

Local Government
Boundary Commission
For England
Report No.79

LOCAL GOVERNMENT

BOUNDARY COMMISSION

FOR ENGLAND

REPORT NO. 79

LOCAL GOVERNMENT BOUNDARY COMMISSION FOR ENGLAND

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The Countess Of Albemarle, DBE.

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Sir Andrew Wheatley, CBE.

Mr F B Young, CBE.

To the Rt Hon Roy Jenkins MP
Secretary of State for the Home Department

PROPOSALS FOR FUTURE ELECTORAL ARRANGEMENTS FOR THE
BOROUGH OF TUNBRIDGE WELLS IN THE COUNTY OF KENT

1. We, the Local Government Boundary Commission for England, having carried out our initial review of the electoral arrangements for the borough of Tunbridge Wells in accordance with the requirements of section 63 of, and Schedule 9 to, the Local Government Act 1972, present our proposals for the future electoral arrangements of that borough.
2. In accordance with the procedure laid down in section 60(1) and (2) of the 1972 Act, notice was given on 10 June 1974 that we were to undertake this review. This was incorporated in a consultation letter addressed to the Tunbridge Wells Borough Council, copies of which were circulated to the Kent County Council, Parish Councils in the district, the Member of Parliament for the constituency concerned and the headquarters of the main political parties. Copies were also sent to the editors of the local newspapers circulating in the area and to the local government press. Notices inserted in the local press announced the start of the review and invited comments from members of the public and any interested bodies.
3. The Tunbridge Wells Borough Council were invited to prepare a draft scheme of representation for our consideration. When doing so, they were asked to observe the rules laid down in Schedule 11 to the Local Government Act 1972 and the guidelines which we set out in Report No 6 about the proposed size of the Council and the proposed number of councillors for each ward. They were also

asked to take into account any views expressed to them following their consultation with local interests. We therefore asked that they should publish details of their provisional proposals about a month before they submitted their draft scheme to us, thus allowing an opportunity for local comment.

4. In accordance with section 7(4)(b) of the Local Government Act 1972 they had exercised an option for elections by thirds.

5. On 25 October 1974 Tunbridge Wells Borough Council presented their draft scheme of representation. They proposed to divide the area into 24 wards, each returning 1, 2 or 3 councillors, to form a council of 47 members.

6. We considered the draft scheme submitted by the Council together with the comments which had been made upon it. We noted that the scheme complied with our own guidelines but contained a wide range of elector/councillor ratios and we considered it required some modifications in order to comply with the rules in Schedule 11 to the Local Government Act 1972. After some alterations to the draft scheme in the rural areas, and in the successor parish of Southborough, we formulated our draft proposals.

7. On 6 January 1975 we issued our draft proposals and these were sent to all who had received our consultation letter or had commented on the Council's draft scheme. The Council were asked to make the draft proposals and the accompanying maps which defined the proposed ward boundaries available for inspection at their main offices. Representations on our draft proposals were invited from those to whom they were circulated and, by public notices, from members of the public and interested bodies. We asked that comments should reach us not later than 7 March.

8. We had proposed that the parish of Bidborough should be combined with the parish of Speldhurst to return 3 councillors. We received representations that Bidborough should form a separate ward returning one councillor. We thought that the electorate of the parish of Bidborough was too small to justify its representation by a separate councillor and decided to confirm our draft proposals for this ward as our final proposals, but to add the name of Bidborough to the name of the ward.

9. We had proposed that the parish of Frittenden should be combined with the parish of Cranbrook to return 3 councillors. We received representations that the parish of Frittenden should form a separate ward returning 1 councillor but we thought that the electorate of the parish of Frittenden was too small to form a separate ward on its own. We also received alternative proposals for the Sissinghurst ward of the parish of Cranbrook to be joined with the parish of Frittenden to form a single member ward. We decided to modify our draft proposals accordingly forming a new single-member ward known as the Frittenden and Sissinghurst ward and to propose that the remaining ward of the parish of Cranbrook should form a ward known as the Cranbrook ward returning 2 councillors.

10. There had been opposition to the Council's proposals to re-ward the successor parish of Southborough. For our draft proposals we had adopted a suggestion that the existing North ward should be retained with 2 members, but that the East and West wards should be combined to form one 3-member borough ward. In response to our draft proposals, we received comments suggesting that the existing borough wards should be retained, the North and East wards each returning 2 councillors and the West ward returning 1 councillor as now. Other comments also wanted the existing wards to be kept but with the West ward represented by 2 councillors.

11. In view of these comments we considered that we needed further information to enable us to reach a conclusion. Therefore, in accordance with section 65(2) of the 1972 Act, and at our request, you appointed Mr J Whatley as an Assistant Commissioner to hold a local meeting and to report to us.

12. Notice of the local meeting was sent to all who had received our draft proposals or had commented upon them, and was published locally.

13. The Assistant Commissioner held the meeting at the Victoria Hall, Southborough on 7 August 1975 and visited the area which was subject to comment. A copy of his report is attached at Schedule 1 to this report.

14. In the light of the discussion that took place at the meeting and his inspection of the area the Assistant Commissioner recommended that the present 3 borough wards in Southborough should be retained with their representation unaltered.

15. We considered again our draft proposals in the light of the comments which had been received and of the Assistant Commissioner's report. We concluded that the modification recommended by the Assistant Commissioner should be adopted and, subject to this ^{further} amendment, we decided to confirm our draft proposals as our final proposals.

