

Final recommendations on the
future electoral arrangements
for South Norfolk

Report to The Electoral Commission

July 2002

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A large map illustrating the proposed ward boundaries for Wymondham is inserted inside the back cover of this report.

WHAT IS THE BOUNDARY COMMITTEE FOR ENGLAND?

The Boundary Committee for England is a committee of The Electoral Commission, an independent body set up by Parliament under the Political Parties, Elections and Referendums Act 2000. The functions of the Local Government Commission for England were transferred to The Electoral Commission and its Boundary Committee on 1 April 2002 by the Local Government Commission for England (Transfer of Functions) Order 2001 (SI 2001 No 3692). The Order also transferred to The Electoral Commission the functions of the Secretary of State in relation to taking decisions on recommendations for changes to local authority electoral arrangements and implementing them.

Members of the Committee are:

Pamela Gordon (Chair)
Professor Michael Clarke CBE
Robin Gray
Joan Jones
Ann M Kelly
Professor Colin Mellors

Archie Gall (Director)

We are required by law to review the electoral arrangements of every principal local authority in England. Our aim 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, the number of councillors and ward names. We can also recommend changes to the electoral arrangements of parish and town councils.

This report sets out our final recommendations on the electoral arrangements for the district of South Norfolk.

SUMMARY

The Local Government Commission for England (LGCE) began a review of South Norfolk's electoral arrangements on 31 July 2001. It published its draft recommendations for electoral arrangements on 26 March 2002, after which it undertook an eight-week period of consultation. As a consequence of the transfer of functions referred to earlier, it falls to us, The Boundary Committee for England, to complete the work of the LGCE and submit final recommendations to The Electoral Commission.

- **This report summarises the representations received during consultation on the LGCE's draft recommendations, and contains our final recommendations to The Electoral Commission.**

We found that the existing arrangements provide unequal representation of electors in South Norfolk:

- **in 25 of the 41 wards the number of electors represented by each councillor varies by more than 10% from the average for the district and 16 wards vary by more than 20%;**
- **by 2006 this situation is expected to worsen, with the number of electors per councillor forecast to vary by more than 10% from the average in 32 wards and by more than 20% in 23 wards.**

Our main final recommendations for future electoral arrangements (see Tables 1 and 2 and paragraphs 196–197) are that:

- **South Norfolk District Council should have 46 councillors, one fewer than at present;**
- **there should be 36 wards, instead of 41 as at present;**
- **the boundaries of 37 of the existing wards should be modified, resulting in a net reduction of five, and four wards should retain their existing boundaries;**

The purpose of these proposals is to ensure that, in future, each district councillor represents approximately the same number of electors, bearing in mind local circumstances.

- **In 26 of the proposed 36 wards the number of electors per councillor would vary by no more than 10% from the district average.**
- **This improved level of electoral equality is forecast to continue, with the number of electors per councillor in only one ward, Harleston, expected to vary by more than 10% from the average for the district in 2006.**

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 town of Diss and the parishes of Costessey and Roydon;**
- **revised warding arrangements for the town of Wymondham;**

- **an increase in the number of councillors for the parishes of Cringleford and Hethersett.**

All further correspondence on these final recommendations and the matters discussed in this report should be addressed to The Electoral Commission, which will not make an Order implementing them before 10 September 2002:

**The Secretary
The Electoral Commission
Trevelyan House
Great Peter Street
London SW1P 2HW**

Table 1: Final recommendations: Summary

	Ward name	Number of councillors	Constituent areas	Map reference
1	Abbey (in Wymondham)	1	part of Wymondham parish (the proposed Abbey town ward)	Large map
2	Beck Vale	1	<i>Unchanged</i> – the parishes of Pulham Market, Pulham St Mary and Starston	Map 3
3	Bressingham & Burston	1	the parishes of Bressingham, Burston & Shimpling, Gissing, Shelfanger and Winfarthing; part of Diss parish (the proposed Heywood town ward); part of Roydon ward (the proposed West parish ward)	Maps 3, A3 and A4
4	Brooke	1	the parishes of Bergh Apton, Brooke, Howe, Kirstead, Mundham and Seething	Map 4
5	Bunwell	1	the parishes of Aslacton, Bunwell, Carleton Rode and Tibenham	Map 3
6	Chedgrave & Thurton	1	the parishes of Ashby St Mary, Carleton St Peter, Chedgrave, Claxton, Langley with Hardley and Thurton	Map 4
7	Cringleford	2	the parishes of Bawburgh, Colney, Cringleford, Keswick and Little Melton	Map 3
8	Cromwells (in Wymondham)	1	part of Wymondham parish (the proposed Cromwells town ward)	Large map
9	Dickleburgh	1	the parishes of Dickleburgh & Rushall, Great Moulton, Tivetshall St Margaret and Tivetshall St Mary	Map 3
10	Diss	3	part of Diss parish (the proposed Diss Town town ward)	Maps 3 and A3
11	Ditchingham & Broome	1	the parishes of Broome, Ditchingham, Hedenham and Thwaite	Map 4
12	Earsham	1	the parishes of Alburgh, Denton, Earsham, Topcroft and Wortwell	Map 4
13	Easton	1	the parishes of Barford, Easton, Great Melton, Marlingford and Wrampingham	Map 3
14	Forncett	1	the parishes of Ashwellthorpe, Forncett and Tacolneston	Map 3
15	Gillingham	1	the parishes of Ellingham, Geldeston, Gillingham, Hales, Heckingham, Kirby Cane, Raveningham and Stockton	Map 4
16	Harleston	2	<i>Unchanged</i> – the parish of Redenhall with Harleston	Map 3
17	Hempnall	1	the parishes of Bedingham, Hempnall, Morningthorpe, Shelton and Woodton	Map 4
18	Hetherset	2	the parish of Hetherset	Map 3
19	Hingham & Deopham	1	the parishes of Deopham and Hingham	Map 3
20	Loddon	1	the parishes of Loddon and Sisland	Map 4
21	Mulbarton	2	the parishes of Bracon Ash, East Carleton, Ketteringham, Mulbarton and Swardeston	Map 3
22	New Costessey	2	part of the parish of Costessey (the proposed New Costessey parish ward)	Maps 3 and A2
23	Newton Flotman	1	the parishes of Flordon, Newton Flotman, Swainsthorpe and Wreningham	Map 3

	Ward name	Number of councillors	Constituent areas	Map reference
24	Northfields (in Wymondham)	1	part of Wymondham parish (the proposed Northfields town ward)	Large map
25	Old Costessey	2	part of the parish of Costessey (the proposed Old Costessey parish ward)	Maps 3 and A2
26	Poringland with the Framinghams	2	<i>Unchanged</i> – the parishes of Framingham Earl, Framingham Pigot and Poringland	Map 3
27	Rockland	1	the parishes of Alington, Bramerton, Hellington, Holverston, Kirby Bedon, Rockland St Mary, Surlingham and Yelverton	Map 4
28	Roydon	1	part of Roydon parish (the proposed East parish ward)	Maps 3 and A4
29	Rustens (in Wymondham)	1	part of Wymondham parish (the proposed Rustens town ward)	Large map
30	Scole	1	<i>Unchanged</i> – the parishes of Brockdish, Needham and Scole	Map 3
31	Stoke Holy Cross	1	the parishes of Bixley, Caistor St Edmund, Stoke Holy Cross and Trowse with Newton	Map 3
32	Stratton	2	the parishes of Long Stratton, Tharston & Hapton and Wacton	Map 3
33	Tasburgh	1	the parishes of Saxlingham Nethergate, Shotesham and Tasburgh	Map 3
34	Thurlton	1	the parishes of Aldeby, Burgh St Peter, Haddiscoe, Norton Subcourse, Thurlton, Toft Monks and Wheatacre	Map 4
35	Town (in Wymondham)	1	part of Wymondham parish (the proposed Town town ward)	Large map
36	Wicklewood	1	the parishes of Barnham Broom, Kimberley, Morley, Runhall and Wicklewood	Map 3

Notes: 1 The whole district is parished.

2 The wards in the above table are illustrated on Maps 3 and 4 and Maps A1–A4 in Appendix A.

3 We have made a number of minor boundary amendments to ensure that existing ward boundaries adhere to ground detail. These changes do not affect any electors.

Table 2: Final recommendations for South Norfolk

	Ward name	Number of councillors	Electorate (2001)	Number of electors per councillor	Variance from average %	Electorate (2006)	Number of electors per councillor	Variance from average %
1	Abbey (in Wymondham)	1	2,175	2,175	12	2,202	2,202	8
2	Beck Vale	1	1,787	1,787	-8	1,834	1,834	-10
3	Bressingham & Burston	1	2,044	2,044	5	2,041	2,041	0
4	Brooke	1	2,104	2,104	8	2,058	2,058	1
5	Bunwell	1	1,993	1,993	3	1,972	1,972	-4
6	Chedgrave & Thurton	1	2,081	2,081	7	2,086	2,086	2
7	Cringleford	2	3,273	1,637	-16	4,006	2,003	-2
8	Cromwells (in Wymondham)	1	1,937	1,937	0	1,952	1,952	-4
9	Dickleburgh	1	2,141	2,141	10	2,124	2,124	4
10	Diss	3	5,460	1,820	-6	5,647	1,882	-8
11	Ditchingham & Broome	1	1,897	1,897	-2	1,850	1,850	-9
12	Earsham	1	1,960	1,960	1	1,910	1,910	-7
13	Easton	1	1,789	1,789	-8	2,037	2,037	0
14	Fornsett	1	1,998	1,998	3	1,969	1,969	-4
15	Gillingham	1	2,287	2,287	18	2,246	2,246	10
16	Harleston	2	3,372	1,686	-13	3,593	1,797	-12
17	Hempnall	1	2,035	2,035	5	2,050	2,050	0
18	Hethersett	2	4,410	2,205	14	4,375	2,188	7
19	Hingham & Deopham	1	2,129	2,129	10	2,170	2,170	6
20	Loddon	1	2,045	2,045	5	2,080	2,080	2
21	Mulbarton	2	3,484	1,742	-10	3,895	1,948	-5
22	New Costessey	2	4,358	2,179	12	4,303	2,152	5
23	Newton Flotman	1	1,848	1,848	-5	2,026	2,026	-1
24	Northfields (in Wymondham)	1	2,231	2,231	15	2,246	2,246	10
25	Old Costessey	2	3,681	1,841	-5	4,294	2,147	5
26	Poringland with the Framinghams	2	3,494	1,747	-10	4,301	2,151	5
27	Rockland	1	2,258	2,258	16	2,243	2,243	10

	Ward name	Number of councillors	Electorate (2001)	Number of electors per councillor	Variance from average %	Electorate (2006)	Number of electors per councillor	Variance from average %
28	Roydon	1	1,820	1,820	-6	1,837	1,837	-10
29	Rustens (in Wymondham)	1	1,692	1,692	-13	2,204	2,204	8
30	Scole	1	1,834	1,834	-5	1,834	1,834	-10
31	Stoke Holy Cross	1	2,008	2,008	4	2,147	2,147	5
32	Stratton	2	3,563	1,782	-8	4,098	2,049	0
33	Tasburgh	1	1,845	1,845	-5	1,903	1,903	-7
34	Thurlton	1	2,201	2,201	13	2,176	2,176	6
35	Town (in Wymondham)	1	1,930	1,930	0	2,218	2,218	9
36	Wicklewood	1	2,055	2,055	6	2,092	2,092	2
	Totals	46	89,219	-	-	94,019	-	-
	Averages	-	-	1,940	-	-	2,044	-

Source: Electorate figures are based on information provided by South Norfolk 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. Figures have been rounded to the nearest whole number.

1 INTRODUCTION

1 This report contains our final recommendations on the electoral arrangements for the district of South Norfolk. The seven districts in Norfolk have now been reviewed as part of the programme of periodic electoral reviews (PERs) of all 386 principal local authority areas in England started by the LGCE in 1996. We have inherited that programme, which we currently expect to complete in 2004.

2 South Norfolk's last review was undertaken by the Local Government Boundary Commission for England, which reported to the Secretary of State in November 1976 (Report no. 172). The electoral arrangements of Norfolk were last reviewed in June 1984 (Report no. 472). We expect to begin reviewing the County Council's electoral arrangements towards the end of the year.

3 In making final recommendations to The Electoral Commission, we have had regard to:

- the statutory criteria contained in section 13(5) of the Local Government Act 1992 (as amended by SI 2001 No 3692), i.e. the need to:
 - a) reflect the identities and interests of local communities;
 - b) secure effective and convenient local government; and
 - c) achieve equality of representation.
- Schedule 11 to the Local Government Act 1972.

4 Details of the legislation under which the review of South Norfolk was conducted are set out in a document entitled *Guidance and Procedural Advice for Local Authorities and Other Interested Parties* (LGCE, fourth edition, published in December 2000). This *Guidance* sets out the approach to the review.

5 Our task is to make recommendations on the number of councillors who should serve on a council, and the number, boundaries and names of wards. We can also propose changes to the electoral arrangements for parish and town councils in the district.

6 The broad objective of PERs is to achieve, so far as possible, equal representation across the district as a whole. Schemes which would result in, or retain, an electoral imbalance of over 10 % in any ward will have to be fully justified. Any imbalances of 20 % or more should only arise in the most exceptional circumstances, and will require the strongest justification.

7 The LGCE was not prescriptive on council size. Insofar as South Norfolk is concerned, it started from the assumption that the size of the existing council already secures effective and convenient local government, but was willing to look carefully at arguments why this might not be so. However, the LGCE found it necessary to safeguard against upward drift in the number of councillors, and that any proposal for an increase in council size would need to be fully justified. In particular, it did not accept that an increase in electorate should automatically result in an increase in the number of councillors, nor that changes should be made to the size of a council simply to make it more consistent with the size of other similar councils.

8 This review was in four stages. Stage One began on 31 July 2001, when the LGCE wrote to South Norfolk District Council inviting proposals for future electoral arrangements. It also notified Norfolk County Council, Norfolk Police Authority, the Local Government Association, Norfolk County Association of Parish and Town Councils, parish and town councils in the district, the Members of Parliament with constituencies in the district, the Members of the European Parliament for the Eastern region, the headquarters of the main political parties, and residents' associations and main community groups. It 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 22 October 2001. At Stage Two it considered all the representations received during Stage One and prepared its draft recommendations.

9 Stage Three began on 26 March 2002 with the publication of the LGCE's report, *Draft recommendations on the future electoral arrangements for South Norfolk*, and ended 20 May 2002. During this period comments were sought from the public and any other interested parties on the preliminary conclusions. Finally, during Stage Four the draft recommendations were reconsidered in the light of the Stage Three consultation and we now publish the final recommendations.

2 CURRENT ELECTORAL ARRANGEMENTS

10 The district of South Norfolk is located to the south of Norwich, bordered by the districts of Breckland, Broadland, Great Yarmouth and Norwich in Norfolk and the districts of Mid Suffolk and Waveney in Suffolk. The district covers an area of around 90,600 hectares and has a population of 106,600. It is predominantly rural in character, but contains a number of towns, of which Costessey, Diss, Harleston, Hethersett, Long Stratton, Poringland and Wymondham are the largest.

11 The district contains 118 civil parishes, and is wholly parished. Wymondham town comprises 11% of the district's total electorate.

12 The electorate of the district is 89,219 (February 2001). The Council presently has 47 members who are elected from 41 wards, 13 of which are relatively urban in Beckhithe, Costessey (two wards), Cringleford & Colney, Diss, Harleston, Long Stratton, Poringland and Wymondham (five wards), the remainder being predominantly rural. One ward is represented by three councillors, four by two councillors and the remaining 36 are single-member wards. The Council is elected as a whole every four years.

