

Contents

Summary	1
1 Introduction	3
2 Analysis and final recommendations	5
Submissions received	6
Electorate figures	6
Council size	7
Electoral fairness	8
General analysis	8
Electoral arrangements	9
North Purbeck and Wareham	9
West Purbeck	11
East Purbeck	14
Conclusions	15
Parish electoral arrangements	15
3 What happens next?	17
4 Mapping	19
Appendices	
A Glossary and abbreviations	21
B Table B1: Final recommendations for Purbeck District Council	25

Summary

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

The review aims to ensure that the number of voters represented by each councillor is approximately the same. The Commission commenced the review in 2011.

This review is being conducted as follows:

Stage starts	Description
23 August 2011	Submission of proposals of ward patterns to the LGBCE
15 November 2011	LGBCE's analysis and formulation of draft recommendations
29 May 2012	Publication of draft recommendations and consultation on them
10 July 2012	Analysis of submissions received and formulation of final recommendations

Draft recommendations

We proposed a council size of 25 comprising five single-member wards, four two-member wards and four three-member wards. During the information gathering period on a warding pattern for Purbeck, we received 11 submissions, including warding proposals from Purbeck District Council.

Our draft recommendations for Purbeck sought to reflect the evidence of community identities received while ensuring good electoral equality and providing for effective and convenient local government. The proposals were broadly based on those of the Council. Where we proposed modifications, it was in order to better reflect our statutory criteria.

Submissions received

During the consultation on the draft recommendations for Purbeck, 71 submissions were received. These included submissions from Purbeck District Council, the Liberal Democrat Group, South Dorset Conservative Association, a county councillor, a district councillor, 12 parishes and 54 local residents. A further three submissions were received after the consultation deadline. These late submissions were from a parish council, a district councillor and a local resident.

All submissions can be viewed on our website at www.lgbce.org.uk

Analysis and final recommendations

Electorate figures

Purbeck District Council submitted electorate forecasts for 2017, a date five years on from the scheduled publication of our final recommendations. This is prescribed in the Local Democracy, Economic Development and Construction Act 2009 ('the 2009 Act'). These forecasts projected an increase in the electorate of approximately 3.5% over this period.

Having toured the area and considered the information provided by the Council, we proposed that several developments and consequent elector projections be discounted from the electorate forecasts. We were not persuaded that the relevant developments would be realised by 2017. Discounting these developments resulted in electorate figures for the district with a proposed increase of approximately 1.4%.

Following publication of our draft recommendations, the Council expressed concern that we had used these revised electorate figures. The Council argued that developments which the Commission had discounted, but were part of the Council's draft Core Strategy, were likely to take place. We remain of the view that no further evidence has been provided to demonstrate that the projected electorate figures used for consultation on the draft recommendations should be revised. Therefore, we are satisfied that these figures are the best available at the present time and form the basis for the final recommendations.

General analysis

We have considered all submissions received during the consultation on our draft recommendations. As a result, we have proposed one amendment to a ward boundary in the north Purbeck area and another amendment to the boundary between Wool and Creech Barrow wards. Elsewhere, we have confirmed our draft recommendations as final.

Our final recommendations for Purbeck are that the Council should have 25 members representing five single-member, four two-member and four three-member wards. Only two wards will have a variance of more than 10% from the average for the district by 2017. Having taken into account the evidence we have received during consultation, we believe that our final recommendations will ensure good electoral equality while reflecting community identities and providing for effective and convenient local government.

What happens next?

We have now completed our review of electoral arrangements for Purbeck District Council. An Order – the legal document which brings into force our recommendations – will be laid in Parliament and will be implemented subject to Parliamentary scrutiny. The draft Order will provide for new electoral arrangements which will come into force at the next elections for Purbeck District Council, in 2015.

We are grateful to all those organisations and individuals who have contributed to the review through expressing their views and advice. The full report is available to download at www.lgbce.org.uk

1 Introduction

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

2 We wrote to Purbeck District Council as well as other interested parties inviting the submission of proposals on warding arrangements for the Council. The submissions received during this information gathering period informed our *Draft recommendations on the new electoral arrangements for Purbeck District Council*, which were published on 29 May 2012. Consultation on our draft recommendations took place until 9 July 2012.