16. Details of these final proposals are set out in Schedule 2 to this report and on the attached maps. Schedule 2 gives the names of the wards and the number of councillors to be returned by each and Schedule 3 shows the order of retirement of councillors. The boundaries of the new wards are defined on the maps.

PUBLICATION

17. In accordance with section 60(5)(b) of the Local Government Act 1972 a copy of this report and a copy of the maps are being sent to Tunbridge Wells Borough Council and will be made available for public inspection at the Council's main offices. Copies of this report (without maps) are being sent to those who made comments. A detailed description of the boundaries of the proposed wards as defined on the maps, is set out in Schedule 4 to this report.

L.S.

Signed

EDMUND COMPTON (CHAIRMAN)

JOHN M RANKIN (DEPUTY CHAIRMAN)

DIANA ALBEMARLE

T C BENFIELD

MICHAEL CHISHOLM

ANDREW WHEATLEY

F B YOUNG

DAVID R SMITH (Secretary)

September 1975

LOCAL GOVERNMENT BOUNDARY COMMISSION FOR ENGLAND

R E P O R T O N W A R D I N G

PARISH OF SOUTHBOROUGH, KENT

J WHATLEY

AUGUST 1975

To The Local Government Boundary Commission for England

R E P O R T of a local meeting held at the
Victoria Hall, Southborough, Kent, at 10.30 am
on Thursday 7 August 1975, to examine the Commission's
draft proposals concerning the electoral arrangements
for the Parish of Southborough.

PRESENT:

<u>Name</u>	<u>Representing</u>
M J Doling	Town Mayor, Southborough Town Council
W E Battersby	Chief Executive, Tunbridge Wells Borough Council
J Adamson	Director of Administration, Tunbridge Wells Borough Council
Elizabeth D Garlick	Southborough Town Council
R G G Woodland	Kent County Councillor and Resident
Rev F Skinner	Bidborough Parish Council
K E Burnell	Bidborough Parish Council
G W Pentecost	Clerk to Southborough Town Council
Barry Thurnell	Conservative Association, Agent for Member of Parliament
H L Garlick	Resident
W F Cavie	Resident
B Dury	Southborough and High Brooms Labour Party
V Akehurst	Southborough and High Brooms Labour Party
C Blackwell	Southborough Town Council and Tunbridge Wells Borough Council (Southborough West Ward)
A E Francis	Royal Tunbridge Wells Constituency Labour Party
Marian Hatt	Kent and Sussex Courier
T Raistrick	Independent Democrat
A E Cottam	Resident

<u>Name</u>	<u>Representing</u>
Mrs P A Marshall	Southborough Town Council
Mrs C E Bowles	Tunbridge Wells Borough Council
V T G Lyles	Southborough Town Council
C U R Slater	Tunbridge Wells Borough Council

COMMISSION'S PROPOSALS:

The Commission have considered the proposals put to them for the district warding of Southborough, which has successor parish status with 3 parish wards. Under the existing arrangements for this area each of the three parish wards, North (1974 electorate 2,920) West (2,308) and East (2,314), is also a district ward returning 2, 1 and 2 councillors respectively. The District Council's draft scheme proposed that the number of parish wards should be reduced to 2 (East and West) with the main London Road as the boundary between them and that the number of district councillors allocated to these two wards should be 3 and 2 respectively. In the light of the representations they had received against the re-warding of the parish, the Commission rejected this proposal in favour of one put forward by Tunbridge Wells District Labour Group that the existing East and West wards of the parish should be combined to form ^{one} /3 - member district ward - proposed name Southborough South - and that the existing North ward should become a 2 - member district ward on its own. Objections to the Commission's proposals have been received from Southborough Town Council; the Southborough Branch of the Royal Tunbridge Wells Constituency Conservative and Unionist Association, the Tunbridge Wells Area Committee of the Kent Association of Parish Councils and Tunbridge Wells District Council. All these objectors accept the retention of the existing parish wards and wish them to be used to provide 3 district wards. Southborough Town Council, the Conservatives and the Kent Association of Parish Councils ask for 2 representatives for the West ward. The District Council consider that this ward can be adequately represented by 1 councillor. A comparison of the alternative proposals with those of the Commission is given below:-

Commission's Draft Proposal (48 councillors)

<u>Ward</u>	<u>Councillors</u>	<u>1974</u>		<u>1979</u>	
		<u>Electorate</u>	<u>Entitlement</u>	<u>Electorate</u>	<u>Entitlement</u>
Southborough North	2	2,920	2.02	2,950	2.01
Southborough South	<u>3</u>	<u>4,622</u>	<u>3.20</u>	<u>4,950</u>	<u>3.37</u>
	5	7,542	5.22	7,900	5.38
	<u>-</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>-</u>

First Alternative Proposal (Proposed by District Council - 48 councillors)

<u>Ward</u>	<u>Councillors</u>	<u>1974</u>		<u>1979</u>	
		<u>Electorate</u>	<u>Entitlement</u>	<u>Electorate</u>	<u>Entitlement</u>
Southborough North	2	2,920	2.02	2,950	2.01
Southborough West	1	2,308	1.60	*2,363 (approx)	1.61
Southborough East	2	2,314	1.60	*2,587 (approx)	1.76
	—		—		—
	5		5.22		5.38
	—		—		—

*calculated on basis of Conservative's figures (comment 2).