13 To compare levels of electoral inequality between wards, the LGCE calculated, in percentage terms, the extent to which the number of electors per councillor in each ward (the councillor:elector ratio) varies from the district average. In the text which follows, this calculation may also be described using the shorthand term 'electoral variance'.

14 At present, each councillor represents an average of 1,898 electors, which the District Council forecasts will increase to 2,000 by the year 2006 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 25 of the 41 wards varies by more than 10% from the district average and in 16 wards by more than 20%. The worst imbalance is in Harleston ward where the councillor represents 78% more electors than the district average.

Map 1: Existing wards in South Norfolk (West)

Map 2: Existing wards in South Norfolk (East)

Table 3: Existing electoral arrangements

	Ward name	Number of councillors	Electorate (2001)	Number of electors per councillor	Variance from average %	Electorate (2006)	Number of electors per councillor	Variance from average %
1	Abbey (in Wymondham)	1	1,881	1,881	-1	1,941	1,941	-3
2	Abbeyfield	1	1,378	1,378	-27	1,381	1,381	-31
3	Beauchamp	1	1,607	1,607	-15	1,590	1,590	-21
4	Beck Vale	1	1,787	1,787	-6	1,834	1,834	-8
5	Beckhithe	2	5,080	2,540	34	5,075	2,538	27
6	Berners	1	1,902	1,902	0	2,064	2,064	3
7	Boyland	1	2,488	2,488	31	2,504	2,504	25
8	Broads	1	1,576	1,576	-17	1,571	1,571	-21
9	Brookwood	1	1,699	1,699	-10	1,671	1,671	-16
10	Chet	1	2,456	2,456	29	2,485	2,485	24
11	Clavering	1	1,829	1,829	-4	1,789	1,789	-11
12	Cringleford & Colney	1	1,875	1,875	-1	2,583	2,583	29
13	Cromwells (in Wymondham)	1	1,509	1,509	-21	1,605	1,605	-20
14	Crown Point	1	880	880	-54	1,039	1,039	-48
15	Depwade	1	1,834	1,834	-3	1,834	1,834	-8
16	Dickleburgh	1	1,562	1,562	-18	1,548	1,548	-23
17	Diss Town	3	5,590	1,863	-2	5,777	1,926	-4
18	Ditchingham	1	1,881	1,881	-1	1,852	1,852	-7
19	Forehoe	1	1,611	1,611	-15	1,621	1,621	-19
20	Harleston	1	3,372	3,372	78	3,593	3,593	80
21	Hempnall	1	1,473	1,473	-22	1,471	1,471	-26
22	Hingham	1	1,711	1,711	-10	1,763	1,763	-12
23	Humbleyard	1	1,254	1,254	-34	1,250	1,250	-38
24	Kidner	1	1,691	1,691	-11	1,911	1,911	-4
25	Long Row	1	1,589	1,589	-16	1,583	1,583	-21
26	Marshland	1	1,541	1,541	-19	1,543	1,543	-23
27	Mergate	1	2,982	2,982	57	3,380	3,380	69
28	New Costessey	2	3,564	1,782	-6	3,518	1,759	-12
29	Northfields (in Wymondham)	1	1,813	1,813	-4	1,759	1,759	-12

Ward name	Number of councillors	Electorate (2001)	Number of electors per councillor	Variance from average %	Electorate (2006)	Number of electors per councillor	Variance from average %
30 Old Costessey	2	4,475	2,238	18	5,079	2,540	27
31 Rosebery	2	3,494	1,747	-8	4,301	2,151	8
32 Rustens (in Wymondham)	1	2,271	2,271	20	2,753	2,753	38
33 Smockmill	1	2,013	2,013	6	2,201	2,201	10
34 Springfields	1	1,298	1,298	-32	1,287	1,287	-36
35 Stratton	1	2,842	2,842	50	3,253	3,253	63
36 Tasvale	1	1,712	1,712	-10	1,694	1,694	-15
37 Town (in Wymondham)	1	2,491	2,491	31	2,764	2,764	38
38 Valley	1	1,767	1,767	-7	1,725	1,725	-14
39 Waveney	1	1,506	1,506	-21	1,470	1,470	-27
40 Westwood	1	2,586	2,586	36	2,557	2,557	28
41 Wodehouse	1	1,349	1,349	-29	1,400	1,400	-30
Totals	47	89,219	-	-	94,019	-	-
Averages	-	-	1,898	-	-	2,000	-

Source: Electorate figures are based on information provided by South Norfolk 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 2001, electors in Crown Point ward were relatively over-represented by 54%, while electors in Harleston ward were relatively under-represented by 78%. Figures have been rounded to the nearest whole number.

3 DRAFT RECOMMENDATIONS

15 During Stage One the LGCE received 17 representations, including district-wide schemes from South Norfolk District Council, South Norfolk Conservative Association and South Norfolk District Council Independent Group, and representations from 13 parish and town councils and a district councillor. In the light of these representations and evidence available to it, the LGCE reached preliminary conclusions which were set out in its report, *Draft recommendations on the future electoral arrangements for South Norfolk*.

16 The LGCE's draft recommendations for the rural areas of the district were based on the District Council's proposals for a council size of 46, which would achieve a substantial improvement in electoral equality and provide a pattern of single-member wards with only one two-member ward. However, it moved away from the District Council's scheme in the urban areas of the district, adopting multi-member wards put forward by the Conservative Association and the Independent Group, together with some of its own proposals. It proposed that:

- South Norfolk District Council should be served by 46 councillors, compared with the current 47, representing 34 wards, seven fewer than at present;
- the boundaries of 37 of the existing wards should be modified, while four wards should retain their existing boundaries;
- there should be new or revised arrangements for the towns of Diss and Wymondham and the parishes of Costessey, Cringleford, Hetherset and Roydon.

Draft recommendation

South Norfolk District Council should comprise 46 councillors, serving 34 wards. The whole council should continue to be elected every four years.

17 The LGCE's proposals would have resulted in significant improvements in electoral equality, with the number of electors per councillor in 26 of the 34 wards varying by no more than 10% from the district average. This level of electoral equality was forecast to improve further, with only one ward, Harleston, varying by more than 10% from the average in 2006.

4 RESPONSES TO CONSULTATION

18 During the consultation on its draft recommendations report, the LGCE received 38 representations. A list of all respondents is available from us on request. All representations may be inspected at our offices and those of South Norfolk District Council.

South Norfolk District Council

19 The District Council broadly supported the draft recommendations, although it expressed its disappointment that its proposals for single-member wards in the urban areas of the district had not been adopted. It opposed the draft recommendations for the town of Wymondham and put forward its Stage One proposals for five single-member district wards with several amendments.

Norfolk County Council

20 Norfolk County Council made several general comments in response to the draft recommendations. In particular, it stated that the reflection of community identities and interests was, in its view, of equal importance to the achievement of electoral equality, particularly in rural areas. The County Council also considered that it would have been easier to maximise coterminosity between district wards and county divisions had reviews of both tiers of local government been conducted at the same time. However, it recognised the difficulties which might have arisen from such a process.

South Norfolk Conservative Association

21 South Norfolk Conservative Association ('the Conservatives') broadly supported the draft recommendations, subject to several amendments. First, they supported the proposal by the District Council to retain five single-member district wards representing the town of Wymondham.

22 Second, the Conservatives also proposed that Topcroft parish be transferred from the proposed Earsham ward to Hempnall ward to better reflect community identities and interests in the parish, and that Shelton parish be transferred from Hempnall ward to Earsham ward to retain good electoral equality. Finally, they put forward alternative ward names for three proposed wards.

South Norfolk District Council Independent Group

23 South Norfolk District Council Independent Group ('the Independents') broadly supported those parts of the draft recommendations that reflected its Stage One proposals. In particular, it supported many of the LGCE's proposals for multi-member wards in urban areas of the district.

South Norfolk Liberal Democrats

24 South Norfolk Liberal Democrats stated that they were broadly in agreement with the scheme put forward by the District Council at Stage One, which was generally adopted by the LGCE for the rural parts of the district. They supported the proposal by the District Council to retain five single-member district wards representing the town of Wymondham.

Richard Bacon MP

25 Richard Bacon MP supported Topcroft Parish Council's view that the parish had no links with the other parishes in the proposed Earsham ward.

Parish and town councils

26 We received responses from 22 parish and town councils. Redenhall with Harleston Town Council and the parish councils of Bressingham, Broome, Costessey, Cringleford, Earsham, Long Stratton, Poringland and Wortwell all stated that they supported the draft recommendations in their respective areas.

27 The parish councils of Alington with Yelverton, Ashby St Mary, Bergh Apton and Thurton, comprising the existing Beauchamp district ward, opposed their division between the proposed wards of Brooke, Chedgrave and Rockland. They considered that this would not reflect community identities and interests. Thurton Parish Council also submitted a petition signed by 171 local residents supporting its views. The parish councils also proposed to retain the existing council size of 47 and put forward an alternative warding pattern based on a 47-member council for the east of the district which would reflect their preferences.

28 Diss Town Council supported the proposed three-member Diss ward, but considered that it should also include the rural Heywood area of the town, which the LGCE had recommended be transferred to Bressingham & Burston ward. Bawburgh Parish Council opposed the proposed Cringleford ward, arguing that it would not meet the statutory criteria, and proposed the retention of the existing Kidner ward.

29 Great Moulton Parish Council opposed the proposed Dickleburgh and Bunwell wards, as they would divide the villages of Great Moulton and Aslacton. Topcroft Parish Council opposed the inclusion of Topcroft parish in Earsham ward, considering that it had no ties with other communities in the ward. Wymondham Town Council supported the proposal by the District Council to retain five single-member district wards representing the town of Wymondham.

30 Alternative ward names were also put forward for five proposed wards by Gissing, Poringland, Saxlingham Nethergate, Starston and Trowse with Newton parish councils.

Other representations

31 A further 10 representations were received in response to the LGCE's draft recommendations from county, district and parish councillors and residents. Councillors Ian and Jill Caldwell (both Diss Town ward), Councillor Gray (Valley ward), Councillor Hudson (Harleston ward) and Councillor Walker (Rosebery ward) all supported the draft recommendations in their respective areas.

32 County Councillor Gunson (Loddon division) opposed the inclusion of Topcroft parish in Earsham ward and proposed that it be included in Hempnall ward to better reflect community identities and interests. Councillor Gunson, a Thurton parish councillor and two Thurton residents also opposed the division of the parishes of the existing Beauchamp ward as discussed above. One of the Thurton residents supported both the retention of the existing council size of 47 and the alternative scheme proposed by the parish councils of Beauchamp ward, while the Thurton parish councillor supported the retention of a 47-member council.

33 County Councillor Hockaday (Wymondham division) supported the proposal by the District Council to retain five single-member district wards representing the town of Wymondham. A Costessey resident also put forward alternative ward names for the proposed New Costessey and Old Costessey wards.

5 ANALYSIS AND FINAL RECOMMENDATIONS

34 As described earlier, our prime objective in considering the most appropriate electoral arrangements for South Norfolk 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 (as amended) – the need to secure effective and convenient local government; reflect the identities and interests of local communities; and secure the matters referred to in paragraph 3(2)(a) of Schedule 11 to the Local Government Act 1972 (equality of representation). Schedule 11 to the Local Government Act 1972 refers to the number of electors per councillor being ‘as nearly as may be, the same in every ward of the district or borough’.

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

36 It is therefore impractical to design an electoral scheme which results in 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.

37 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 minimised, the aim 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 make electoral equality their starting point, and then make adjustments to reflect relevant factors such as community identity and interests. Five-year forecasts of changes in electorate must also be considered and we would aim to recommend a scheme which provides improved electoral equality over this five-year period.

Electorate forecasts

38 Since 1975 there has been a 35% increase in the electorate of South Norfolk district. At Stage One the District Council submitted electorate forecasts for the year 2006, projecting an increase in the electorate of approximately 5% from 89,219 to 94,019 over the five-year period from 2001 to 2006. It expected most of the growth to be in Rosebery ward, although a significant amount was also expected in Cringleford & Colney, Old Costessey, Rustens and Stratton wards. In order to prepare these forecasts, the Council 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.

39 As discussed in paragraph 140 of this report, the District Council commented that Redenhall with Harleston Town Council had expressed concern that the forecast electorate for the town was too low. However, the District Council stated that it had no evidence of further growth. Having accepted that this is an inexact science and, having considered the forecast electorates, the LGCE stated in its draft recommendations report that it was satisfied that they represented the best estimates that could reasonably be made at the time.

40 At Stage Three, Councillor Gray (Valley ward) and Councillor Hudson (Harleston ward) referred in their submissions to two planning applications for sites within Harleston town which would, if approved, lead to a substantial increase in the town electorate in the foreseeable future. In the light of these comments, we asked officers at the District Council to revisit their five-year projections for the town. The District Council indicated that it was satisfied that its original projections remained the best estimates for change in electorate over the five-year

period. We received no further comments on the District Council's electorate forecasts at Stage Three, and remain content that they represent the best estimates currently available.

Council size

41 As already explained, the LGCE started its review by assuming that the current council size facilitates effective and convenient local government, although it was willing to carefully look at arguments why this might not be the case.

42 South Norfolk District Council presently has 47 members. In its draft recommendations report the LGCE adopted the District Council's proposal for a council of 46 members, which was also supported by the Conservatives and the Independents. Examining the proposal, the LGCE noted that it had been supported by a majority of councillors voting, and that the District Council had undertaken a consultation exercise on its proposals involving parish and town councils. While responses to this consultation tended to focus on issues specific to a single part of the district, the LGCE considered that there was evidence of some support for the scheme. Having looked at the size and distribution of the electorate, the geography and other characteristics of the area, together with the representations received, it therefore concluded that the achievement of electoral equality and the statutory criteria would best be met by a council of 46 members.

43 During Stage Three, the District Council, the Conservatives and the Independents expressed general support for the draft recommendations. However, the parish councils of the existing Beauchamp ward (Alpington with Yelverton, Ashby St Mary, Bergh Apton and Thurton), together with a Thurton parish councillor and a Thurton resident supported the retention of a 47-member council. They considered that a reduction in the number of councillors would not reflect the forecast increase in electors by 2006, general population growth in South Norfolk, the 'projected large increase in the provision of new dwellings outlined in the Local Plan', and the 'considerable increase in council staff in recent years'. Further, it was also argued that the 46-member scheme required greater change to existing wards to improve electoral equality than one based on a 47-member warding pattern.

44 We have given careful consideration to the views received at Stage Three. We note that the retention of 47 members would require substantial change to the LGCE's proposed warding pattern, which has received some general and local support, to ensure good electoral equality across South Norfolk. Consequently, we would not seek to move away from the draft recommendations without a substantial case being made in favour of the existing council size. After examining the arguments, we do not consider that such a case has been made.

45 First, we do not consider that the most appropriate council size for an authority should be determined solely by an increase in the size of its electorate or its population. Second, we are not convinced on the basis of the evidence received that 46 members would be any less effective than 47 members in performing their representative and administrative duties. Third, we note that electoral variance under the existing 47-member council (see Chapter 2) is such that a great deal of change would still be required to achieve good electoral equality. We received no further comments on the proposed council size of 46, and have therefore decided to confirm the LGCE's draft recommendation as final.

Electoral arrangements

46 The LGCE gave careful consideration to the representations received at Stage One, including the district-wide schemes put forward by the District Council, the Conservatives and the Independents.