What is an electoral review?

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

4 Our three main considerations – equalising the number of electors each councillor represents; reflecting community identity; and providing for effective and convenient local government – are set out in legislation¹ and our task is to strike the best balance between them when making our recommendations. Our powers, as well as the guidance we have provided for electoral reviews and further information on the review process, can be found on our website at www.lgbce.org.uk

Why are we conducting a review in Purbeck?

5 We decided to conduct this review because based on the January 2011 electorate figures, 43% of its wards exceed the 10% variance threshold. The largest outlier is the two-member St Martin ward which contains 28% fewer electors than the district average.

How will the recommendations affect you?

6 The recommendations will determine how many councillors will serve on the Council. They will also decide which ward you vote in, which other communities are in that ward and, in some instances, which parish or town council wards you vote in. Your ward name may change, as may the names of parish or town council wards in the area. If you live in a parish, the name or boundaries of that parish will not change as a result of our recommendations.

¹ Schedule 2 to the Local Democracy, Economic Development and Construction Act 2009.

What is the Local Government Boundary Commission for England?

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

Members of the Commission are:

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

Chief Executive: Alan Cogbill
Director of Reviews: Archie Gall

2 Analysis and final recommendations

8 We have now finalised our recommendations on the new electoral arrangements for Purbeck District Council.

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

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

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

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

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

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

² Schedule 2 to the Local Democracy, Economic Development and Construction Act 2009.

Submissions received

14 Prior to, and during, the initial stages of the review, we visited Purbeck District Council ('the Council') and met with members and officers. We are grateful to all concerned for their co-operation and assistance. We received a submission from the Council relating to council size, 11 submissions during our information gathering period, including a further submission from the Council during the formulation of the draft recommendations, and 71 submissions during our consultation on draft recommendations. A further three submissions were received shortly after the consultation closed on draft recommendations. All submissions may be inspected at both our offices and those of the Council. All representations received can also be viewed on our website at www.lgbce.org.uk

15 We take the evidence received during consultation very seriously and the submissions were carefully considered before we formulated our final recommendations. Officers from the Commission have been assisted by officers at Purbeck District Council who have provided relevant information throughout the review.

Electorate figures

16 As part of this review, the Council submitted electorate forecasts for 2017, a period five years on from the scheduled publication of our final recommendations in 2012. These forecasts projected an increase in the electorate of approximately 3.5% to 2017. This included a number of allocated and unallocated sites which the Council had included in its draft Core Strategy as proposed developments.

17 During the preparation of the draft recommendations we requested further information regarding several of the developments in the Council's draft Core Strategy. We were satisfied that some developments were ongoing and, as a result, accepted the Council's projected electorate increases in these areas. However, we were concerned about the intended timing of developments planned to take place in the areas of Lytchett Matravers, Upton, Wareham, and Swanage. These proposed sites did not have planning permission, outline planning permission, or a developer appointed, and we understood that in some cases a specific site for the development had yet to be identified.

18 Having toured the areas concerned and considered the information provided by the Council, we decided that these developments and consequent elector projections are currently too speculative to be taken into account in the electorate forecast.

19 Discounting these developments results in electorate figures for the district with a proposed increase of approximately 1.4% in the period to 2017. We were satisfied that as a result of our amendments, these figures were the best available at that time. They therefore formed the basis for the draft recommendations.

20 The result of the revised electorate forecasts meant that the projected variances proposed in submissions received during the information gathering stage, including that of the Council's, have changed. These may therefore appear different to those given in the submissions received.

21 We encouraged the Council and those involved with the developments to

comment on the likelihood of the further development being built or occupied by 2017.

22 During the consultation on the draft recommendations, the Council expressed concern that we had used the revised electorate figures for our draft recommendations. The Council argued that developments which we had discounted, but were part of the Council's draft Core Strategy, were still likely to take place. A submission from the South Dorset Conservative Association also expressed disappointment that the Commission had used 'different figures for the projected electorate than Purbeck District Council'.