Second Alternative Proposal (Proposed by all objectors except District Council - 49 councillors)

<u>Ward</u>	<u>Councillors</u>	<u>1974</u>		<u>1979</u>	
		<u>Electorate</u>	<u>Entitlement</u>	<u>Electorate</u>	<u>Entitlement</u>
Southborough North	2	2,920	2.06	2,950	2.05
Southborough West	2	2,308	1.63	2,363	1.64
Southborough East	<u>2</u>	2,314	<u>1.63</u>	2,587	<u>1.79</u>
	6		<u>5.32</u>		<u>5.48</u>
	—		—		—

Proposals advanced at the meeting:

Mr W E Battersby for Tunbridge Wells stated as follows:-

In June 1974 the Local Government Boundary Commission brought forward the timing of the Initial Review of Electoral Arrangements in Kent which was to be carried out under the terms of the Local Government Act, 1972 and asked for assistance in publicising the start of the review which it was estimated would be concluded by the end of October 1975.

The Borough Council was then invited to prepare a draft scheme of representation for the District taking into account any views which might be expressed, either before or after publication of the proposals.

Due public notice of the review was given and the matter was considered by a meeting of the Policy and Resources Committee of the Council on Tuesday 9 July 1974 when the report put before Members indicated -

- (a) that the District Council had already considered the question of the review of Parish boundaries and accepted that this was unnecessary prior to the initial review of electoral arrangements; and
- (b) that the existing membership of the Council of 47 members should, if possible, be retained for the future in order to continue the proportional representation between the respective constituent areas of the new local authority as recommended by the District Joint Committee set up by the four preceding local authorities when that Joint Committee recommended the original scheme of representation in 1972.

The attention of the Committee was drawn to the Rules which the Commission had indicated should be observed in any review and accepted that it would be necessary to modify the present representation in order to ensure that the ratio of electors the number of Councillors was the same, or as near as may be, for each Ward or Parish.

The Policy and Resources Committee established a Sub-Committee to consider any views then expressed at the meeting or which may be submitted and to formulate a scheme of representation for approval by the Committee. The Sub-Committee met on 29 July and considered a provisional scheme which had been based on the existing electoral areas and agreed that this should be sent to Parish Councils and political parties for their comments.

The suggestion contained in those provisional proposals with regard to Southborough provided for a combination of the Southborough West and Southborough East Wards into one South Ward with 3 representatives and retained the North Ward existing boundaries with 2 representatives.

The Sub-Committee met again on 4 September and considered representations -

- (i) by the Southborough Town Council requesting that 3 wards should be created each with 2 representatives or, alternatively, that the area be divided into 2 Wards with London Road as the boundary;

the East Ward having 3 representatives and the West Ward 2 representatives;

- (ii) by the Royal Tunbridge Wells Constituency Labour Party supporting the first suggestion of the Southborough Town Council; and
- (iii) by the Tunbridge Wells Conservative and Unionist Association supporting the second alternative suggested by the Southborough Town Council,

and accordingly recommended that the area of Southborough should be divided into 2 Wards as suggested in the alternative proposal put forward by the Southborough Town Council with a boundary along London Road.

The Policy Resources endorsed this recommendation at its meeting on 17 September and the suggestions were incorporated in the scheme submitted to the Local Government Boundary Commission. Thereafter the proposals were submitted to the Commission.

The Sub-Committee met again on 11 February 1975 to consider the draft proposals prepared by the Local Government Boundary Commission which maintained the present representation for Southborough as a whole at 5 Members and provided for two of these to be elected for the North Ward and 3 to be elected for a new South Ward created from the existing Southborough West and Southborough East Wards.

As a result of this consideration the Sub-Committee recommended the Policy and Resources Committee to recommend that the representation should remain as at present, namely 2 Members for the Southborough North, 2 Members for the Southborough East and 1 Member for the Southborough West Ward.

This recommendation was considered by a meeting of the Policy and Resources Committee on Tuesday 18 February, when reference was made to a letter addressed to the Local Government Boundary Commission by the Southborough Town Council and as a result thereof the Policy and Resources Committee recommended the Borough Council to accept the suggested increase in over-all Membership from 47 to 48 (this increase is not applicable to the Southborough area) and also the recommendation that the representation of the Southborough

Parish remain as at present.

Set out on the attached schedule are the electorates for the three existing wards between the years 1961 and 1975 and it will be seen that between the years 1969 and 1970 there was considerable increase in the electorate.

This was due to the reduction in the voting age from 21 to 18 and represented a 5.7% increase over the whole of the district by increases of 4.5%, 4.7% and 7.1% respectively in the East, West and North Wards. This would appear to indicate that in the North Ward at that time there was a greater proportion of younger people, but it would be wrong to put any greater implication on the figures than that.

Bearing in mind the above percentage increase between those years, the second part of the table sets out the adjusted electorate for the three wards with those percentage increases applied to the years 1961, 1964, 1966 and 1968, so that the second part of the table gives a truer comparable figure of the electorate as if the voting age had been the same throughout the period under review.

It will be observed from the two tables that the electorate of East Ward remained virtually static during the whole of the period 1961 to 1975 and although there were some decreases in the electorate these were made up in later years. It would seem fair to assume from these figures that the electorate of the East Ward has remained static over the whole of the period, this, despite the fact that there has been housing development in the area, not least of which were 30 houses erected by the local authority during 1970-71 in Chestnut Avenue and it will be observed that the occupation of these 30 houses apparently had little effect on the electorate.