47 In the rural parts of the district the LGCE based its draft recommendations on the District Council's proposals, considering that they would better meet the statutory criteria than the

current arrangements and provide the correct allocation of district councillors. It noted that these proposals were supported in full by the Conservatives and (subject to minor amendments) by the Independents. The LGCE was also content that the District Council had sought where possible to reflect the views expressed by interested parties during the Council's local consultation exercise.

48 However, the LGCE noted that there was substantial disagreement as to whether the urban areas of the district should be represented by single-member or multi-member wards. The District Council considered single-member wards to be 'fundamentally more democratic' and conducive to improving the accountability of councillors. It also argued that multi-member wards 'did not fit so easily' in largely rural districts such as South Norfolk, which hold elections every four years rather than electing their councils by thirds. The District Council further considered that single-member wards would promote effective and convenient local government in urban areas by facilitating the warding of large parish and town councils. In its view, the practice of electing parish and town councillors from a single long list of candidates was confusing and undemocratic. The LGCE also received submissions in support of single-member urban district wards from Wymondham Town Council and Hethersett Parish Council.

49 Conversely, the Conservatives and the Independents considered that there need not be a uniform single-member warding pattern. The Conservatives commented, 'the division of parishes solely to facilitate single member wards ... is undesirable as this places bureaucratic neatness above community needs. Such division may well lead to electoral confusion.' The Independents considered that multi-member wards would better reflect local preferences in a number of urban areas. Submissions were also received in support of multi-member urban district wards from Diss Town Council, Long Stratton Parish Council, Councillor Smith (Stratton ward) and Redenhall with Harleston Town Council.

50 The LGCE stated that it was not prescriptive when making recommendations for single-member or multi-member wards. However, it did not consider on the basis of the evidence received that the single-member warding pattern proposed by the District Council would achieve the best balance between the statutory criteria in the urban areas of the district. The LGCE noted that proposed wards comprising parts of Diss, Costessey, Harleston, Hethersett and Wymondham were forecast by 2006 to have a variance higher than it would normally seek to recommend. It also expressed its concern that the proposed boundaries would artificially divide the urban communities of the district, particularly in Long Stratton and Mulbarton, where each half of the parish would be placed with one or more rural parishes.

51 The LGCE therefore proposed that the District Council's proposed single-member wards in the Diss, Harleston, Hethersett, Mulbarton and Poringland areas be combined to form two- or three-member wards. In Costessey, it proposed amending the boundary between the existing two-member wards of New Costessey and Old Costessey to improve electoral equality. In Wymondham, the LGCE proposed to combine four of the District Council's five revised single-member wards to form a pair of two-member wards, subject to further minor boundary amendments.

52 At Stage Three, the District Council stated that it supported the draft recommendations for the rural areas of the district, which reflected its Stage One scheme. It expressed its disappointment that the LGCE had rejected its justification for single-member wards in the more urban parts of South Norfolk, but acknowledged 'significant local opposition to ... [its] proposals in some of the areas affected.' The District Council therefore asked for reconsideration of its Stage One proposals in only one area, the town of Wymondham. These were supported by the Conservatives, the Liberal Democrats, the Town Council and a county councillor.

53 The Conservatives otherwise expressed broad support for the draft recommendations, except for proposing an amendment between Earsham and Hempnall wards, while the Independents supported those proposals that corresponded with their Stage One scheme. Ten

parish and town councils and five district councillors also supported the LGCE's proposals in their respective areas. However, Richard Bacon MP, a further eight parish and town councils, another county councillor, a parish councillor, two local residents and a petition signed by 171 residents opposed parts of the draft recommendations. We also received an alternative warding pattern for much of the east of the district, based on a council size of 47, from respondents in the existing Beauchamp ward.

54 Norfolk County Council stated that the reflection of community identities and interests was in its view of equal importance to the achievement of electoral equality, and that the Committee should balance these criteria carefully. The County Council expressed concern that boundary changes could lead to villages being separated from others with which they had 'natural affinities'. However, it did not comment upon any specific rural area of the district.

55 After due consideration of the representations received, we propose that the LGCE's draft recommendations be substantially confirmed. We consider that these recommendations generally provide the best balance between achieving electoral equality, reflecting community identities and interests and providing effective and convenient local government. As discussed in the previous section, we are not proposing to retain a 47-member council. As a consequence, this limits the extent to which we have been able to give consideration to the alternative scheme for the east of the district, which has been put forward by respondents from the existing Beauchamp ward. However, we have decided to move away from the LGCE's proposals in the town of Wymondham, having received further evidence that the existing pattern of five single-member wards is an effective and convenient solution for the area and commands local support.

56 At Stage One, the District Council stated that it had sought to improve the recognition value of district ward names by generally naming its proposed wards after the parish with the largest electorate. The LGCE was generally content on the basis of the evidence received that these proposed ward names would better reflect community identities than the existing ward names (proposed in 19 instances by the Independents) or other suggestions. However, it adopted three of the 12 alternative ward names put forward by the Conservatives, which it considered better met this objective. At Stage Three, the Conservatives, five parish councils, one district councillor and a local resident also put forward additional alternative names for nine proposed district wards. After due consideration of these representations, we have decided to adopt a further three proposed ward names, which we consider on the basis of the evidence received would also better reflect community identities in the affected wards.

57 The draft recommendations have been reviewed in the light of further evidence and the representations received during Stage Three. For district warding purposes, the following areas, based on existing wards, are considered in turn:

The north-west

- (a) Forehoe, Hingham and Wodehouse wards;
- (b) Cringleford & Colney and Kidner wards;
- (c) Costessey (two wards);
- (d) Wymondham (five wards);
- (e) Beckhithe, Humbleyard and Mergate wards;

The south-west

- (f) Berners, Springfields, Stratton and Westwood wards;
- (g) Boyland, Diss Town and Long Row wards;
- (h) Beck Vale, Depwade, Dickleburgh and Harleston wards;

The east

- (i) Crown Point, Rosebery, Smockmill and Tasvale wards;
- (j) Abbeyfield, Beauchamp, Broads, Brookwood and Chet wards;
- (k) Ditchingham, Hempnall and Valley wards;
- (l) Clavering, Marshland and Waveney wards.

58 Details of our final recommendations are set out in Tables 1 and 2, and illustrated on Maps 3 and 4, in Appendix A and on the large map inserted at the back of this report.

The north-west

Forehoe, Hingham and Wodehouse wards

59 The wards of Forehoe, Hingham and Wodehouse lie in the north-west of the district and are each represented by a single councillor. Forehoe ward contains the parishes of Deopham, Morley and Wicklewood, while Hingham ward is coterminous with the parish of the same name. Wodehouse ward comprises the parishes of Barford, Barnham Broom, Kimberley, Runhall and Wrampingham. Under existing arrangements, Forehoe and Hingham wards have 15% and 10% fewer electors per councillor than the district average respectively (19% and 12% fewer than the average by 2006). Wodehouse ward currently has 29% fewer electors per councillor than the average (30% fewer than the average by 2006).

60 At Stage One, the District Council proposed that the parishes of Morley and Wicklewood, from the existing Forehoe ward, be combined with the parishes of Barnham Broom, Kimberley and Runhall from Wodehouse ward to form a new single-member Wicklewood ward. The remainder of Forehoe ward, the parish of Deopham, would be combined with Hingham parish in a new single-member Hingham & Deopham ward. The District Council stated that this revised ward name was intended to emphasise the change in warding arrangements. The District Council also proposed that the remainder of the existing Wodehouse ward, the parishes of Barford and Wrampingham, be combined with Easton, Great Melton and Marlingford parishes from Kidner ward to form a new single-member Easton ward, as detailed in the following section.

61 The LGCE based its draft recommendations on the District Council's proposals, which were also supported by the Conservatives and the Independents, noting that they would resolve the over-representation of the existing Forehoe, Hingham and Wodehouse wards. It noted that the proposed wards would possess satisfactory road connections, while also reflecting community identities and interests in the area reasonably well, given the limited number of possible combinations of parishes in this part of the district.

62 Under the LGCE's draft recommendations, Hingham & Deopham ward (comprising the parishes of the same names) would have 10% more electors per councillor than the district average (6% more than the average by 2006). Wicklewood ward (comprising the parishes of Barnham Broom, Kimberley, Morley, Runhall and Wicklewood) would have 6% more electors per councillor than the average (2% more than the average by 2006).

63 At Stage Three, the District Council, the Conservatives and the Independents broadly supported the draft recommendations. We received no further comments, and have decided to confirm the LGCE's proposals as final. Our final recommendations would provide the same levels of electoral equality as the draft recommendations, and are illustrated on Map 3.

Cringleford & Colney and Kidner wards

64 The single-member wards of Cringleford & Colney and Kidner are broadly situated between the city of Norwich to the north and east, and the town of Wymondham to the south and south-west. Cringleford & Colney ward is coterminous with the parishes of the same names, while Kidner ward comprises the parishes of Bawburgh, Easton, Great Melton and Marlingford. Under existing arrangements, Cringleford & Colney ward has 1% fewer electors per councillor than the district average. However, electoral equality is set to deteriorate over the next five years, and the ward is forecast to have 29% more electors per councillor than the average by 2006. Kidner ward has 11% fewer electors per councillor than the average (4% fewer than the average by 2006).

65 At Stage One, the District Council proposed that the existing Cringleford & Colney ward be combined with the parishes of Bawburgh (from the existing Kidner ward), Keswick (from Humbleyard ward) and Little Melton (from Beckhithe ward) to form a new two-member Yare ward. It stated, 'The Council considered two one-member wards for this area but the boundary of the two wards would have to have been through the middle of Cringleford in an area where the properties are not yet built.' The District Council also proposed that the remainder of the existing Kidner ward, the parishes of Easton, Great Melton and Marlingford, be combined with Barford and Wrampingham parishes from Wodehouse ward to form a single-member Easton ward. It noted that, in response to consultation it had undertaken locally, there had been opposition from some parishes, particularly Bawburgh, but it considered its proposed warding pattern to be the best option.

66 The LGCE based its draft recommendations on the District Council's proposals, which were also supported by the Conservatives and the Independents, noting that they would reduce the under-representation forecast for the existing Cringleford & Colney ward by 2006. However, it decided to adopt the Conservatives' suggested ward name of 'Cringleford', agreeing that 'Yare' would appear somewhat ambiguous, as the River Yare forms the boundary of four other proposed wards. Examining the proposed Yare ward, the LGCE noted that it would possess satisfactory road connections, although its parishes would be situated on opposite sides of the A47. It stated that it was content that both the Yare ward and the proposed Easton ward, consisting of well-connected small and medium-sized villages to its west, would provide the best available balance between the statutory criteria in this part of the district.

67 The LGCE noted the view of Bawburgh and Cringleford parish councils that the proposed Cringleford ward would not reflect community identities and interests. It also recognised that, on a council size of 47 or 46, the existing Kidner ward is forecast to have good electoral equality by 2006. However, the LGCE stated that it sought to put forward a proposal that would reduce electoral variance across the north-west of the district as a whole. It stated that it had not received any alternative schemes for this part of the district that would address these difficulties and accommodate the preference of Bawburgh Parish Council for the retention of the existing Kidner ward. While the LGCE also noted the preference of Cringleford Parish Council for a single-member ward coterminous with Cringleford parish, it considered that such a ward would have a greater electoral variance by 2006 than it would normally seek to recommend.

68 Under the LGCE's draft recommendations, Cringleford ward (comprising the parishes of Bawburgh, Colney, Cringleford, Keswick and Little Melton) would have 16% fewer electors per councillor than the district average (2% fewer than the average by 2006). Easton ward (comprising the parishes of Barford, Easton, Great Melton, Marlingford and Wrampingham) would have 8% fewer electors per councillor than the average (equal to the average by 2006).

69 At Stage Three, the District Council, the Conservatives and the Independents stated that they broadly supported the draft recommendations, while Cringleford Parish Council supported the proposed Cringleford ward. However, Bawburgh Parish Council opposed the LGCE's proposals in this area, arguing as at Stage One for the retention of the existing Kidner ward

(comprising the parishes of Bawburgh, Easton, Great Melton and Marlingford), which is forecast to have good electoral equality by 2006.

70 The Parish Council considered that the draft proposals for this part of the district placed too much emphasis on electoral equality at the expense of reflecting community identities and interests. It also cited the statement by the LGCE (draft recommendations report, page 13, paragraph 6) that 'local people are normally in a better position to judge what ... ward configurations are most likely to secure effective and convenient local government in their areas.' Bearing this in mind, the Parish Council expressed the view that the two district councillors representing the proposed Cringleford ward 'would be strongly oriented to the soon-to-be-enlarged Cringleford parish and would not therefore reflect the needs of the residents of Bawburgh'. It also stated that the B1108 road between Bawburgh and Norwich had been closed 'because of intense traffic problems in connection with the new hospital. Reaching Cringleford [from Bawburgh] now entails a major detour.'

71 Having carefully considered the representations received, we have decided to confirm the draft recommendation for the proposed Cringleford and Easton wards as final. While we acknowledge the view of Bawburgh Parish Council, we are unable to consider Kidner ward in isolation from the rest of the district. Rather, we seek to obtain the best overall balance across the whole of South Norfolk between achieving good electoral equality, reflecting community identities and interests and providing effective and convenient local government.

72 We note that Kidner ward is currently situated between the under-represented Beckhithe and Cringleford & Colney wards to the east, and the over-represented wards of Forehoe, Hingham and Wodehouse to the west. This situation would not substantially alter on the proposed council size of 46, and we concur with the LGCE that ward boundary changes in this area are necessary to reduce this variance. The pattern of parishes in this part of the district limits the number of available options, but we have received no alternative proposals at Stage Three that would retain the existing Kidner ward while allowing for modifications to the warding pattern to improve electoral equality. We further note that a simple transfer of Bawburgh parish from the proposed Cringleford ward to Easton ward would lead to high electoral variance in both wards.

73 Examining the further evidence provided by Bawburgh Parish Council at Stage Three, we are also not convinced by their assertion that road links between Bawburgh and Cringleford are poor, bearing in mind the ease of access both have to the A47, which runs to the south of Norwich. We note the support of the District Council, the Conservatives, the Independents and Cringleford Parish Council for the draft recommendations, and concur with the LGCE that they would provide the best balance between the statutory criteria. Our final recommendations would provide the same levels of electoral equality as the draft recommendations, and are illustrated on Map 3.

Costessey (two wards)

74 The urban parish of Costessey, bordering Norwich, is currently divided between the two-member district wards of New Costessey and Old Costessey. Both district wards are coterminous with parish wards bearing the same names. Under existing arrangements, New Costessey ward has 6% fewer electors per councillor than the district average (12% fewer than the average by 2006). Old Costessey ward has 18% more electors per councillor than the district average (27% more than the average by 2006).

75 At Stage One, the District Council proposed dividing the parish of Costessey into four single-member wards: Costessey (East), Costessey (North), Costessey (South) and Costessey (West). It stated that 'the District Council believe for reasons of democracy and accountability all wards where possible should be one member wards.' However, the Conservatives and the Independents both proposed that Costessey should continue to be represented by a pair of two-

member wards. The Conservatives considered that 'no case is made by the [District] Council for the application of single-member wards to the suburb of Costessey.' The Independents argued that multi-member wards were preferred locally. Neither group put forward detailed proposals, but accepted the need for boundary amendments to improve electoral equality.