23 Having considered the evidence provided by the Council and the South Dorset Conservative Association, we remain of the view that the projected electorate figures used for consultation on the draft recommendations are the best available at the present time and form the basis for the final recommendations.

Council size

24 This review began in May 2011 with discussions regarding council size. At that point in time the Council elected by thirds and therefore needed to ensure any council size proposals were divisible by three.³ The Council subsequently made a proposal for a council size of 27 members, an increase of three from the current council size of 24. In support of its proposal, the Council argued that an increase was necessary to ensure that it had enough members to undertake the necessary work, provide competition for membership on panels and reduce duplication of membership on various bodies. Having considered the evidence received, we were minded to adopt a council size of 27 as proposed by the Council.

25 During the information gathering stage of the review the Council requested that it be given the opportunity to consider changing its electoral cycle. We agreed to provide the Council with sufficient time to consider a change to its electoral cycle on the basis that it was committed to this process. We considered that the formulation of the draft recommendations for the district should take place after the Council had convened its special meeting for the necessary resolution to change its electoral cycle. This allowed the Council to consider a scheme based on its new electoral cycle.

26 On 21 February 2012, the Council resolved to change its electoral cycle to whole council elections. The Council also resolved that this change in electoral cycle would be implemented at elections in 2015. The resolution to change its electoral cycle removed the necessity of having a council size divisible by three and the presumption in favour of three-member wards. Subsequently, the Council submitted an alternative warding pattern based on a council size of 25. In light of the change to the electoral cycle, and the evidence received from the Council supporting a council size of 25, we explored whether we should reconsider our recommendation for a council size of 27.

27 The Council argued that while an increase in council size was necessary, it did not require a council size of 27. The argument for an increase was based on an

³ Schedule 2 to the Local Democracy, Economic Development and Construction Act 2009 provides that where a local authority elects by thirds, there should be a presumption in favour of the Commission recommending a uniform pattern of three-member wards.

additional councillor to raise the Audit and Governance Committee to seven members. The Council noted that at the time of proposing a council size of 27 it had been bound by its then cycle of elections by thirds and that any council size proposed was required to be divisible by three. In its submission, the Council also stated that it had listened to representations from town and parish councils which indicated concerns over the financial impact of an increase in council size to 27 members.

28 Having considered the evidence, we proposed a council size of 25 as part of our draft recommendations. We considered a council size of 25 provides for suitable governance arrangements for the Council and allows for a warding pattern providing the best balance between the statutory criteria. In recommending a council size of 25, we considered that this figure would enable the authority to discharge its functions.

29 We have therefore based the draft and final recommendations for Purbeck District Council on a council size of 25 members.

Electoral fairness

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

31 In seeking to achieve electoral fairness, we work out the average number of electors per councillor. The district average is calculated by dividing the total electorate of the district (36,542 in 2011 and 37,057 by 2017) by the total number of councillors representing them on the council, 25 under our draft recommendations. Therefore, the average number of electors per councillor under our draft recommendations is 1,462 in 2011 and 1,482 by 2017.

32 Under our final recommendations, 11 of our proposed 13 wards will have electoral variances of not more than 10% from the average for the district by 2017. We are therefore satisfied that we have achieved good levels of electoral fairness for Purbeck.

General analysis

33 Prior to formulating our draft recommendations, we received 11 submissions including a district-wide proposal from the Council. The submissions received also included two district-wide schemes based on a council size of 24 members, from Wareham St Martin Parish Council and a local resident. We received four further representations that did not support an increase in council size to 27 members. These representations argued for the current council size of 24 to be retained but did not provide persuasive evidence.