The electorate for the West Ward had been subject to a very slight increase over the whole of the period, although, again it has fluctuated in both directions. The percentage increase over the whole period represents only about 3%. During the period under review, 100 houses were erected by the local authority between 1972 and 1975 and again it will be observed that

the occupation of these houses has apparently had little effect except to stay what would otherwise have been a reduction in the electorate.

However, in the North Ward, it will be observed that there has been an increase from 2,662 to 2,854 over the 14 years set out and, in fact, in the five years previous to 1975 the electorate was even greater. This represents an increase of about 7½% over that period. During the period under review 40 or 50 houses were erected by private enterprise, mainly in the period 1970-73, but, again, this appears to have little effect on the electorate.

It would be expected, therefore, that the electorates for the three Wards should continue to develop during the years 1974 to 1979 on the same basis as in the past, but in assessing these figures it should be borne in mind that very little development is proceeding at the moment, although the local authority anticipate building 80 dwellings in the East Ward and these are likely to be completed for occupation during June 1978. Perhaps, therefore, the previous trends in the East Ward will be changed and to this extent therefore the estimated electorates for this and the West Wards have been shown at the submission to the Commission as 2,550 and 2,400 giving a total of 4,950 for the proposed South Ward compared with 4,622 on the 1974 electorate. The North Ward has been similarly estimated at 2,950 for 1979 compared with 2,920 for 1974. This is only a slight increase, but it must be borne in mind that the figure of 2,920 for 1974 was the highest of a series of fluctuations and it seems appropriate to use the year 1973 later confirmed by the figures for 1975 as the base.

Schedule submitted by Mr Battersby

Electorate of Polling Districts in the Southborough Parish - 1961/75

TABLE 1

	<u>1961</u>	<u>1962</u>	<u>1963</u>	<u>1964</u>	<u>1965</u>	<u>1966</u>	<u>1967</u>	<u>1968</u>	<u>1969</u>	<u>1970</u>	<u>1971</u>	<u>1972</u>	<u>1973</u>	<u>1974</u>	<u>1975</u>
East	2,264	2,282	2,284	2,263	2,278	2,266	2,277	2,212	2,204	2,306	2,345	2,335	2,318	2,314	2,366
West	2,192	2,194	2,177	2,169	2,157	2,143	2,093	2,073	2,109	2,216	2,179	2,192	2,220	2,308	2,360
North	2,490	2,428	2,421	2,517	2,563	2,595	2,631	2,641	2,688	2,880	2,882	2,908	2,877	2,920	2,854

Adjusted figures for electorate

TABLE 2

	<u>1961</u>	<u>1964</u>	<u>1966</u>	<u>1968</u>	<u>1970</u>	<u>1971</u>	<u>1972</u>	<u>1973</u>	<u>1974</u>	<u>1975</u>
East	2,367	2,366	2,370	2,311	2,306	2,345	2,335	2,318	2,314	2,366
West	2,295	2,271	2,244	2,170	2,216	2,179	2,192	2,220	2,308	2,360
North	2,662	2,697	2,779	2,828	2,880	2,882	2,908	2,877	2,920	2,854

In connection with his statement to the effect that the local authority anticipate building 80 dwellings in the East Ward, which are likely to be completed for occupation during June 1978, Mr Battersby said that the local authority was currently negotiating for the purchase of the necessary land, and that no outline planning approval had yet been obtained.

The Town Mayor of Southborough stated that Southborough had a long history. An Ordnance Survey Map prior to 1894 showed the town divided into the three existing Wards, and development since then has been in accordance with that division, each area constituting a totally separate community. The ideal electoral arrangement will be the present one, but with an additional councillor for the West Ward. The common boundary between the East and West Wards is very short, and he believed that there was no residential property situated thereon.

Councillor Slater stated that he was the Chairman of the Policy and Resources Committee of the Tunbridge Wells Borough Council and that he was also the Chairman of the Sub-Committee referred to by Mr Battersby as having been formed to prepare a scheme of representation for approval by the Committee. He was also the leader of the Majority Party on the Borough Council with an overall majority thereon.

He stated that while the Borough Council desire to meet the wishes of the Southborough Town Council in regard to representation and to establish a harmonious working relationship with them, he regretted that there was no statistical basis for a total of 6 Councillors to represent the 3 wards of the Parish of Southborough.

If Southborough Town Council wanted the ward boundaries redrawn, the Borough Council would do its best to assist. However, the Borough Council's recommendation to the Commission was that the Wards should remain as they are at present, with 2 Councillors for the North Ward, 2 for the East, and 1 for the West.

Mr Blackwell said he was the sole member for the West Ward of Southborough. He had been a representative of Southborough Urban District Council on the District Joint Committee formed to consider arrangements for the New District Council. The Joint Committee had recommended that for the first elections Southborough should have 5 Councillors. Only two of the constituent authorities had Labour Party Members. The Labour representatives on the Joint Committee were told by other members of the Joint Committee that later on the representation of Southborough would be reviewed, and this was taken to mean that all the wards would have 2 Members.

The Labour Party proposals for an extra member for the West Ward were propounded at a Meeting of the Electoral Rearrangements Sub-Committee of the Policy and Resources Committee of the New District Council, but they were barely mentioned at the meeting of the Policy and Resources Committee held on 17 September 1974 when the report of the Sub-Committee was received.