76 The LGCE based its draft recommendations on the Conservatives' and Independents' proposals for revised two-member New Costessey and Old Costessey wards, but in part adapted the District Council's proposed boundaries. It stated that it was not opposed in principle to single-member wards in urban areas and considered each case upon its merits. However, the LGCE noted that under the District Council's proposals, the variance in the proposed Costessey (North) ward would by 2006 exceed that which it would normally seek to recommend. It also considered that it had not received any specific evidence that the division of the relatively compact urban area of New Costessey between Costessey (East) and Costessey (West) wards would reflect community identities and interests in this area, or provide effective and convenient local government. The LGCE noted that under the District Council's proposals in this area, Wood View Court would be separated from the western end of Gurney Road, at which the only access to Wood View Court is located. Having visited the area, it also considered that the Town House Road area relates more clearly to other parts of Old Costessey directly to its north and west, rather than estates to the south of the River Tud, and that the river itself constitutes the most appropriate ward boundary in this part of the parish.

77 The revised New Costessey ward would comprise that part of the parish to the east of (and including) Grays Fair, Huntingfield Close, Upper Stafford Avenue, Grove Avenue, Farmland Road, West Close, West Road and Meadow Road. It would be bounded in the north-west, north and east by the River Tud, apart from a slight northward diversion to include Rogers Farm, accessed from Norwich Road, in the proposed ward. The remainder of the parish to the north and west of this boundary would comprise the revised Old Costessey ward. The LGCE considered that these wards would provide for improved electoral equality, while better reflecting community identities and interests and providing effective and convenient local government, than either the existing arrangements or the District Council's proposals.

78 Under the LGCE's draft recommendations, New Costessey ward (comprising the revised New Costessey ward of Costessey parish) would have 12% more electors per councillor than the district average (5% more than the average by 2006). Old Costessey ward (comprising the revised Old Costessey ward of Costessey parish) would have 5% fewer electors per councillor than the average (5% more than the average by 2006).

79 At Stage Three, the District Council expressed its disappointment that the LGCE had rejected its justification for single-member wards in the more urban parts of South Norfolk, but acknowledged 'significant local opposition to ... [its] proposals in some of the areas affected'. The Conservatives and the Independents broadly supported the draft recommendations, while Costessey Parish Council supported the draft recommendations in this area.

80 However, a Costessey resident put forward alternative names for the proposed wards. It was stated that, as the area to the north of the River Tud was considered to be 'Old Costessey', and the area to the south to be 'New Costessey', renaming New Costessey ward as 'Costessey South' and Old Costessey ward as 'Costessey North' would avoid geographical confusion. It was also argued that this would facilitate the creation of a 'Costessey West' ward at a future electoral review.

81 Having carefully considered the representations received at Stage Three, we have decided to confirm the draft recommendation for the wards of New Costessey and Old Costessey as final, noting that the LGCE's proposals have received some support. We recognise that the proposed alternative ward names are feasible, however given the absence of a consensus in favour of the new names we do not propose that they be adopted. Our final recommendations

would provide the same levels of electoral equality as the draft recommendations, and are illustrated on Map 3 and Map A2 in Appendix A.

Wymondham (five wards)

82 The single-member wards of Abbey, Cromwells, Northfields, Rustens and Town cover the town of Wymondham in the west of the district and are coterminous with the town council wards of the same names. Currently, Abbey, Cromwells and Northfields wards have 1%, 21% and 4% fewer electors per councillor than the district average respectively (3%, 20% and 12% fewer than the average by 2006). Rustens and Town wards have 20% and 31% more electors per councillor than the average respectively (both 38% more than the average by 2006).

83 At Stage One, the District Council proposed retaining the five existing single-member wards subject to a number of boundary amendments. It commented that it had sought to retain whole estates and, where possible, whole streets, in a single ward. The Conservatives supported the District Council's proposals, while Wymondham Town Council supported the retention of five single-member wards, accepting amendments to improve electoral equality.

84 The District Council's revised Abbey ward would comprise the western part of the town to the east of the Wymondham to Dereham railway line (though including properties on Chapel Lane) and north of the B1172 London Road. Its eastern boundary would run through the town broadly to the east of Avenue Road, to the west of Browick Road and Choseley Court, to the south of Orchard Way, along Back Lane, to the north of Cock Street, the west of Melton Road and Poynt Close, and east of Barnham Broom Road. It would then run east along Tuttlés Lane West, before heading north-east along field boundaries south of Melton Road to reach the parish boundary.

85 The existing Cromwells ward would be retained subject to the following additions: all of the existing Abbey ward to the west of the Wymondham to Dereham railway line and south of Chapel Lane; and part of the existing Town ward to the south of (and including) Browick Road and Gunton Road and to the east of Avenue Road. It would thus comprise the southern part of the town, together with a rural area of Wymondham parish further to the south, including the villages of Silfield, Spooner Row and Suton.

86 The revised Northfields ward would comprise an area in the north of the town to the south and east of the proposed Abbey ward. Its remaining boundary would run east on Tuttlés Lane East, before running south to the east of Maple Close, Beech Close, and west to the south of Lime Tree Avenue, Abbot Close and Sheffield Road. It would then run south, to the east of Hewitts Lane, Pople Street, Albansfield and Rattle Row, to meet the boundary with Abbey ward at the junction with Back Lane, Cock Street and Town Green.

87 The revised Rustens ward would comprise an area in the north-east of the town, bordered in the west by Abbey ward and Northfields ward. Its southern boundary would run broadly to the east of Rustens Manor Road, Folly Lane and Vimy Ridge, and to the north of Vimy Drive, before proceeding to the parish boundary along the B1172 Harts Farm Road and the A11. Finally, the revised Town ward would comprise an area in the centre and east of the town, bordered in the north by Northfields and Rustens ward, in the east by the parish boundary, in the south by Cromwells ward and in the west by Abbey ward.

88 However, the LGCE put forward its own warding arrangements in this area. It stated that it was not opposed in principle to single-member wards in urban areas, and considered each case upon its merits. Examining the District Council's proposals, it noted that they would secure a considerable improvement in electoral equality and would provide for more effective and convenient ward boundaries in some parts of the town. The LGCE nonetheless also noted that the variance in the proposed Northfields ward would exceed that which it would normally recommend both now and in 2006. It further considered that the District Council's proposed

warding pattern would give rise to a number of boundary anomalies. Having visited the area, the LGCE noted that Folly Road would be placed in Town ward, while Bellrope Close, Bellrope Lane and Ringers Close, accessible only from Folly Road, would be placed in Rustens ward. It also noted the lack of direct access between the Harts Farm estate in the east of the revised Town ward and the remainder of the ward to the west of the B1172 Harts Farm Road, except through Cromwells or Rustens wards.

89 The LGCE also stated that it was not convinced on the basis of the evidence received that the best means of reflecting community identities and interests and providing effective and convenient local government in Wymondham would be through a uniform pattern of single-member wards. It therefore proposed that the District Council's revised single-member Abbey, Northfields, Rustens and Town wards be combined into two-member Abbey & Northfields and Rustens & Town wards, retaining the District Council's proposed single-member Cromwells ward. The LGCE proposed two further minor amendments to the District Council's boundaries. Under the draft recommendations, all of Smithson Close in the centre of the town and part of Browick Road to the west of the B1172 Harts Farm Road would be transferred to Rustens & Town ward. The LGCE considered that the first of these amendments would reflect access to Smithson Close via Rothbury Road, while the second would ensure fuller use of the B1172 as a well-defined ward boundary in the south of the town.

90 Examining the proposed Abbey & Northfields ward, broadly comprising the west of Wymondham town, it noted that it would resolve the under-representation of the District Council's revised Northfields ward, possess strong internal road communications, and make use of effective external boundaries such as the railway line, the B1172, Hewitts Lane, Pople Street, and Lime Tree Avenue. The LGCE also considered that the proposed Rustens & Town ward would provide stronger road links between the Harts Farm estate and the majority of properties in the ward to the west of Harts Farm Road, and would better reflect access to Bellrope Lane by placing Folly Road in the same ward. It further considered that the proposed Cromwells ward would provide good electoral equality, and that its status as a single-member ward would reflect the difference in character between the town and the more rural areas in the south of the parish.

91 The LGCE stated that it was therefore content to put its proposals forward for consultation as part of its draft recommendations, considering that they would best meet the statutory criteria. As discussed in paragraphs 203–205 of this report, it also proposed to retain five revised town council wards of Abbey, Cromwells, Northfields, Rustens and Town substantially based on the District Council's district warding proposals.

92 Under the LGCE's proposals, Abbey & Northfields ward (comprising the revised town wards of Abbey and Northfields) would have 12% more electors per councillor than the district average (7% more than the average by 2006). Cromwells ward (comprising the revised town ward of Cromwells) would have 5% more electors per councillor than the average (1% more than the average by 2006). Rustens & Town ward (comprising the revised town wards of Rustens and Town) would have 8% fewer electors per councillor than the average (7% more than the average by 2006).

93 At Stage Three, the District Council supported the LGCE's proposed Cromwells ward but opposed the draft recommendation for two-member Abbey & Northfields and Rustens & Town wards. It contrasted the LGCE's rejection of its five single-member district wards with the draft recommendation for five town council wards based on the same district warding proposals. It expressed concern at this perceived inconsistency of approach, asking why the problems with its Stage One proposals identified by the LGCE would 'be regarded as a disqualification for District purposes but not for the Town Council?'

94 The District Council also considered that a lack of coterminosity would cause confusion, 'particularly at elections for both councils held at the same time', and would not provide effective

and convenient local government. Finally, it took the view that substantial local support should be required for changes in the warding pattern from single-member wards to predominantly multi-member wards, stating that to its knowledge there was no support for this in Wymondham. The District Council therefore proposed that its Stage One proposals for single-member Abbey, Northfields, Rustens and Town wards be adopted. However, it accepted the minor boundary amendments proposed by the LGCE at Browick Road and Smithson Close as detailed above, and proposed the transfer of Bellrope Lane, Bellrope Close and Ringers Close from Rustens to Town ward (corresponding to the LGCE's proposed town council ward boundary in this area) to reflect road access.

95 The Conservatives, South Norfolk Liberal Democrats, Wymondham Town Council and county councillor Hockaday (Wymondham division) all supported the District Council's proposals for five single-member wards. Under these proposals, Abbey, Cromwells and Northfields wards (comprising the town council wards of the same names) would have 9%, 5% and 15% more electors per councillor than the district average respectively (4%, 1% and 10% more than the average by 2006). Rustens and Town wards (comprising the town council wards of the same names) would have 17% fewer and 2% more electors per councillor than the average respectively (4% more and 11% more than the average by 2006).

96 We have given careful consideration to the representations received at Stage Three. We note that we have received evidence of a local preference for the retention of five single-member wards and a rejection of the LGCE's proposed two-member wards. While we have regard for all representations, we do not consider that local support for a proposal to retain an existing warding arrangement suffices to rule out change, as has been suggested by the District Council.

97 As has been stated, we do not prescribe single-member or multi-member wards in urban areas, but rather consider each proposal in the context of our statutory criteria. It has been put to the Committee that, in the case of Wymondham, it would not be effective and convenient to have several town council wards together comprising a single district ward. Indeed, we note that this is considered to have a greater adverse effect than those problems with the District Council's scheme identified by the LGCE. We must also have regard for the view that the LGCE's draft recommendations, which sought to improve upon the District Council's district warding proposals while respecting the Town Council's preference for five town council wards, would risk the application of a differentiated approach to the statutory criteria when making recommendations for these two tiers of local government.

98 We are therefore proposing to depart from the LGCE's proposals for Wymondham by reverting to a warding pattern of five single-member district wards, coterminous with five town council wards. Our proposals would be substantially based on the District Council's Stage One scheme. However, we also consider that the concerns expressed by the LGCE regarding these proposals remain valid, and have proposed a number of boundary modifications to provide for better communication links within the wards, and to address electoral imbalances.

99 We propose that part of the District Council's proposed Abbey ward to the north of the B1135 (with the exception of properties on Chapel Lane) be included in the proposed Northfields ward. We consider that this rural area has clearer road links to Northfields ward, in which the majority of affected electors are currently situated, than to Abbey ward, which extends much further to the south. This transfer of electors to Northfields ward would be offset by the inclusion of Maple Close in the District Council's proposed Rustens ward, and that part of Pople Street to the south of Elkins Road and Rothbury Road (including Fern Court and Rattle Row) in Abbey ward. We consider that this revised boundary marks a divide in the character of properties on Pople Street, and that this would mitigate to some extent the resulting division of the road between district wards.

100 We also propose the transfer of Bellrope Lane, Bellrope Close and Ringers Close to the proposed Town ward to reflect access to these streets via Folly Road. We are also putting forward a boundary amendment between the proposed Town and Cromwells wards, under which the revised boundary would run east from the B1172 along the centre of Browick Road, before heading north-east along the railway line to the town boundary as under the LGCE's proposals. This would ensure a direct connection by road between the Harts Farm estate and the rest of Town ward, and we concur with the LGCE that this would help provide a more effective and coherent warding arrangement for the east of the town.

101 However, we consider that the resulting under-representation of Town ward by 2006 should be addressed, and to this end we propose further amendments between the wards of Abbey and Town. We propose that the revised Abbey ward also include that part of Rothbury Road broadly to the west of the play area (including Rothbury Close and Smithson Close), as well as Choseley Court and a small part of Norwich Road further to the east. We consider that this revised boundary would mark a qualitative divide in the character of properties on Rothbury Road, and that this would mitigate to some extent the resulting division of the road between district wards. Finally, we propose five minor boundary amendments, affecting the wards of Abbey, Northfields and Town, ensuring that all properties on Back Lane, Folly Road, Ketts Avenue, Northfields Gardens and Poynt Close are placed in a single district ward.

102 In the light of further evidence received at Stage Three, we consider that these proposals would best achieve electoral equality, reflect community identities and interests and provide effective and convenient local government for the town of Wymondham. Under our final recommendations the proposed Abbey, Northfields and Rustens wards (comprising the town council wards of the same names) would have 12% more, 15% more and 13% fewer electors per councillor than the district average respectively (improving to 8%, 10% and 8% more than the average by 2006). The proposed Cromwells and Town wards (comprising the town council wards of the same names) would both have equal to the average number of electors per councillor (4% fewer and 9% more than the average by 2006). Our final recommendations are illustrated on Map 3 and the large map at the back of the report.

Beckhithe, Humbleyard and Mergate wards

103 The two-member Beckhithe ward and the single-member wards of Humbleyard and Mergate are situated to the south of Norwich and east of Wymondham. Beckhithe ward comprises the parishes of Hethersett and Little Melton. Humbleyard ward contains the parishes of East Carleton, Keswick, Ketteringham and Swardeston, while Mergate ward comprises the parishes of Bracon Ash, Mulbarton and Wreningham. Beckhithe and Mergate ward are currently under-represented, with 34% and 57% more electors per councillor than the district average respectively (27% and 69% more than the average by 2006). Humbleyard ward is currently over-represented and has 34% fewer electors per councillor than the average (38% fewer than the average by 2006).

104 At Stage One, the District Council proposed that the parishes of Keswick, from the existing Humbleyard ward, and Little Melton, from Beckhithe ward, be included in a two-member Yare ward with the parishes of Bawburgh, Colney and Cringleford. It proposed that the remainder of Beckhithe ward, the parish of Hethersett, be divided into two single-member Hethersett (North) and Hethersett (South) wards. As previously stated, the District Council considered that single-member wards would better provide effective and convenient local government, adding that Hethersett Parish Council had been involved in discussions regarding the proposed boundaries.

105 The District Council also proposed single-member Mulbarton (North) and Mulbarton (South) wards. The proposed Mulbarton (North) ward would comprise part of the parish of Mulbarton, together with the parishes of East Carleton, Ketteringham and Swardeston, all currently in Humbleyard ward. The proposed ward of Mulbarton (South) would comprise the

remainder of Mulbarton parish together with Bracon Ash parish. The remainder of the existing Mergate ward, Wreningham parish, would be transferred to a new Newton Flotman ward.

