Sutton	1	1,526	1,526	-8	1,585	1,585	-7
Trimleys & Kirton	3	5,452	1,817	10	5,505	1,835	8
Walberswick	1	1,701	1,701	3	1,820	1,820	7
Wickham Market	1	1,797	1,797	9	1,805	1,805	6
Witnesham	1	1,646	1,646	-1	1,635	1,635	-4
Woodbridge South & Martlesham North	1	1,703	1,703	3	1,664	1,664	-2
Yoxford	1	1,731	1,731	5	1,815	1,815	7
Totals	55	91,038	–	–	93,730	–	–
Averages	–	–	1,655	–	–	1,704	–

Source: Electorate figures are based on Suffolk Coastal District 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 district. The minus symbol (-) denotes a lower than average number of electors. Figures have been rounded to the nearest whole number.

Councillors Hall and Howard's Proposed Electoral Arrangements

Figure B3: Councillors Hall and Howard's Proposals: Number of Councillors and Electors by Ward

Ward name	Number of councillors	Electorate (2005)	Number of electors per councillor	Variance from average %
Aldeburgh & Knodishall	2	4,665	2,333	10
Benhall & Rendham	1	2,195	2,195	3
Brandeston & Easton	1	2,075	2,075	-3
Cratfield & Peasenhall	1	2,025	2,025	-5
Felixstowe *	9	19,175	2,131	0
Framlingham, Dennington & Earl Soham	2	4,313	2,157	1
Hasketon & Woodbridge *	3	6,395	2,132	0
Hollesley & South Sutton	1	2,015	2,015	-5
Kelsale & Yoxford	1	2,060	2,060	-3
Kirton & Waldringfield	1	2,140	2,140	0
Leiston & Theberton	2	4,450	2,225	4
Martlesham	2	4,075	2,038	-4
Melton, Ufford, Brownswell & North Sutton	2	4,240	2,120	-0
Otley & Grundisburgh	1	2,170	2,170	2
Purdis Farm & Nacton	1	2,175	2,175	2
Rendlesham & Area	1	2,195	2,195	3
Rushmere & Kesgrave *	6	12,450	2,075	-3
Saxmundham	1	2,280	2,280	7
Snape & Orford	1	2,315	2,315	9
Trimleys	2	4,070	2,035	-4
Wenhaston & Westleton	1	2,080	2,080	-2

Ward name	Number of councillors	Electorate (2005)	Number of electors per councillor	Variance from average %
Wickham, Pettistree & Lower Hasketon	1	2,015	2,015	-5
Witnesham & Bealings	1	2,125	2,125	0
Totals	44	93,698	–	–
Averages	–	–	2,130	–

Source: Electorate figures are based on Councillors Hall and Howard's submission. Electorate figures for 2000 were not provided.

Note: 1 The 'variance from average' column shows by how far, in percentage terms, the number of electors per councillor 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.

2 There are a number of small anomalies in the electorate figures supplied, and as a result this table and other tables do not tally. Small changes to ward electorates may arise as a result of further analysis at Stage Three.

* The figures shown are indicative as no detailed proposals were received for these areas.

APPENDIX C

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 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 will be 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; and
- the name of any electoral area.

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

4 Unlike the LGBC, the Commission may also make recommendations for changes in respect of electoral arrangements within parish and town council areas. Accordingly, in relation to parish or town councils within a principal authority's area, the Commission may make recommendations relating to:

- the number of councillors;
- the need for parish wards;
- the number and boundaries of any such wards;
- the number of councillors to be elected for any such ward or, in the case of a common parish, for each parish; and
- the name of any such ward.

5 In conducting the review, section 27 of the 1992 Act requires the Commission to comply, so far as is practicable, with the rules given in Schedule 11 to the Local Government Act 1972 for the conduct of electoral reviews.

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

6 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.

7 In relation to shire districts:

Having regard to any changes in the number or distribution of the local government electors of the district 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 district;
- (b) in a district every ward of a parish council shall lie wholly within a single ward of the district;
- (c) in a district every parish which is not divided into parish wards shall lie wholly within a single ward of the district.

8 The Schedule also provides that, subject to (a)–(c) above, regard should be had to:

- (d) the desirability of fixing ward boundaries which are and will remain easily identifiable; and

(e) any local ties which would be broken by the fixing of any particular ward boundary.

9 The Schedule provides that, in considering whether a parish should be divided into wards, regard shall be had to whether:

(f) the number or distribution of electors in the parish is such as to make a single election of parish councillors impracticable or inconvenient; and

(g) it is desirable that any area or areas of the parish should be separately represented on the parish council.

10 Where it is decided to divide any such parish into parish wards, in considering the size and boundaries of the wards and fixing the number of parish councillors to be elected for each ward, regard shall be had to:

(h) any change in the number or distribution of electors of the parish which is likely to take place within the period of five years immediately following the consideration;

(i) the desirability of fixing boundaries which are and will remain easily identifiable; and

(j) any local ties which will be broken by the fixing of any particular boundaries.

11 Where it is decided not to divide the parish into parish wards, in fixing the number of councillors to be elected for each parish regard shall be had to the number and distribution of electors of the parish and any change which is likely to take place within the period of five years immediately following the fixing of the number of parish councillors.