At the meeting of the full Council on 1 October 1974 when Minute 445, dealing with the Initial Review of Electoral Arrangements was debated, the Chairman called on only 5 members to speak, none of them being members of the Labour Group, and then closed the debate. The Labour Members then withdrew as a protest.

Councillor Slater observed at this point that there was sympathy for the Labour Members point of view, but the Council believed that 47 Members were enough.

Canon Skinner, Rector of Bidborough and Chairman of Bidborough Parish Council stated that on the occasion of a boundary review carried out in 1930, the area of Great Bounds had been taken from Bidborough and included in the North Ward of Southborough. From an educational and cultural point of view Great Bounds looked to Bidborough rather than to Southborough. He had twice asked Southborough to consider a review whereby Great Bounds should be put back into Bidborough, but without response, and he wished to take advantage of the Meeting to raise the matter once more.

Mr Dury representing Southborough Labour Party, said that Southborough, Town Council had agreed reluctantly to the proposals for the division of the Parish into East and West Wards but preferred that the wards should remain as at present, with an extra Councillor for the West Ward. If this were not possible, he would like to see the East and West Wards combined.

Mrs Garlick, Deputy Mayor of Southborough, stated that the East and West Wards constituted separate communities. The East Ward comprised an area known as High Brooms which in the past had been divided between Tunbridge Wells and Southborough. It had fought for, and gained its identity, and possessed its own community organisations. The demand for a second councillor for the West Ward had been propounded very largely because Pembury had been allowed an extra councillor in the Commission's proposals. If the East and West Wards were combined there was no guarantee that the Councillors would be drawn from all parts of the new Ward, and there might be a feeling of disenfranchisement.

The Mayor of Southborough observed that if the East and West Wards were combined local organisations would not be adversely affected, but he feared that the Eastern part of the new Ward would become dominant, and the Western part would suffer accordingly.

Mrs Garlick and Mr Dury agreed.

Mr Francis stated that he was a member of the Royal Tunbridge Wells Labour Party, but on this occasion was speaking in a private capacity. He had lived in Southborough for 70 years and he agreed with Mrs Garlick; Southborough and High Brooms were always separate communities. He served on the Southborough Urban District Council for 22 years, being chairman from 1963 to 1965. In 1947, in an effort to bring Southborough and High Brooms closer together, the separate South Brooms branch of the Labour Party had been dissolved. The move proved ineffectual, and the two communities were still separate.

Councillor Slater stated that the Joint Committee had decided that the size of the new District Council should be between 30 and 60. The proportions of the total electorate comprised in the constituent authorities were as follows:

Royal Tunbridge Wells Borough Council	49%
Cranbrook Rural District Council	16%
Tunbridge Rural District Council (part)	24%
Southborough Urban District Council	11%

Taking 47 (approximately mid-way between the figures of 30 and 60 referred to above) as the size of the new District Council, and dividing it in the same proportions, gave the following representation for the constituent authorities:

Royal Tunbridge Wells Borough Council	23.03	say	23	Councillors
Cranbrook Rural District Council	7.52	"	8	"
Tunbridge Rural District Council (part)	11.28	"	11	"
Southborough Urban District Council	5.17	"	5	"

The Commission's proposals to give an extra Councillor to Pembury had increased the representation for the part of Tunbridge Rural District Council comprised in the new District from 11 to 12.

Mr Garlick said he had represented the East Ward on Southborough Urban District Council from 1961-1971. He said he supported Mr Francis. The division of the Parish into an East Ward and a West Ward should only be contemplated if the present warding arrangement was unacceptable. He considered the distortion of percentages preferable to loss of community interest.

To a suggestion that some other figure between 47 and 60 would be acceptable as the size of the new Council, Mr Slater observed that the Council Chamber was barely large enough for the 48 members proposed by the Commission.

Mr Blackwell observed that this was irrelevant; they must have the right numbers of councillors to ensure proper representation. Mr Slater repeated that the Joint Committee had looked carefully at the range of figures between 30 and 60 and decided that 47 was the best one. The Town Mayor of Southborough and

Mr Francis both said that the size of the Council Chamber was irrelevant.

When the Meeting was asked whether anyone questioned Mr Slater's statement that with one more Councillor in the West Ward, Southborough would be over represented, no one responded.

Mr Raistrick observed that there had been no reference to any change in the Parish boundaries, and spoke in support of his proposal that the Parish should have 4 Wards.

Mr Blackwell referred to the difficulties experienced by Councillors under the new system of local government in representing their Constituents and Mr Thurnell spoke on the matter generally.

A letter from the Kent County Secretary to the Assistant Commissioner, stating that the Kent County Council envisaged at present that the Parishes of Southborough and Speldhurst would be grouped to return one County Councillor, was read to the Meeting. It was observed that the total number of County Councillors envisaged by the County Council was in excess of the maximum normally acceptable by the Commission.

Inspection

I was able in the course of my visit to Southborough to visit the built up proportions of all three Wards as far as the Parish boundaries to East and West.

Arguments advanced at the Meeting

The various alternative proposals which have from time to time been advanced in this matter, together with my observations thereon, are set out below.

Alternative No 1 That the Parish should be divided into an East and a West Ward. This appears now to have been abandoned by its original proponent, the Tunbridge Wells Borough Council, and has only received reluctant support elsewhere. As an alternative to the proposal to unite the East and West Wards, the Borough Council would apparently consider the necessary alteration of the Ward boundaries to enable this alternative to be implemented, but only if the Town Council so requested. Since the Town Council does not now so

request, I do not consider that this alternative should be further considered.