106 The Conservatives and the Independents proposed that the District Council's proposed single-member Hethersett (North) and Hethersett (South) wards be combined into a two-member Hethersett ward coterminous with the parish. The Conservatives also proposed that the District Council's proposed single-member Mulbarton (North) and Mulbarton (South) wards be combined into a two-member Mulbarton ward. They considered that no specific case had been made for the use of single-member wards in either instance. However, the Independents supported the District Council's proposals for the Mulbarton area.

107 The LGCE based its draft recommendations for Hethersett on the Conservatives' and Independents' proposals, and for Mulbarton on the Conservatives' proposals. It noted that under the District Council's proposals, the variance in the proposed Hethersett (South) ward would exceed that which it would normally seek to recommend both now and in five years time. The LGCE stated that while it was not opposed in principle to single-member wards in urban areas, it found that electoral equality is often more achievable under a multi-member configuration. It also expressed its concern that the boundary proposed would artificially divide the Hethersett community, and would not reflect its common identity and interests, despite the support of the Parish Council for the District Council's proposals. In particular, it noted that the proposed boundary would divide Admirals Way, a large residential cul-de-sac, in the north-east of the town.

108 Examining the District Council's proposed Mulbarton (North) and Mulbarton (South) wards, the LGCE noted that they would enable significant improvements in electoral equality. However, as in Hethersett, it stated that it was not convinced on the basis of the evidence received that the division of Mulbarton parish would adequately reflect the common identity and interests of the community, particularly as both parts of the parish would then be placed in wards with one or more rural villages.

109 Under the LGCE's proposals, Hethersett ward (comprising the parish of the same name) would have 14% more electors per councillor than the district average (7% more than the average by 2006). Mulbarton ward (comprising the parishes of Bracon Ash, East Carleton, Ketteringham, Mulbarton and Swardeston) would have 10% fewer electors per councillor than the district average (5% fewer than the average by 2006).

110 At Stage Three, the District Council expressed its disappointment that the LGCE had rejected its justification for single-member wards in the more urban parts of South Norfolk, but acknowledged 'significant local opposition to ... [its] proposals in some of the areas affected.' The Conservatives broadly supported the draft recommendations, while the Independents supported those of the LGCE's proposals that reflected their Stage One scheme. We received no further comments, and have decided to confirm the draft recommendations for this part of the district as final. While we acknowledge the views expressed by the District Council, we concur with the LGCE that its proposed two-member Hethersett and Mulbarton wards would provide the best available balance between the statutory criteria. Our final recommendations would provide the same levels of electoral equality as the draft recommendations, and are illustrated on Map 3.

The south-west

Berners, Springfields, Stratton and Westwood wards

111 The single-member wards of Berners, Springfields, Stratton and Westwood are broadly situated to the east and south-east of Wymondham. Berners ward contains the parishes of Ashwellthorpe, Tasburgh and Tharston & Hapton, while Springfields ward comprises the parishes of Bunwell and Carleton Rode. Stratton ward is coterminous with the parish of Long

Stratton, while Westwood ward contains the parishes of Aslacton, Forncett, Great Moulton, Tacolneston and Wacton. Under existing arrangements, Berners ward has equal to the average number of electors per councillor (3% more than the district average by 2006). Springfields ward is relatively over-represented, with 32% fewer electors per councillor than the average (36% fewer than the average by 2006). Stratton and Westwood wards are both relatively under-represented, with 50% and 36% more electors per councillor than the average respectively (63% and 28% more than the average by 2006).

112 At Stage One, the District Council proposed a new single-member Forncett ward comprising the 'similar' parishes of Ashwellthorpe, from the existing Berners ward, and Forncett and Tacolneston, from Westwood ward. It also proposed that the existing Springfields ward, comprising Bunwell and Carleton Rode parishes, be combined with Aslacton and Tibenham parishes, from Westwood and Long Row wards respectively, to form a new single-member Bunwell ward. The parishes of Great Moulton and Tasburgh would be included respectively in proposed Dickleburgh and Tasburgh wards. The District Council noted Great Moulton Parish Council's preference for the inclusion of Aslacton and Great Moulton parishes in the same ward, but stated that it had not been able to accommodate this in its scheme.

113 The District Council also proposed single-member Stratton (North) and Stratton (South) wards. Stratton (North) ward would contain part of Long Stratton parish together with the parish of Tharston & Hapton, while Stratton (South) ward would contain the remaining part of Long Stratton parish, together with Wacton parish. The District Council stated that 'Long Stratton required more than one member but was not big enough for two' and that the other two parishes use 'many services which Long Stratton has to offer'.

114 The Conservatives and Independents supported the District Council's proposed Forncett and Bunwell wards, but proposed that the District Council's proposed single-member Stratton (North) and Stratton (South) wards be combined in a two-member Stratton ward. This was also supported by Long Stratton Parish Council and Councillor Smith (Stratton ward). However, the Independents proposed to include Wacton parish in a ward with Pulham Market and Pulham St Mary.

115 As part of its draft recommendations the LGCE put forward the District Council's proposed Bunwell and Forncett wards. It noted they would provide good electoral equality, resolving the over- and under-representation of the existing Springfields and Westwood wards. The LGCE also considered that the proposed wards would possess satisfactory internal road communications and would reflect community identities and interests in the area reasonably well.

116 It noted the objections of Great Moulton Parish Council to being placed in a different district ward from Aslacton parish. Examining the proposed wards, the LGCE considered that it had received no alternative schemes that would both place Aslacton and Great Moulton in a single ward and also secure good electoral equality. It added that it had explored a number of alternative options and considered that these aims could possibly be achieved by the recommendation of a two-member rural ward in this area. However, the LGCE concluded that it had received no evidence that such a ward would better meet the statutory criteria than the District Council's proposals. It also noted that the village of Sneath Common is divided between the parishes of Aslacton, Great Moulton and Tivetshall St Margaret. It stated that it had no power to recommend changes to parish boundaries, but that the anomalies in Sneath Common might be corrected at some future time by a parish review, which lies within the District Council's remit.

117 The LGCE also decided to adopt the Conservatives' proposals for a two-member Stratton ward comprising the parishes of Long Stratton, Tharston & Hapton and Wacton. It reiterated that it was not opposed in principle to single-member wards in urban areas and considered each case upon its merits. In this instance, however, the LGCE was not convinced

that the division of the town between single-member wards, each containing a rural parish, would sufficiently reflect community identities and interests and provide effective and convenient local government. In particular, it noted that under the District Council's proposals the Chequers Road area, which traverses the boundary between Long Stratton and Tharston & Hapton parishes, would be divided between the proposed Stratton (North) and Stratton (South) wards.

118 The LGCE noted the District Council's comments regarding the use of the town's services by residents of the parishes of Tharston & Hapton and Wacton, and was content to recommend that they be placed in a two-member ward with Long Stratton, as proposed by the Conservatives, Long Stratton Parish Council and Councillor Smith. While the LGCE acknowledged the Independents' opposition to the inclusion of Wacton parish in Stratton ward, it considered that it had received no evidence as to how this would not meet the objectives of the review. It also noted the lack of direct road connections between Pulham Market and Wacton parishes.

119 Under the LGCE's draft recommendations, Bunwell ward (comprising the parishes of Aslacton, Bunwell, Carleton Rode and Tibenham) would have 3% more electors per councillor than the district average (4% fewer than the average by 2006). Forncett ward (comprising the parishes of Ashwellthorpe, Forncett and Tacolneston) would have 3% more electors per councillor than the average (4% fewer than the average by 2006). Stratton ward (comprising the parishes of Long Stratton, Tharston & Hapton and Wacton) would have 8% fewer electors per councillor than the average (equal to the average by 2006).

120 At Stage Three, the District Council expressed its disappointment that the LGCE had rejected its justification for single-member wards in the more urban parts of South Norfolk, but acknowledged 'significant local opposition to ... [its] proposals in some of the areas affected.' The Conservatives broadly supported the draft recommendations, while the Independents supported those of the LGCE's proposals that reflected their Stage One scheme. Long Stratton Parish Council supported the proposed two-member Stratton ward.

121 However, as at Stage One, Great Moulton Parish Council opposed the division of Aslacton and Great Moulton parishes between the proposed district wards of Bunwell and Dickleburgh. The Parish Council stated that the two villages shared facilities, such as a school, playing field and village hall, whereas there was 'no synergy' between Great Moulton and the other parishes of the proposed Dickleburgh ward. It further stated that 'If it was decided at a later date to combine parishes into larger authorities, these two villages would be obvious choices for merger. It therefore seems ridiculous that they should be the responsibility of two different district councillors.'

122 Having carefully considered the representations received, we have decided to confirm the draft recommendation for the proposed Bunwell, Forncett and Stratton wards as final. We note that the proposed two-member Stratton ward has received some measure of support.

123 While we acknowledge the views of Great Moulton Parish Council, we are unable to consider the most suitable district warding arrangement for Aslacton and Great Moulton parishes in isolation from the rest of the district. We consider that we have received no new substantive evidence from Great Moulton Parish Council at Stage Three, nor have we received details of an alternative scheme that would enable us to place both parishes in the same ward and provide good electoral equality for the area. Furthermore, we cannot have regard for the possibility of future mergers of parishes in making our recommendations for current district warding arrangements. We therefore consider that the LGCE's proposals would provide the best balance between achieving electoral equality, reflecting community identities and interests, and providing effective and convenient local government. Our final recommendations would provide the same levels of electoral equality as the draft recommendations, and are illustrated on Map 3.

Boyland, Diss Town and Long Row wards

124 The wards of Boyland, Diss Town and Long Row are situated in the south-west of the district. Boyland ward comprises the parishes of Bressingham and Roydon, while Long Row ward comprises the parishes of Burston & Shimpling, Gissing, Shelfanger, Tibenham and Winfarthing. Both wards are each represented by a single councillor. The three-member Diss Town ward is coterminous with the town of Diss. Boyland and Long Row wards currently have 31% more and 16% fewer electors per councillor than the district average respectively (25% more and 21% fewer than the average by 2006). Diss Town ward has 2% fewer electors per councillor than the average (4% fewer than the average by 2006).

125 At Stage One, the District Council proposed a new single-member Bressingham ward. This would comprise the parish of Bressingham and a small part of Roydon parish, from the existing Boyland ward, the Heywood area of Diss town, and the parishes of Burston & Shimpling, Gissing, Shelfanger and Winfarthing from Long Row ward. As described in the previous section, Tibenham parish would be included in the proposed Bunwell ward.

126 The District Council stated that a recently conducted review of parish boundaries (submitted April 2001) had proposed the creation of a new Heywood parish, subject to approval by the Deputy Prime Minister, corresponding to the area of Diss parish to be included in the proposed Bressingham district ward. This would comprise all of the existing Diss parish to the north of Burston Road. The District Council commented, 'The area of Heywood is said to have more affinity with Winfarthing and Burston [than with Diss town].' It also indicated that the parish boundary review had proposed a boundary amendment between the parishes of Bressingham and Roydon. This amendment, again subject to approval by the Deputy Prime Minister, corresponds to the small part of Roydon parish that the District Council proposed to include in Bressingham district ward, comprising an area in the village of Bressingham north of the A1066 High Road, west of Baynards Lane and Hall Lane, and south of the Bressingham parish boundary.

127 Under the District Council's proposals, the remainder of Roydon parish would form a single-member Roydon ward, while the remainder of Diss parish would be divided into three single-member wards, to be named Diss (Central), Diss (East) and Diss (West). The District Council considered that creating three single-member wards for Diss would promote democracy and accountability. It added that it had not sought to propose a warding pattern combining Diss and Roydon, as during the recent parish review Roydon had strongly opposed a merger at parish level. The Conservatives supported the District Council's proposals in this area, but argued that the proposed Bressingham ward should be renamed Bressingham & Burston. They considered that Bressingham constitutes less than half of the proposed ward electorate and is situated in the far west of the ward, whereas Burston & Shimpling, the parish with the second largest electorate, is situated in the east.

128 However, the Independents and Diss Town Council opposed the District Council's proposed wards of Diss (Central), Diss (East) and Diss (West), arguing that the local preference was for a three-member ward. Diss Town Council considered that the existing ward already secured democracy, accountability and electoral equality for the electorate of the town. It expressed the view that these would be hampered by the creation of separate wards at district and town level.

129 As part of its draft recommendations the LGCE put forward the District Council's proposed Bressingham and Roydon wards, which were supported by the Conservatives and (subject to a minor amendment) the Independents. However, it proposed that Bressingham ward be named 'Bressingham & Burston', as proposed by the Conservatives, in order to better reflect community identities and interests in this part of the district. The LGCE noted that these proposals would resolve the under- and over-representation of the existing Boyland and Long Row wards. It also concurred with the view expressed by the District Council that the rural

Heywood area of Diss parish has more in common with the rural parishes of Bressingham & Burston than with Diss town, and considered that its inclusion would serve to improve road communications within the ward. The LGCE noted the opposition of the Independents to the inclusion of a small part of Roydon parish in Bressingham ward. However, it considered that the majority of affected properties form part of Bressingham village, and that this amendment would consequently provide a better reflection of community identities and interests than the existing ward boundary.

130 The LGCE decided to adopt the Independents' and Diss Town Council's proposal for a three-member Diss ward coterminous with the town, with the exception of the Heywood area. It stated that it was not opposed in principle to single-member wards in urban areas, but often found that electoral equality is more achievable under a multi-member configuration. The LGCE noted that the variance in the proposed Diss (East) ward would exceed that which it would normally seek to recommend both now and in five years' time. It also expressed its concern that the boundaries proposed would artificially divide the Diss community. The LGCE therefore considered that a three-member ward would best meet the statutory criteria. While it further noted the Independents' comment that approximately a third of the Roydon parish electorate is situated in two areas that form part of the Diss urban area, it considered that the remainder of Roydon parish would have insufficient electors to form a separate single-member ward.

131 Under the LGCE's draft recommendations, Bressingham & Burston ward (comprising the parishes of Bressingham, Burston & Shimpling, Gissing, Shelfanger, Winfarthing, the proposed Heywood ward of Diss town and the proposed West ward of Roydon parish) would have 5% more electors per councillor than the district average (equal to the average by 2006). Diss ward (comprising the proposed Diss Town ward of Diss town) and Roydon ward (comprising the proposed East ward of Roydon parish) would both have 6% fewer electors per councillor than the average (8% and 10% fewer than the average by 2006).

132 At Stage Three the District Council and the Conservatives broadly supported the draft recommendations. The District Council expressed its disappointment that the LGCE had rejected its justification for single-member wards in the more urban parts of South Norfolk, but acknowledged 'significant local opposition to ... [its] proposals in some of the areas affected.' The Independents supported those parts of the LGCE's proposals that reflected their Stage One scheme, while Bressingham Parish Council supported the proposed Bressingham & Burston ward and the 'reasonable' warding of Roydon parish.

133 Councillors Ian and Jill Caldwell (both Diss Town ward) supported the draft recommendation to include the rural Heywood area of Diss town in the proposed Bressingham & Burston ward. They stated, 'As long-term residents of the Heywood we are very well aware of and share the feelings of local residents that the Heywood area has much more affinity with the surrounding parishes of Winfarthing, Burston and Shelfanger than with the town of Diss.' The councillors drew the attention of the Committee to a petition signed by the majority of Heywood residents in support of the creation of a new Heywood parish as evidence that its community identities and interests did not lie with Diss.

134 However, while Diss Town Council supported the draft recommendation for a three-member Diss ward, it considered that this ward should also include the Heywood area of the town. It expressed the view that the Heywood forms part of the town's rural heritage, and that Heywood residents used Diss rather than Bressingham for all their 'business, social and recreational needs'. The Town Council also commented upon local council tax rates, an issue for which we do not have regard in making our recommendations.