Alternative No 2 That the Parish should be divided into four wards. This was suggested by Mr Raistrick, but was not supported by other speakers at the Meeting. One weakness of this alternative is that there appears to be no satisfactory basis upon which a central ward could be created. No suggestions were made as to how the ward boundaries should be redrawn, and no indication was given on behalf of the Tunbridge Wells Borough Council that they would be prepared to redraw those boundaries.

I do not therefore favour this alternative.

Alternative No 3 That the Parish Wards remain as at present, and that the West Ward have 2 members instead of 1, thus giving Southborough six representatives on the Tunbridge Wells Borough Council. Strong arguments in favour of this were advanced at the Meeting and the Commission has received several written representations supporting it. It has the merit of respecting the obvious desire of the west part of Southborough, and the east part including High Brooms, to retain their separate identities and separate representation. It also has the merit of affording further representation to the West Ward, which with only one member, nevertheless has an entitlement of 1.56 members. However, if Southborough were to be represented by 6 members, the balance between the representation of this part of the Borough of Tunbridge Wells and the parts originally comprised in the other constituent authorities would be upset, thus rendering desirable a comprehensive review of the electoral provision for the Borough as a whole. I do not consider that the advantages of this alternative outweigh the disadvantages and therefore, do not think it should be proceeded with.

Alternative No 4 This consists of the Commission's proposal that the Parish should have two wards. One, the North Ward, being coterminous with the present North Ward, returning 2 councillors, and the other, the South Ward, being a fusion of the existing East and West Wards, returning 3 Councillors. This has in the past been propounded also by a sub-committee of the Policy and

Resources Committee of the Tunbridge Wells Borough Council and by the Tunbridge Wells District Labour Group. The only speaker at the Meeting to support it was Mr Dury.

The advantages of this alternative are clear, since it provides representation very close indeed to the statistical entitlement of 2.02 Councillors for the North Ward and 3.20 Councillors for the South Ward while at the same time keeping the representation of the Parish to 5 councillors and thus retaining a balance with the other parts of the Borough.

With respect, however, I consider that it disregards the requirement that the local ties shall be observed. I was very much impressed by the force and sincerity of the arguments which were advanced by many speakers against the Commission's proposals and in favour of retaining the separate identity and representation of the East and West parts of the Parish of Southborough. I have endeavoured to summarise these arguments in this report and the Commission has also received cogent written representations to the like effect. I therefore consider that the Commission should not seek to implement its draft proposals.

Alternative No 5 This is the one now suggested by the Tunbridge Wells Borough Council, that the present wards and representation be retained. Its weakness is that it only allows one councillor for the West Ward, despite an entitlement of 1.56. This is the greatest divergence between the number of councillors and the corresponding entitlement of any Ward in the Borough, the next worst off from this point of view being apparently the Parish of Brenchley which has one councillor against an entitlement of 1.33. The sitting councillor for the West Ward pointed out the disadvantages of the present situation not only to himself but also the electorate.

The advantages of this alternative are that it provides 5 Councillors for the Parish of Southborough which is reasonably close to the entitlement, proportionate to the electorate of the Borough of 5.47 and that it guarantees separate representation for the inhabitants of the West Ward. Fears were expressed that to combine the East and West Wards might result in the interests

of the inhabitants of the existing West Ward being overlooked. The arguments directed to these matters occupied a great part of the time of the meeting and I received the impression that they were uppermost in the minds of most of those who spoke.

In my opinion the advantages of this alternative outweigh the disadvantages.

Recommendation

In view of the weight of the arguments against combining the East and West Wards, and against increasing the number of Councillors for the Parish, I recommend the Commission to leave things as they are and to provide for the continuation of the existing Wards of the Parish, the North Ward to have two councillors, the East Ward to have two and the West Ward to have one.

Dated 15 August 1975

.....J. WHATLEY.....

Assistant Commissioner

TUNBRIDGE WELLS BOROUGH: NAMES OF PROPOSED WARDS AND NUMBER OF COUNCILLORS

<u>NAME OF WARD</u>	<u>NO. OF COUNCILLORS</u>
BENENDEN	1
BRENCHLEY	1
CAPEL	1
CRANBROOK	2
CULVERDEN	3
FRITTENDEN AND SISSINGHURST	1
GOUDHURST	1
HAWKHURST	2
HORSMONDEN	1
LAMBERHURST	1
PADDOCK WOOD	2
PANTILES	2
PARK	3
PEMBURY	3
RUST HALL	3
SAINT JAMES	3
SAINT JOHN'S	3
SAINT MARK'S	3
SANDHURST	1
SHERWOOD	3
SOUTHBOROUGH EAST	2
SOUTHBOROUGH NORTH	2
SOUTHBOROUGH WEST	1
SPELDHURST AND BIDBOROUGH	3

ORDER OF RETIREMENT

	NO. OF COUNCILLORS REPRESENTING WARD	1ST YEAR	2ND YEAR	3RD YEAR
SANDHURST	1			1 PE
HAWKHURST	2	1		1 PE
CRANBROOK	2	1	1 PE	
FRITTENDEN AND SISSINGHURST	1		1 PE	
BENENDEN	1	1 PE		
GOULDHURST	1		1 PE	
LAMBERHURST	1			1 PE
HORSMONDEN	1			1 PE
PADDOCK WOOD	2	1	1 PE	
BRENCHLEY	1			1 PE
PEMBERY	3	1	1 PE	1
SPELDHURST AND BIDBOROUGH	3	1	1 PE	1
CAPEL	1			1 PE
SOUTHBOROUGH EAST	2	1	1 PE	
SOUTHBOROUGH NORTH	2	1	1 PE	
SOUTHBOROUGH WEST	1		1 PE	
ST JAMES'	3	1	1	1
SHERWOOD	3	1	1	1
PARK	3	1	1	1
ST MARK'S	3	1	1	1
PANTILES	2	1		1
CULVERDEN	3	1	1	1
RUSTHALL	3	1	1	1
ST JOHN'S	3	1	1	1
	48	16	16	16

PE = Parish Elections for any parishes within the ward which have parish councils.

ORDER OF RETIREMENT

	NO.OF COUNCILLORS REPRESENTING WARD	1ST YEAR	2ND YEAR	3RD YEAR
SANDHURST	1			1 PE
HAWKHURST	2	1		1 PE
CRANBROOK	2	1	1 PE	
FRITTENDEN AND SISSINGHURST	1		1 PE	
BENENDEN	1	1 PE		
GOUDHURST	1		1 PE	
LAMBERHURST	1			1 PE
HORSMONDEN	1			1 PE
PADDOCK WOOD	2	1	1 PE	
BRENCHLEY	1			1 PE
PEMBERY	3	1	1 PE	1
SPELDHURST AND BIDBOROUGH	3	1	1 PE	1
CAPEL	1			1 PE
SOUTHBOROUGH EAST	2	1	1 PE	
SOUTHBOROUGH NORTH	2	1	1 PE	
SOUTHBOROUGH WEST	1		1 PE	
ST JAMES'	3	1	1	1
SHERWOOD	3	1	1	1
PARK	3	1	1	1
ST MARK'S	3	1	1	1
PANTILES	2	1		1
CULVERDEN	3	1	1	1
RUSTHALL	3	1	1	1
ST JOHN'S	3	1	1	1
	48	16	16	16

PE = Parish Elections for any parishes within the ward which have parish councils.

TUNBRIDGE WELLS DISTRICT

ST JOHN'S WARD

Commencing at a point where the prolongation northwestwards of the track from Smockham Farm to Broomhill Road meets the eastern boundary of Speldhurst CP, thence northeastwards and following said boundary to the southern boundary of Southborough CP, thence northeastwards and following said boundary to the railway from Royal Tunbridge Wells to Tonbridge, thence southwestwards along said railway to Grosvenor Bridge, thence northwestwards along said Bridge and Dunstan Road to Queens Road, thence southwestwards along said road to St John's Road, thence northwestwards along said road to the road known as Culverden Down, thence southwestwards and following said road to a point opposite the southern boundary of Huntleys Secondary School for Boys, thence northwestwards to and along said boundary and the southwestern boundary of Bennett Memorial CE Secondary School for Girls to the northeastern boundary of Hurst Wood, thence northwestwards and following said boundary to the western boundary of parcel No 0184 as shown on OS PLAN TQ56/5740 edition of 1970, thence northwards and northeastwards along said boundary and in prolongation thereof to the track from Smockham Farm to Broomhill Road, thence southwestwards and following said track and in prolongation thereof to the point of commencement.

ST JAMES' WARD

Commencing at a point on Goods Station Road opposite Meadow Road, thence northwestwards in a straight line to Belgrave Road, thence northeastwards along said Road to Tunnel Road, thence northwards and following said road to a point opposite the Royal Tunbridge Wells to Tonbridge railway thence northeastwards in a straight line to and along said railway and continuing northeastwards along the eastern boundary of St John's Ward to Sandhurst Road, thence eastwards and following said road to the road known as

Sandhurst Park, thence southwestwards and following said road to the access path from Sandhurst Park to Hilbert Recreation Ground, thence southwestwards and following said access path to the stream to the southwest of Parkwood Close, thence southeastwards along said stream and in prolongation thereof to the rear boundaries of Nos 12 to 5 Parkwood Close thence southeastwards And following said boundaries and the rear boundaries of the properties known as Greenways and Sundal, to the eastern boundary of Roundabout Wood, thence southeastwards and following said boundary to the rear boundary of No 7 Lipscombe Road, thence eastwards and following the said boundary and the rear boundaries of Nos 8 to 12 Lipscombe Road to the rear boundaries of Nos 7 $\frac{1}{4}$ to 5 $\frac{1}{4}$ Ravenswood Avenue, thence southeastwards along said boundaries to the southern boundary of No 54 Ravenswood Avenue, thence southwestwards along said boundary to the rear boundaries of Nos 52 to 42 Ravenswood Avenue, thence generally southwards along said boundaries to the southern boundary of the property known as Burnside, thence southeastwards and following said boundary and the southeastern boundary of the property known as the Garden Cottage to the rear boundaries of Nos 4 and 3 Cedar Ridge, thence southeastwards along said boundaries to the cul-de-sac at the rear of Nos 1 and 2 Cedar Ridge, thence southwestwards and following said cul-de-sac to the road known as Springhead, thence northwestwards along said road to the road known as Cedar Ridge, thence southeastwards along said road to the road known as Ferndale, thence northeastwards along said road to Sandhurst Road, thence southeastwards along said road to Pembury Road, thence southwestwards along said road to San^drock Road, thence northwestwards and following said road to Lansdowne Road, thence southwestwards along said road to Garden Road, thence northwestwards along said road to Kensington Street, thence northwestwards along said street to Albert Street, thence southwestwards along said street to Victoria Road, thence northwestwards and following said road to Goods Station Road, thence southwestwards along said road to the point of commencement.