135 Gissing Parish Council put forward alternative names for the proposed Bressingham & Burston ward, expressing 'disquiet' at what it regarded as its apparent absorption into larger communities. It proposed either the retention of the existing 'less specific' ward name of 'Long Row', or the new ward name of 'Heywood', which it considered would avoid 'giving undue

emphasis to particular parishes' and would refer to the Heywood area of Diss town in the centre of the ward.

136 Having carefully considered the representations received, we have decided to confirm the draft recommendation for the proposed Bressingham & Burston, Diss and Roydon wards as final. We note that the draft recommendation for a three-member Diss ward and single-member Bressingham & Burston ward have received a measure of support. We further note the lack of consensus concerning the inclusion of the Heywood area of Diss town in the proposed Bressingham & Burston ward and its orientation towards either the surrounding rural parishes or the town. However, should the proposed Diss ward be expanded to include the whole of the town, Bressingham & Burston ward would be divided into two separate parts. We do not normally recommend such 'detached wards', considering that they lend themselves to the creation of electoral areas lacking in community identity, and therefore do not propose departing from the draft recommendations in this area.

137 We acknowledge Gissing Parish Council's alternative names for the proposed Bressingham & Burston ward. We recognise that 'Heywood' may be a feasible option, though we note that the name 'Long Row' relates to a section of the B1134 situated almost entirely in the parish of Tibenham, which would be included in the proposed Bunwell ward. However, in the absence of consensus or substantive evidence in favour of these alternatives we do not propose to depart from the LGCE's proposals. Our final recommendations would provide the same levels of electoral equality as the draft recommendations and are illustrated on Map 3, and on Maps A3 and A4 in Appendix A.

Beck Vale, Depwade, Dickleburgh and Harleston wards

138 The single-member wards of Beck Vale, Depwade, Dickleburgh and Harleston are situated in the south of the district to the east of Diss. Beck Vale ward comprises the parishes of Pulham Market, Pulham St Mary and Starston, while Depwade ward contains the parishes of Brockdish, Needham and Scole. Dickleburgh ward comprises the parishes of Dickleburgh & Rushall, Tivetshall St Margaret and Tivetshall St Mary. Harleston ward is coterminous with the town of Redenhall with Harleston. Under existing arrangements, Beck Vale and Depwade wards have 6% and 3% fewer electors per councillor than the district average respectively (both 8% fewer than the average by 2006). Dickleburgh ward is relatively over-represented, with 18% fewer electors per councillor than the average (23% fewer than the average by 2006). Harleston ward is significantly under-represented, with 78% more electors per councillor than the average (80% more than the average by 2006).

139 At Stage One, the District Council proposed retaining the existing single-member Beck Vale ward, but renaming it Pulhams ward. It commented that, although the constituent parish councils were keen to retain both the existing ward and the existing ward name, it considered that ward names should be instantly recognisable. Similarly, the District Council proposed that the existing single-member Depwade ward be retained but renamed Scole ward. It commented that 'there have been no objections to this proposal and with these parishes in between the towns of Diss and Harleston and the largish parish of Dickleburgh to the north it makes sense to leave the ward as it is.' The existing Dickleburgh ward would, under the District Council's proposals, be combined with the parish of Great Moulton, currently in Westwood ward, to form a revised single-member Dickleburgh ward. As previously stated, the District Council noted Great Moulton Parish Council's preference for the inclusion of Aslacton and Great Moulton parishes in the same ward, but stated that it had not been able to reflect this in its scheme.

140 The District Council also proposed that the existing Harleston ward be divided into two single-member Harleston (East) and Harleston (West) wards 'for reasons of democracy and accountability'. While it recognised that these wards would remain slightly over-represented, it stated that Redenhall with Harleston Town Council had expressed concern as to the accuracy of the forecast electorate for 2006, 'as they claim that new properties are being created in in-fill

locations all the time.’ The District Council commented that it had no evidence of this, but considered that Harleston should be considered a special case.

141 However, the Conservatives, the Independents and Redenhall with Harleston Town Council opposed the division of the town between district wards. The Conservatives considered that there was no case for such a proposal, while the Town Council stated that two district councillors ‘should work together for the whole of the parish’. The Conservatives and the Town Council proposed a two-member ward coterminous with the town, while the Independents proposed that that the contiguous parish of Starston be included to improve electoral equality. Under the Independents’ proposals the parish of Wacton would be included in a revised Beck Vale ward with Pulham Market and Pulham St Mary as previously discussed

142 As part of its draft recommendations the LGCE put forward the District Council’s proposed Dickleburgh, Pulhams and Scole wards, which were supported by the Conservatives and Pulham Market and Pulham St Mary parish councils, and by the Independents subject to the above amendment. It noted that this warding pattern would resolve the over-representation of the existing Dickleburgh ward, and that Pulhams and Scole wards, renamed but retained from the existing arrangements, would continue to have acceptable electoral equality under a 46-member council. The LGCE considered that these three proposed wards would possess satisfactory internal road communications. Although it also noted the Independents’ proposal to include the rural parish of Starston in Harleston ward, it did not consider on the basis of the evidence received that that such a ward would reflect community identities and interests. The LGCE further noted Great Moulton Parish Council’s opposition to the proposed Dickleburgh ward but, as previously stated, had received no viable alternative proposals for that part of the district.

143 However, the LGCE decided to adopt the Conservatives’ and Redenhall with Harleston Town Council’s proposals for a two-member Harleston ward coterminous with the town. It noted that with a council size of 46, the town is entitled to two councillors, and considered the town of Harleston to be sufficiently different from the surrounding rural parishes as to require separate representation, despite the slight over-representation of the proposed wards. The LGCE stated that it was not opposed in principle to single-member wards in urban areas, but was concerned that the boundary proposed by the District Council would artificially divide the Harleston community.

144 Under the LGCE’s draft recommendations, Dickleburgh ward (comprising the parishes of Dickleburgh & Rushall, Great Moulton, Tivetshall St Margaret and Tivetshall St Mary) would have 10% more electors per councillor than the district average (4% more than the average by 2006). Harleston ward (comprising the town of Redenhall with Harleston) would have 13% fewer electors per councillor than the average (12% fewer than the average by 2006). Pulhams ward (comprising the parishes of Pulham Market, Pulham St Mary and Starston) and Scole ward (comprising the parishes of Brockdish, Needham and Scole) would have 8% and 5% fewer electors per councillor than the average (both 10% fewer than the average by 2006).

145 At Stage Three, the District Council broadly supported the draft recommendations. It expressed its disappointment that the LGCE had rejected its justification for single-member wards in the more urban parts of South Norfolk, but acknowledged ‘significant local opposition to ... [its] proposals in some of the areas affected.’

146 The Conservatives also broadly supported the draft recommendations, but proposed the retention of the existing ward names of ‘Beck Vale’ and ‘Depwade’ for the proposed Pulhams and Scole wards. They stated that they had received strong representations from party members in these areas, arguing that since the existing wards were to be retained without amendment, there was no need to change the existing names, with which there was ‘strong local identification’. Starston Parish Council also proposed that the existing ward name of ‘Beck Vale’ should be retained. It stated, ‘Starston is not a suburb of the Pulhams [Pulham Market and

Pulham St Mary], and ... there are few combined activities.' They considered that the existing ward name had historical significance, and reflected the fact that all three parishes were situated within the 'Vale of the Beck', a tributary of the River Waveney.

147 The Independents supported those parts of the LGCE's proposals that reflected their Stage One scheme, while Redenhall with Harleston Town Council, Councillor Gray (Valley ward) and Councillor Hudson (Harleston ward) supported the proposed two-member Harleston ward. Both Councillors Gray and Hudson referred to the possibility of further development in the town, as discussed in paragraph 40. As detailed previously, Great Moulton Parish Council continued to oppose the division of Aslacton and Great Moulton parishes between the proposed district wards of Bunwell and Dickleburgh.

148 Having carefully considered the representations received, we have decided to confirm the draft recommendation for the proposed Dickleburgh, Harleston, Pulhams and Scole wards as final. We note that the LGCE's proposals, in particular the proposed two-member Harleston ward, have received some support at Stage Three. While we acknowledge the views of Great Moulton Parish Council, as stated in paragraph 123, we have been unable to accommodate its preferred district warding arrangement in the final recommendations.

149 We note the lack of consensus as to whether the existing Beck Vale and Depwade wards should retain their current names, or whether the proposed new names of Pulhams and Scole should be confirmed. Examining the new evidence received at Stage Three, we have been persuaded that the existing ward name 'Beck Vale' would better reflect community identities in this part of the district than 'Pulhams'. We are nonetheless confirming the draft recommendation for 'Scole', in the apparent absence of consensus or convincing evidence. Our final recommendations would provide the same levels of electoral equality as the draft recommendations, and are illustrated on Map 3.

The east

Crown Point, Rosebery, Smockmill and Tasvale wards

150 The wards of Crown Point, Rosebery, Smockmill and Tasvale are situated in the centre of the district to the south and east of Norwich. All are single-member wards apart from Rosebery ward, which is represented by two members. Crown Point ward comprises the parishes of Bixley, Caistor St Edmund, Kirby Bedon and Trowse with Newton, while Rosebery ward comprises the parishes of Framingham Earl, Framingham Pigot and Poringland. Smockmill comprises the parishes of Flordon, Newton Flotman, Saxlingham Nethergate and Swainsthorpe, while Tasvale comprises the parishes of Shotesham and Stoke Holy Cross. Crown Point is currently significantly over-represented, with 54% fewer electors per councillor than the district average (48% fewer than the average by 2006). Rosebery, Smockmill and Tasvale wards have 8% fewer, 6% more and 10% fewer electors per councillor than the average respectively (8% more, 10% more and 15% fewer than the average by 2006).

151 At Stage One, the District Council proposed that the existing Crown Point ward, less Kirby Bedon parish, be combined with Stoke Holy Cross parish to form a new single-member Stoke Holy Cross ward. Under its proposals, Kirby Bedon parish would be combined with parishes to its east to form a new single-member Rockland ward, as described in the following section. The remainder of the existing Tasvale ward, Shotesham parish, would be combined with the parishes of Saxlingham Nethergate, from the existing Smockmill ward, and Tasburgh, from Berners ward, to form a new single-member Tasburgh ward. The District Council commented that it had been unable to accommodate the preference of Shotesham Parish Council for a combination with Stoke Holy Cross parish and achieve good electoral equality. Finally, it proposed that Wreningham parish, from the existing Mergate ward, be combined with the remainder of the existing Smockmill ward to form a new single-member Newton Flotman

ward. The District Council considered that this proposed ward reflected the preferences of Flordon, Newton Flotman and Swainsthorpe parishes, despite its unusual shape.

152 The District Council also proposed that the existing two-member Rosebery ward be divided into two single-member wards to facilitate democracy and accountability. Rosebery (North) ward would consist of the parishes of Framingham Earl and Framingham Pigot, together with part of the parish of Poringland, while Rosebery (South) ward would consist of the remaining part of Poringland. However, the Conservatives and the Independents proposed retaining the existing two-member ward. The Conservatives considered that no specific case had been made for the use of single-member wards and the division of Poringland parish, while the Independents stated that the existing two-member ward reflected local preferences.

153 As part of its draft recommendations the LGCE put forward the District Council's proposed Newton Flotman, Stoke Holy Cross and Tasburgh wards, which were supported by the Conservatives and the Independents. It noted that these wards would provide good electoral equality, in particular resolving the over-representation of the existing Crown Point ward, and would possess satisfactory internal road communications. The LGCE stated that it was content that the District Council had sought wherever possible to reflect local community identities and interests. While it noted that Wreningham parish would appear somewhat isolated in the proposed Newton Flotman ward, it was unable to identify an alternative warding pattern that would meet the objectives of the review.

154 However, the LGCE decided to adopt the Conservatives' and Independents' proposal to retain a two-member ward comprising the parishes of Framingham Earl, Framingham Pigot and Poringland, considering that this would provide the best available balance between the statutory criteria in that area. It stated that it was not opposed in principle to single-member wards in urban areas and considered each case upon its merits. However, the LGCE did not consider on the basis of the evidence received that the division of Poringland parish would adequately reflect the identity and interests of the community. It also concurred with the view expressed by the Conservatives that renaming Rosebery ward after Poringland, the parish with by far the largest electorate, would facilitate name recognition.

155 Under the LGCE's draft recommendations, Newton Flotman ward (comprising the parishes of Flordon, Newton Flotman, Swainsthorpe and Wreningham) would have 5% fewer electors per councillor than the district average (1% fewer than the average by 2006). Poringland ward (comprising the parishes of Framingham Earl, Framingham Pigot and Poringland) would have 10% fewer electors per councillor than the average (5% more than the average by 2006). Stoke Holy Cross ward (comprising the parishes of Bixley, Caistor St Edmund, Stoke Holy Cross and Trowse with Newton) would have 4% more electors per councillor than the average (5% more than the average by 2006). Tasburgh ward (comprising the parishes of Saxlingham Nethergate, Shotesham and Tasburgh) would have 5% fewer electors per councillor than the average (7% fewer than the average by 2006).

156 At Stage Three, the District Council broadly supported the draft recommendations. It expressed its disappointment that the LGCE had rejected its justification for single-member wards in the more urban parts of South Norfolk, but acknowledged 'significant local opposition to ... [its] proposals in some of the areas affected'. The Conservatives and Independents broadly supported the draft recommendations, while Poringland Parish Council and Councillor Walker (Rosebery ward) supported the proposed two-member Poringland ward.

157 However, Councillor Walker stated that Framingham Earl, Framingham Pigot and Poringland were still 'very protective of their separate identities'. If the ward name 'Rosebery' was not to be retained, she considered that 'Poringland with the Framinghams' would be a more appropriate ward name. This alternative was also supported by Poringland Parish Council.

158 As discussed in the following section, respondents from the existing Beauchamp ward put forward alternative proposals for the eastern part of the district based on the existing council size of 47, rather than a 46-member council as proposed in the draft recommendations. These proposals would entail the inclusion of Framingham Pigot parish in a revised Rockland ward. However, as discussed in paragraph 45, we are proposing to confirm the proposed 46-member council as final. Under this council size, the revised Poringland ward would have 13% fewer electors per councillor than the district average (2% more than the average by 2006).

159 Saxlingham Nethergate Parish Council considered that the proposed Tasburgh ward should be renamed 'Tas Valley'. It stated that the parish churches of Saxlingham Nethergate, Shotesham and Tasburgh formed the 'Tas Valley' ministry team, and that this name would be more representative of all three parishes. Trowse with Newton Parish Council stated that it was 'not totally happy' with but accepted the proposed Stoke Holy Cross ward. However, it opposed the ward name, expressing concern at 'being engulfed in a larger parish'. The Parish Council therefore considered that the ward should either be renamed 'Tas Valley' or the existing ward name of 'Crown Point' should be retained.

160 Having carefully considered the representations received, we have decided to confirm the draft recommendation for the proposed Newton Flotman, Poringland, Stoke Holy Cross and Tasburgh wards as final. We note that these proposals, in particular the two-member Poringland ward, have received some support. We are not proposing to transfer Framingham Pigot to a revised Rockland ward, as proposed by respondents from Beauchamp ward, as we are not convinced on the basis of the evidence received that this would reflect community identities and interests in the area. We also note that overall their scheme would not provide good electoral equality under a 46-member council.