SHERWOOD WARD

Commencing at a point where Pembury Road meets the eastern boundary of St James Ward, thence northwestwards and following said boundary to the eastern boundary of St John's Ward, thence northeastwards along said boundary to the eastern boundary of Southborough CP, thence northeastwards and following said boundary to the southern boundary of Capel CP; thence southeastwards and following said boundary to the western boundary of Pembury CP, thence southwards and following said boundary to Pembury Road, thence southwestwards and following said road to the point of commencement.

RUSTHALL WARD

Commencing at a point where Langton Road meets the eastern boundary of Speldhurst CP, thence northwards and following said boundary to the southwestern boundary of St John's Ward, thence southeastwards and following said boundary to the road known as Culverden Down, thence southwestwards along said road to Byng Road, thence northeastwards along said road to Earls Road, thence southwestwards along said road and Bogey Lane to Bishop's Down Park Road, thence southwestwards along said road to Hurstwood Lane, thence southeastwards and following said Lane to Bishop's Down Road, thence southwestwards along said road to Langton Road, thence southwestwards and following said road to the point of commencement.

CULVERDEN WARD

Commencing at a point where the road known as Mount Ephraim meets Bishop's Down Road, thence northwestwards along said road to the eastern boundary of Rusthall Ward, thence northwestwards and following said boundary to the southern boundary of St Johns Ward, thence northeastwards and following said boundary to the northwestern boundary of St James Ward,

thence southwestwards along said boundary to Goods Station Road, thence southwestwards along said road to Grosvenor Road, thence southeastwards and following said road to Mount Pleasant Road, thence southwards along the said road to Vale Road, thence northwestwards and following said road to London Road thence northwards and following said road to Church Road, thence southwestwards along said road to the road known as Mount Ephraim, thence southwestwards along said road to the point of commencement.

PANTILES WARD

Commencing at a point where the county boundary meets the eastern boundary of Speldhurst CP, thence northwards and following said CP boundary to the southern boundary of Rusthall Ward, thence northeastwards and following said boundary to the southern boundary of Culverden Ward, thence southeastwards and following said boundary to London Road, thence southwestwards and following said road to Nevill Street, thence southeastwards and following said street and Frant Road to the road known as Broadwater Down, thence southwestwards along said road to a point opposite the eastern boundary No 55 Broadwater Down, thence southeastwards in a straight line to the county boundary, thence westwards and following said boundary to the point of commencement.

ST MARKS WARD

Commencing at a point where the county boundary meets the eastern boundary of Pantiles Ward, thence northwestwards, northeastwards and following said ward boundary to the southern boundary of Culverden Ward, thence northeastwards and following said boundary to the railway turning southeastwards from Central Station, thence southeastwards along said railway to the northern perimeter path of The Grove, thence northeastwards and following said path to the path leading southeastwards from said perimeter path to Birdcage Walk, thence southeastwards along said path to Birdcage Walk, thence southeastwards along said walk to the eastern boundary of No 16

Grove Hill Gardens thence southwestwards along said boundary to the road known as Grove Hill Gardens, thence eastwards and following said road to Grove Hill Road, thence southeastwards along said road and Camden Hill to the road known as Camden Park, thence southeastwards along said road and the path from Camden Park to Forest Road, to Forest Road, thence southwestwards along said road to Benhall Mill Road, thence southeastwards along said road to a point opposite the western boundary of the Works on the northeastern side of Benhall Mill Road, thence northeastwards in a straight line to the county boundary, thence southeastwards and following said boundary to the point of commencement.

PARK WARD

Commencing at a point where the county boundary meets the eastern boundary of St Mark's Ward, thence southwestwards, northwestwards and following said ward boundary to the eastern boundary of Culverden Ward thence northeastwards and following said boundary to the southern boundary of St James' Wards, thence northeastwards and following said boundary to the southern boundary of Sherwood Ward thence northeastwards and following said boundary to the western boundary of Pembury CP, thence northeastwards and following said boundary to the county boundary, thence southwestwards and following said boundary to the point of commencement.

SPELDHURST AND BIDBOROUGH WARD

The parishes of Speldhurst and Bidborough.

CAPEL WARD

The parish of Capel.

FRITTENDEN AND SISSINGHURST WARD

The parish of Frittenden and the Sissinghurst ward of the parish of Cranbrook.

PADDOCK WOOD WARD

The parish of Paddock Wood.

PEMBURY WARD

The parish of Pembury.

BRENCHLEY WARD

The parish of Brenchley.

HORSMONDEN WARD

The parish of Horsmonden.

LAMBERHURST WARD

The parish of Lamberhurst.

GOUDHURST WARD

The parish of Goudhurst.

CRANBROOK WARD

Cranbrook Ward of the
The parish of Cranbrook.

HAWKHURST WARD

The parish of Hawkhurst.

BENENDEN WARD

The parish of Benenden.

SANDHURST WARD

The parish of Sandhurst.

SOUTHBOROUGH NORTH WARD

The ~~existing~~ North ward of the parish of Southborough.

SOUTHBOROUGH WEST WARD

The ~~existing~~ West ward of the parish of Southborough.

SOUTHBOROUGH EAST WARD

The ~~existing~~ East ward of the parish of Southborough.