161 We note the lack of consensus on the most appropriate ward names for the proposed Poringland, Stoke Holy Cross and Tasburgh wards. In the light of further evidence provided at Stage Three, we are proposing to adopt the revised ward name 'Poringland with the Framinghams', which we consider would better reflect community identities than the LGCE's proposal. We note that 'Tas Valley' has been proposed as an alternative name for Stoke Holy Cross and Tasburgh wards and, while the River Tas flows through both wards, in view of this apparent ambiguity we are not proposing that this name be adopted. We also examined the proposal to retain the existing ward name of 'Crown Point', rather than 'Stoke Holy Cross', but in the apparent absence of a clear consensus or convincing evidence we are not departing from the draft recommendation. Our final recommendations would provide the same levels of electoral equality as the draft recommendations, and are illustrated on Map 3.

Abbeyfield, Beauchamp, Broads, Brookwood and Chet wards

162 The single-member wards of Abbeyfield, Beauchamp, Broads, Brookwood and Chet are situated in the north of the district, to the east of Norwich. Abbeyfield ward comprises the parishes of Carleton St Peter, Chedgrave, Claxton and Langley with Hardley, while Beauchamp ward comprises the parishes of Alington, Ashby St Mary, Bergh Apton, Thurton and Yelverton. Broads ward comprises the parishes of Bramerton, Hellington, Holverston, Rockland St Mary and Surlingham, while Brookwood comprises the parishes of Brooke, Howe, Kirstead and Woodton. Chet ward comprises the parishes of Loddon, Mundham, Seething and Sisland. Abbeyfield and Beauchamp wards currently have 27% and 15% fewer electors per councillor than the district average respectively (31% and 21% fewer than the average by 2006). Broads and Brookwood wards currently have 17% and 10% fewer electors per councillor than the average respectively (21% and 16% fewer than the average by 2006). Chet ward currently has 29% more electors per councillor than the average (24% more than the average by 2006).

163 At Stage One, the District Council proposed that the existing Broads ward be combined with the parishes of Alington and Yelverton, from the existing Beauchamp ward, and Kirby Bedon, from Crown Point ward, to form a new single-member Rockland ward. It also proposed

that the existing Abbeyfield ward be combined with the parishes of Ashby St Mary and Thurton to form a new single-member Chedgrave ward. The remainder of Beauchamp ward, the parish of Bergh Apton, would be added to the parishes of Brooke, Howe and Kirstead (the existing Brookwood ward, less Woodton parish) and the parishes of Mundham and Seething, from Chet ward, to form a new single-member Brooke ward. Finally, the District Council proposed that the remainder of the existing Chet ward, the parishes of Loddon and Sisland, form a single-member Loddon ward. It added that there was local support for the inclusion of the rural parish of Sisland in this ward. The District Council commented that in its local consultation the parishes of the existing Beauchamp ward had opposed being divided between the above wards. Nonetheless, it considered its proposals would best meet the Commission's objectives.

164 The LGCE based its draft recommendations on the District Council's scheme, which was also supported by the Conservatives and the Independents, noting that it would reduce the current and forecast electoral variances in the existing wards. Examining the proposed Brooke, Chedgrave and Rockland wards, it considered that they would possess satisfactory road connections, and that separate representation for the town of Loddon, together with the small rural parish of Sisland, would better reflect community identities and interests than the existing arrangements.

165 The LGCE noted Alington with Yelverton Parish Council's opposition to the proposed Broads and Brooke wards, its view that the A146 divides rather than links parishes in this part of the district, and the evidence it submitted regarding its ties with Bergh Apton parish. However, it stated that it was unable to consider any area in isolation, but must bear in mind the requirement to achieve the best balance between the statutory criteria across the district as a whole. The LGCE considered that the inclusion of Alington, Bergh Apton and Yelverton parishes in either Rockland or Brooke wards would considerably worsen electoral variances in the wards concerned. It also noted that it had received no alternative proposals for this area that would meet its objectives.

166 Under the LGCE's draft recommendations, Brooke ward (comprising the parishes of Bergh Apton, Brooke, Howe, Kirstead, Mundham and Seething) would have 8% more electors per councillor than the district average (1% more than the average by 2006). Chedgrave ward (comprising the parishes of Ashby St Mary, Carleton St Peter, Chedgrave, Claxton, Langley with Hardley and Thurton) would have 7% more electors per councillor than the average (2% more than the average by 2006). Loddon ward (comprising the parishes of Loddon and Sisland) would have 5% more electors per councillor than the average (2% more than the average by 2006). Rockland ward (comprising the parishes of Alington, Bramerton, Hellington, Holverston, Kirby Bedon, Rockland St Mary, Surlingham and Yelverton) would have 16% more electors per councillor than the average (10% more than the average by 2006).

167 At Stage Three, the District Council, the Conservatives and the Independents broadly supported the draft recommendations. However, in response to representations from party members in Ashby St Mary and Thurton parishes, the Conservatives proposed that the proposed Chedgrave ward be renamed 'Chedgrave & Thurton'. They argued that Chedgrave parish constituted less than half of the proposed ward electorate, and that the revised name would therefore better reflect community identities in the area.

168 The parish councils of Alington with Yelverton, Ashby St Mary, Bergh Apton and Thurton (comprising the existing Beauchamp ward), county councillor Gunson (Loddon division), a Thurton parish councillor, two Thurton residents, and a petition signed by 171 local residents opposed the division of Beauchamp ward between the proposed Brooke, Chedgrave and Rockland wards. It was considered that the existing arrangement was a 'natural grouping' that reflected community identities and interests and provided effective and convenient local government. Respondents argued that this was apparent from the shared use of local facilities such as churches, schools and the post office, the existence of cross-parish community groups and initiatives, and the good road links between the villages. The attention of the Committee

was also drawn to several areas of Beauchamp ward where residential streets were divided by parish boundaries.

169 In contrast, it was stated that the parishes of Beauchamp ward had little in common with the others with which they had been placed under the LGCE's proposals. Councillor Gunson reiterated the view, expressed by Alington with Yelverton Parish Council at Stage One, that Alington and Yelverton parishes did not relate to the rest of the proposed Rockland ward, arguing that they were divided by the A146 and in different school catchment areas.

170 The four parish councils and one of the above Thurton residents put forward an alternative warding pattern for the east of the district based on a 47-member council. Under their proposals the existing single-member Beauchamp ward would be retained, but would be expanded to include Carleton St Peter and Claxton parishes from the proposed Chedgrave ward. Framingham Pigot parish would be transferred from the proposed Poringland ward to a revised single-member Rockland ward, while the parishes of Chedgrave and Langley with Hardley would be combined with Hales, Heckingham and Loddon parishes to form a new two-member ward. A revised single-member Brooke ward would also incorporate Sisland and Thwaite parishes from the proposed Loddon and Ditchingham & Broome wards. Respondents considered these proposals to reflect 'natural' linkages between parishes.

171 As discussed in paragraph 45, we are confirming the draft recommendation for a 46-member council as final. Based on this council size, the alternative Beauchamp ward (comprising the parishes of Alington, Ashby St Mary, Bergh Apton, Carleton St Peter, Claxton, Thurton and Yelverton) would have 6% fewer electors per councillor than the district average (12% fewer than the average by 2006). The alternative single-member Brooke ward (comprising the parishes of Brooke, Howe, Kirstead, Mundham, Seething, Sisland and Thwaite) would have 5% fewer electors per councillor than the average (11% fewer than the average by 2006).

172 Again based on a 46-member council, the alternative two-member Loddon ward (comprising the parishes of Chedgrave, Hales, Heckingham, Langley with Hardley and Loddon) would have 6% fewer electors per councillor than the average (10% fewer than the average by 2006). The alternative Rockland ward (comprising the parishes of Bramerton, Framingham Pigot, Hellington, Holverston, Kirby Bedon, Rockland St Mary and Surlingham) would have 5% fewer electors per councillor than the average (10% fewer than the average by 2006).

173 Having carefully considered the representations received, we have however decided to confirm the draft recommendation for the proposed Brooke, Chedgrave, Loddon and Rockland wards as final. We acknowledge the preference expressed by local respondents for the retention of the parishes of the existing Beauchamp ward in a single proposed district ward. However, our decision to confirm the draft recommendation for a 46-member council limited the extent to which their alternative 47-member scheme could be taken into consideration, as some of their proposed wards would then be forecast by 2006 to have a higher variance than we would normally seek to recommend.

174 Respondents have indicated that the current Beauchamp ward reflects community identities and interests and provides effective and convenient local government, and we acknowledge this view, but do not consider that the services and social arrangements to which they refer would necessarily be disrupted by the LGCE's proposals. We also note that the division of sizeable residential areas between district wards would be avoided under the draft recommendations, except for a number of properties on Mill Road adjacent to the Alington/Bergh Apton parish boundary.

175 Furthermore, we do not consider that we have received substantive evidence in support of their proposed wards, with the exception of the revised Beauchamp ward. We concur with the LGCE that we are unable to consider any area in isolation, but must bear in mind the requirement to achieve the best balance between the statutory criteria across the district as a

whole. Although we sought an alternative warding pattern that would place all the Beauchamp parishes in a single district ward, meet the statutory criteria, and contain any change within the three directly affected proposed wards of Brooke, Chedgrave and Rockland, we have identified only a limited number of alternatives. These all required considerable change to the LGCE's ward boundaries and the creation of a two-member ward. In the absence of the evidence required to underpin such changes we were unable to give these options any further consideration.

176 We therefore consider that the LGCE's draft recommendations represent the best balance between achieving electoral equality, reflecting community identities and interests, and providing effective and convenient local government. However, we are proposing to adopt the Conservatives' revised ward name of 'Chedgrave with Thurton', considering that this would better reflect the composition of the proposed ward. Our final recommendations would provide the same levels of electoral equality as the draft recommendations, and are illustrated on Map 4.

Ditchingham, Hempnall and Valley wards

177 The single-member wards of Ditchingham, Hempnall and Valley are situated in the centre and south of the district. Ditchingham ward comprises the parishes of Bedingham, Ditchingham, Hedenham, Thwaite and Topcroft, while Hempnall ward comprises the parishes of Hempnall, Morningthorpe and Shelton. Valley ward comprises the parishes of Alburgh, Denton, Earsham and Wortwell. At present Ditchingham and Valley wards have 1% and 7% fewer electors per councillor than the district average respectively (7% and 14% fewer than the average by 2006). Hempnall ward is currently over-represented, with 22% fewer electors per councillor than the average (26% fewer than the average by 2006).

178 At Stage One, the District Council proposed that the existing Valley ward be combined with the parish of Topcroft, currently in Ditchingham ward, to form a new single-member Earsham ward. It commented that it had taken into account the wish of the parishes of the existing Valley ward to remain together. The District Council also proposed a revised single-member Hempnall ward, comprising the existing ward together with Bedingham parish from the existing Ditchingham ward and Woodton parish from Brookwood ward. It argued that, despite its unusual shape, this ward would provide good electoral equality while reflecting the strong links of Bedingham and Woodton parishes. The remainder of the existing Ditchingham ward, the parishes of Ditchingham, Hedenham and Thwaite, would be combined with the parish of Broome, currently in Waveney ward, to form a revised single-member Ditchingham & Broome ward. The District Council stated that it had taken into account established ties between the parishes of Ditchingham and Thwaite, and that the addition of 'Broome' to the ward name reflected local preferences in Broome.

179 The LGCE based its draft recommendations on the District Council's scheme, which was also supported by the Conservatives and the Independents, considering that it would best meet the statutory criteria in this area. It stated that it was content on the basis of the evidence received that the District Council had sought to take into account local preferences and concerns where possible. The LGCE noted that the proposed wards would possess satisfactory road connections, and in particular that Woodton and Bedingham parishes are well linked to the rest of the proposed Hempnall ward via the B1135. It considered that this ameliorated the concerns expressed by the District Council regarding the shape of the proposed ward. While the LGCE received details of an alternative warding arrangement for this area from Earsham and Wortwell parish councils, it considered that their preference for the retention of the existing Valley parishes in a single ward had been taken into account in the District Council's proposals.

180 Under the LGCE's draft recommendations, Ditchingham & Broome ward (comprising the parishes of Broome, Ditchingham, Hedenham and Thwaite) would have 2% fewer electors per councillor than the district average (9% fewer than the average by 2006). Earsham ward

(comprising the parishes of Alburgh, Denton, Earsham, Topcroft and Wortwell) would have 1% more electors per councillor than the average (7% fewer than the average by 2006). Hempnall ward (comprising the parishes of Bedingham, Hempnall, Morningthorpe, Shelton and Woodton) would have 5% more electors per councillor than the average (equal to the average number of electors per councillor by 2006).

181 At Stage Three, the District Council, the Conservatives and the Independents expressed broad support for the draft recommendations. However, the Conservatives also put forward an amendment between Earsham and Hempnall wards as detailed below. Broome Parish Council supported the proposed Ditchingham & Broome ward, while Earsham and Wortwell parish councils and Councillor Gray (Valley ward) supported the proposed Earsham ward.

182 However, Richard Bacon MP, the Conservatives, Topcroft Parish Council and County Councillor Gunson (Loddon division) all opposed the inclusion of Topcroft parish in the proposed Earsham ward. It was considered that the parish had no links with the villages of Alburgh, Denton, Earsham and Wortwell, and that its church, commercial, school and social ties lay with the parishes of the proposed Hempnall ward (Bedingham, Hempnall, Morningthorpe, Shelton and Woodton). The Parish Council stated that, as with the above parishes, the wider orientation of Topcroft was towards the town of Long Stratton, whereas the other parishes of the proposed Earsham ward looked towards Harleston. The Conservatives, the Parish Council and Councillor Gunson therefore proposed that Topcroft be transferred to the proposed Hempnall ward. However, the Conservatives also proposed to retain good electoral equality in Earsham ward by transferring Shelton parish from the proposed Hempnall ward.

183 Under Topcroft Parish Council's proposals, Earsham ward (comprising the parishes of Alburgh, Denton, Earsham and Wortwell) would have 9% fewer electors per councillor than the district average (16% fewer electors than the average by 2006). Hempnall ward (comprising the parishes of Bedingham, Hempnall, Morningthorpe, Shelton, Topcroft and Woodton) would have 15% more electors per councillor than the average (9% more than the average by 2006).

184 The Conservatives' proposed Earsham ward (as above, but also including the parish of Shelton) would have 2% more electors per councillor than the average (5% fewer than the average by 2006), while their proposed Hempnall ward (as above, but without Shelton parish) would have 4% more electors per councillor than the average (1% fewer electors than the average by 2006).

185 As discussed in the previous section, respondents from the existing Beauchamp ward put forward alternative proposals for the eastern part of the district based on the existing council size of 47. These proposals would entail the inclusion of Thwaite parish in a revised Brooke ward and a revised Ditchingham & Broome ward comprising the parishes of Broome, Ditchingham and Ellingham. As discussed in paragraph 45, we are proposing to confirm the proposed 46-member council as final, and on this council size the revised Ditchingham & Broome ward would have 9% more electors per councillor than the district average (1% more than the average by 2006).

186 Having carefully considered the representations received, we have decided to confirm the draft recommendation for the proposed wards as final. We note in particular that Ditchingham & Broome and Earsham wards (with the exception of Topcroft) have received a measure of local support. As detailed in the previous section, our decision to confirm the draft recommendation for a 46-member council limited the extent to which the alternative 47-member scheme put forward by respondents from the existing Beauchamp ward could be taken into consideration. We also do not consider that we have received sufficient evidence to depart from the LGCE's proposals in this area, and note that their proposals would divide the contiguous villages of Ellingham and Kirby Cane between district wards.

187 We note that the Conservatives' proposal to transfer Topcroft parish to Hempnall ward and Shelton parish to Earsham ward would enable the preference of Topcroft Parish Council to be reflected while also retaining good electoral equality in this part of the district. However, we are not convinced by the evidence received that the transfer of Shelton parish would meet our objectives. Bearing in mind its road links with and close proximity to the villages of Fritton and Morningthorpe in Morningthorpe parish, as well as its position to the west of Topcroft and proximity to the A140 and Long Stratton town, we consider that community identity would best be reflected by the continued inclusion of Shelton parish in Hempnall ward.

188 We therefore gave careful consideration to the proposal to transfer Topcroft parish alone, but noted that this would result in a relatively high level of over-representation in the proposed Earsham ward. We would not generally recommend wards with such an electoral variance. Although we acknowledge the views of Topcroft Parish Council and the other three respondents opposing the draft recommendations in this area, we are not convinced that the evidence received would justify making an exception in this case. In particular, we do not consider that the services and social arrangements to which they refer would necessarily be disrupted by the LGCE's proposals. We received no other alternative proposals for this area, and are not proposing to depart from the draft recommendations. Our final recommendations would provide the same levels of electoral equality as the draft recommendations, and are illustrated on Map 4.

Clavering, Marshland and Waveney wards

189 The single-member wards of Clavering, Marshland and Waveney are situated in the east of the district. Clavering ward comprises the parishes of Haddiscoe, Hales, Heckingham, Norton Subcourse, Raveningham and Thurlton, while Marshland ward comprises the parishes of Aldeby, Burgh St Peter, Gillingham, Toft Monks and Wheatacre. Waveney ward comprises the parishes of Broome, Ellingham, Geldeston, Kirby Cane and Stockton. All three wards are forecast to be over-represented in 2006. At present, Clavering ward has 4% fewer electors per councillor than the district average (11% fewer than the average by 2006). Marshland and Waveney wards are over-represented both now and in 2006, with 19% and 21% fewer electors per councillor than the average respectively (23% and 27% fewer than the average by 2006).

190 At Stage One, the District Council proposed that the existing Marshland ward, except the parish of Gillingham, be combined with the parishes of Haddiscoe, Norton Subcourse and Thurlton, from Clavering ward, to form a new single-member Thurlton ward. It commented that these parishes were similar in nature, that there was support for this proposal from Haddiscoe and Burgh St Peter parish councils, and that it was felt that Norton Subcourse and Thurlton parishes should be retained in the same ward. As detailed in the previous section, the parish of Broome, currently in Waveney ward, would be transferred under the District Council's proposals to a new single-member Ditchingham & Broome ward. The remainder of Waveney ward, together with Gillingham parish and the remainder of Clavering ward, the parishes of Hales, Heckingham and Raveningham, would then form a new single-member Gillingham ward. The District Council again commented that there was local support for these proposals from Stockton Parish Meeting, and that the ward reflected close links between Ellingham and Kirby Cane parishes, and between Hales and Heckingham parishes.

191 The LGCE based its draft recommendations on the District Council's scheme, which was also supported by the Conservatives and the Independents, considering that it would best meet the statutory criteria in this area. It noted that these proposals would resolve the over-representation of the existing Clavering, Marshland and Waveney wards, and that they sought to reflect local community identities and interests. The LGCE considered that the proposed Gillingham and Thurlton wards would possess good internal road communications, and concurred with the view expressed by the District Council that the relatively sparsely populated rural parishes of Thurlton ward are similar in character. It also noted that further improvements in electoral equality in these wards was hindered to the west by the River Chet and the town of

Loddon, and further south by the undesirability of separating the contiguous parishes of Ellingham and Kirby Cane.

192 Under the LGCE's draft recommendations, Gillingham ward (comprising the parishes of Ellingham, Geldeston, Gillingham, Hales, Heckingham, Kirby Cane, Ravensingham and Stockton) would have 18% more electors per councillor than the district average (10% more than the average by 2006). Thurlton ward (comprising the parishes of Aldeby, Burgh St Peter, Haddiscoe, Norton Subcourse, Thurlton, Toft Monks and Wheatacre) would have 13% more electors per councillor than the average (6% more than the average by 2006).

193 At Stage Three, the District Council, the Conservatives and the Independents expressed broad support for the draft recommendations. However, as previously discussed, respondents from the existing Beauchamp ward put forward alternative proposals for the eastern part of the district based on the existing council size of 47. These would entail the inclusion of the parishes of Hales and Heckingham (from the proposed Gillingham ward) in a two-member ward together with the parishes of Chedgrave, Langley with Hardley and Loddon. Under their proposals Ellingham parish would also be transferred from Gillingham ward to a revised Ditchingham & Broome ward.

194 Having carefully considered the representations received, we also have decided to confirm the draft recommendation for the proposed Gillingham and Thurlton wards as final. As detailed in the previous section, our decision to confirm the draft recommendation for a 46-member council limited the extent to which the alternative 47-member scheme put forward by respondents from the existing Beauchamp ward could be taken into consideration. We note that their proposal to transfer Ellingham, Hales and Heckingham parishes would create a reduced Gillingham ward with a higher variance than we would normally seek to recommend, and we do not consider that we have received sufficient evidence to depart from the LGCE's proposals in this area. Our final recommendations would provide the same levels of electoral equality as the draft recommendations, and are illustrated on Map 4.

Electoral cycle

195 By virtue of the amendments made to the Local Government Act 1992 by the Local Government Commission for England (Transfer of Functions) Order 2001, we have no powers to make recommendations concerning the electoral cycle.

Conclusions

196 Having considered carefully all the representations and evidence received in response to the LGCE's consultation report, we have decided substantially to endorse its draft recommendations, subject to the following amendments:

- in Wymondham town, we propose five single-member wards of Abbey, Cromwells Northfields, Rustens and Town, based on the District Council's Stage One proposals, subject to amendments to provide better communication links within the wards, and to address the resulting electoral imbalances;
- we propose changing the names of the proposed Chedgrave, Poringland and Pulhams wards to Chedgrave & Thurton, Poringland with the Framinghams and Beck Vale respectively.

197 We conclude that, in South Norfolk:

- there should be a reduction in council size from 47 to 46;
- there should be 36 wards, five fewer than at present;
- the boundaries of 37 of the existing wards should be modified.

198 Table 4 shows the impact of our final recommendations on electoral equality, comparing them with the current arrangements, based on 2001 and 2006 electorate figures.

Table 4: Comparison of current and recommended electoral arrangements

	2001 electorate		2006 forecast electorate	
	Current arrangements	Final recommendations	Current arrangements	Final recommendations
Number of councillors	47	46	47	46
Number of wards	41	36	41	36
Average number of electors per councillor	1,898	1,940	2,000	2,044
Number of wards with a variance more than 10 per cent from the average	25	10	32	1
Number of wards with a variance more than 20 per cent from the average	16	0	23	0

199 As Table 4 shows, our recommendations would result in a reduction in the number of wards with an electoral variance of more than 10% from 25 to 10, with no wards varying by more than 20% from the district average. This level of electoral equality would improve further in 2006, with only one ward, Harleston, varying by more than 10% from the average, at 12%. We conclude that our recommendations would best meet the statutory criteria.

Final recommendation

South Norfolk District Council should comprise 46 councillors serving 36 wards, as detailed and named in Tables 1 and 2, and illustrated on Map 3, Map 4 and in Appendix A including the large map inside the back cover.

Parish and town council electoral arrangements

200 When reviewing parish electoral arrangements, we are required to comply as far as is reasonably practicable with the rules set out in Schedule 11 to the 1972 Act. The Schedule states that if a parish is to be divided between different district wards, it should also be divided into parish wards, so that each parish ward lies wholly within a single ward of the district. In the LGCE's draft recommendations report it proposed consequential changes to the warding arrangements for the towns of Diss and Wymondham and the parishes of Costessey and Roydon to reflect the proposed district wards. At the request of Cringleford Parish Council, it also proposed an increase in the number of councillors representing the parish, while at the request of the District Council it proposed increasing the number of councillors representing the parish of Hethersett.

201 The town of Diss is served by 13 councillors and is not warded. In the light of its draft recommendations in this area, the LGCE proposed the creation of two new town council wards, Diss Town ward and Heywood ward, to facilitate the division of the town between the proposed Bressingham & Burston and Diss wards. The boundary between the proposed Heywood and Diss Town town wards should reflect the proposed district ward boundary. The LGCE proposed that the new Diss Town ward return 12 councillors and the new Heywood ward should return one councillor.

202 At Stage Three, Diss Town Council opposed the warding of the parish between district wards, considering that the division proposed would be detrimental to the community. However, Councillors Ian and Jill Caldwell (Diss Town ward) supported the LGCE's proposals, considering that the Heywood area had stronger links with the surrounding rural parishes than with the Diss urban area. Having considered all the evidence received, and in light of the confirmation of the proposed district wards in the area, we are confirming the draft recommendation for warding Diss Town as final.

Final recommendation

Diss Town Council should comprise 13 councillors, as at present, representing two wards: Diss Town (returning 12 councillors) and Heywood (returning one councillor). The boundary between the two town wards should reflect the proposed district ward boundary, as illustrated and named on Map A3 in Appendix A.

203 The town of Wymondham is currently served by 15 councillors representing five wards: Abbey ward, Cromwells ward, Northfields ward, Rustens ward and Town ward, each represented by three councillors. At Stage One Wymondham Town Council proposed that its existing number of wards and councillors be retained. In the light of its draft recommendations in this area, the LGCE proposed to modify the boundaries between the town council wards to reflect the new district warding arrangements. It did not propose to modify the level of representation of any of the wards concerned.

204 The LGCE first proposed modifying the boundaries of Cromwells town council ward to reflect the revised Cromwells single-member district ward. Second, it put forward revised Abbey, Northfields, Rustens and Town town council wards based on the revised district wards of the same names put forward by the District Council. However, as the LGCE departed from the District Council's proposals to combine these four single-member district wards into a pair of two-member wards, Abbey and Northfields town council wards would together be coterminous with the LGCE's proposed two-member Abbey & Northfields district ward. Similarly, Rustens and Town town council wards would together be coterminous with the proposed two-member Rustens & Town district ward.

205 As a further result of the LGCE's amendments to the District Council's proposed district wards, Smithson Close would be placed in Town ward instead of being divided between Northfields and Town wards. It also proposed that Bellrope Close, Bellrope Lane and Ringers Close be included in Town ward rather than Rustens ward.

206 At Stage Three, the District Council, the Conservatives, South Norfolk Liberal Democrats, Wymondham Town Council and county councillor Hockaday (Wymondham division) all supported the retention of five single-member district wards, to be coterminous with the five town council wards proposed by the LGCE.

207 As previously discussed, we are departing from the LGCE's draft recommendations in this area. We have decided to retain five single-member district wards representing the town in the light of further evidence received at Stage Three. These district wards would reflect the LGCE's proposed five town council wards, subject to a number of amendments. We are

therefore proposing to modify the boundaries of the town council wards to reflect the new district warding. We are not proposing to modify the level of representation of any of the wards concerned.

Final recommendation
Wymondham Town Council should comprise 15 councillors, as at present, representing five wards: Abbey, Cromwells, Northfields, Rustens and Town, each returning three councillors. The boundaries between the five town council wards should reflect the proposed district ward boundaries in the area, as illustrated and named on the large map at the back of the report.

208 The parish of Costessey is currently divided into two parish wards, New Costessey, represented by eight councillors, and Old Costessey, represented by seven councillors. In light of its draft recommendations in this area, the LGCE proposed to modify the boundaries between the parish wards to reflect the new district warding. Further, it also proposed to modify the level of representation of Old Costessey ward to reflect more accurately the distribution of the parish electorate. The LGCE proposed that both New Costessey and Old Costessey wards be served by eight councillors, increasing the number of parish councillors from 15 to 16.

209 In response to the LGCE’s consultation report, Costessey Parish Council stated that it supported the draft recommendations for its own electoral arrangements. Having considered all the evidence received, and in light of the confirmation of the proposed district wards in the area, we are confirming the draft recommendation for warding Costessey parish as final.

Final recommendation
Costessey Parish Council should comprise 16 parish councillors, instead of the current 15, representing two wards: New Costessey and Old Costessey, each returning eight councillors. The parish ward boundary between the two wards should reflect the proposed district ward boundary, as illustrated and named on Map A2 in Appendix A.

210 The parish of Roydon is currently served by nine councillors and is not warded. In the light of its draft recommendations in this area, the LGCE proposed to create two new parish wards, East ward and West ward, to facilitate the division of the parish between the proposed Bressingham & Burston and Roydon wards. The boundary between the proposed East and West parish wards should reflect the proposed district ward boundary. The LGCE proposed that the new East ward return eight councillors and the new West ward return one councillor.

211 In response to the LGCE’s consultation report, no comments were received from the Parish Council. In light of the confirmation of the proposed district wards in the area, we are confirming the draft recommendation for warding Roydon parish as final.

Final recommendation
Roydon Parish Council should comprise nine parish councillors, as at present, representing two wards: East (returning eight councillors) and West (returning one councillor). The parish ward boundary between the two wards should reflect the proposed district ward boundary, as illustrated and named on Map A4 in Appendix A.

212 The parish of Cringleford is currently served by nine councillors and is not warded. At Stage One, Cringleford Parish Council, supported by the District Council, proposed that the

parish be served by 11 councillors. The LGCE stated that it was content to put forward this proposal as part of its draft recommendations.

213 In response to the LGCE's consultation report, Cringleford Parish Council stated that it supported the proposed increase in the number of parish councillors. Having considered all the evidence received, we are confirming the draft recommendation for Cringleford parish as final.

Final recommendation

Cringleford Parish Council should comprise 11 parish councillors, instead of the current nine.

214 The parish of Hethersett is currently served by 11 councillors and is not warded. At Stage One, the District Council proposed that the parish be served by 13 councillors, in response to consultation it had undertaken with Hethersett Parish Council. The LGCE stated that it was content to put forward this proposal as part of its draft recommendations.

215 In response to the LGCE's consultation report, no further comments were received from the District Council or the Parish Council. Having considered all the evidence received, we are confirming the draft recommendation for Hethersett parish as final.

Final recommendation

Hethersett Parish Council should comprise 13 parish councillors, instead of the current 11.

Map 3: Final recommendations for South Norfolk (West)

Map 4: Final recommendations for South Norfolk (East)

6 WHAT HAPPENS NEXT?

216 Having completed the review of electoral arrangements in South Norfolk and submitted our final recommendations to The Electoral Commission, we have fulfilled our statutory obligation under the Local Government Act 1992 (as amended by SI 2001 No 3692).

217 It is now up to The Electoral Commission to decide whether to endorse our recommendations, with or without modification, and to implement them by means of an Order. Such an Order will not be made before 10 September 2002.

218 All further correspondence concerning our recommendations and the matters discussed in this report should be addressed to:

The Secretary
The Electoral Commission
Trevelyan House
Great Peter Street
London SW1P 2HW

APPENDIX A

Final recommendations for South Norfolk: Detailed mapping

The following maps illustrate our proposed ward boundaries for the South Norfolk area.

Map A1 illustrates, in outline form, the proposed ward boundaries within the district and indicates the areas which are shown on Maps A2, A3, A4 and the large map at the back of this report.

Map A2 illustrates the proposed warding of Costessey parish.

Map A3 illustrates the proposed warding of Diss town.

Map A4 illustrates the proposed warding of Roydon parish.

The **large map** inserted at the back of this report illustrates the proposed warding arrangements for Wymondham.

Map A1: Final recommendations for South Norfolk: Key map

Map A2: Proposed warding of Costessey Parish

Map A3: Proposed warding of Diss Town

Map A4: Proposed warding of Roydon Parish