34 After the Council resolved to change its electoral cycle, as discussed in paragraphs 25-26, we received a further district-wide warding proposal from the Council, this time based on a council size of 25. This new warding pattern proposed that many of the existing wards be retained, but introduced an extra member to the Swanage North area. The Council's proposal would have resulted in three wards

being projected to have a variance greater than +/- 10% by 2017. These were the wards of Swanage South, St Martin, and Wool which are projected to have 12% fewer, 11% fewer and 16% more electors than the district average by 2017, respectively. The Council provided some evidence of community identity and convenient and effective local government in support of its scheme, detailing each ward on an individual basis.

35 Across the district, we broadly based our draft recommendations on the Council's proposals, subject to amendments to ensure the best balance between our statutory criteria.

36 Our draft recommendations were for a pattern of five single-member wards, four two-member wards, and four three-member wards. We considered that our draft recommendations provided good electoral equality while providing a good reflection of community identities and interests where we have received such evidence.

37 During consultation on our draft recommendations for Purbeck, 71 submissions were received. These included submissions from Purbeck District Council, the Liberal Democrat Group, South Dorset Conservative Association, a county councillor, a district councillor, 12 parishes and 54 local residents. A further three submissions were received after the consultation deadline. The three late submissions were from a parish council, a district councillor and a local resident.

38 We have considered all submissions received during consultation on our draft recommendations. In our final recommendations for Purbeck, we have sought to address evidence received during consultation and achieve good levels of electoral equality while reflecting community identities and interests.

39 Our final recommendations are for five single-member wards, four two-member wards and four three-member wards – a pattern unchanged from our draft recommendations. Two wards would have a variance of more than 10% from the average for the district by 2017. A summary of our proposed electoral arrangements is set out in Table B1 (on pages 25-26) and Map 1.

Electoral arrangements

40 This section of the report details the submissions we have received, our consideration of them, and our final recommendations for each area of Purbeck. The following areas of the authority are considered in turn:

- North Purbeck and Wareham (pages 9–11)
- West Purbeck (pages 11–14)
- East Purbeck (page 14)

41 Details of the final recommendations are set out in Table B1 on pages 25-26 and illustrated on Map 1 accompanying this report.

North Purbeck and Wareham

42 The draft recommendations for the north Purbeck and Wareham area were for a single-member Bere Regis ward, two-member Lytchett Matravers, Lytchett Minster & Upton East, Lytchett Minster & Upton West and St Martin wards and a three-member

Wareham ward. These wards are projected to have equal to the number of electors, 5% fewer, 8% more, equal to the number of electors, 7% fewer, and 5% more electors than the district average by 2017, respectively.

43 Our draft recommendations in this area were based on proposals submitted by the Council, with an amendment to provide for better electoral equality in our St Martin ward. This amendment created a new parish ward (Organford) in Lytchett Minster & Upton parish. One further minor amendment was proposed between Lytchett Minster & Upton East and Lytchett Minster & Upton West. This modification had no impact on electoral equality and avoided dividing a property between wards along Blandford Road North.

44 During consultation on our draft recommendations, we received seven submissions which made reference to the north Purbeck and Wareham area. Only the Council's submission specifically supported our draft recommendation for a three-member Wareham ward coterminous with the Wareham Town boundary, stating that the Council was 'pleased to see that overall the Council's proposals have been accepted' in this area.

45 Bloxworth Parish Meeting and Morden Parish Council opposed being included in the St Martin ward, and some evidence of community identity was provided by both submissions to demonstrate that these parishes look towards Bere Regis in the west and Lytchett Matravers and Lytchett Minster in the east. Wareham St Martin and Arne parish councils also supported the views of Bloxworth and Morden.

46 We considered the possibilities of moving Morden parish, Bloxworth parish, or both parishes out of St Martin ward. Transferring Morden parish into Lytchett Matravers ward would result in St Martin ward and Lytchett Matravers ward being forecast to have 16% fewer and 4% more electors than the district average by 2017, respectively. Transferring Bloxworth parish into Bere Regis ward would result in St Martin ward and Bere Regis ward being forecast to have 13% fewer and 12% more electors than the district average by 2017, respectively. Transferring both parishes out of St Martin would result in St Martin ward being projected to have 22% fewer electors than the average by 2017.

47 The Council re-submitted its original proposals for this area, which included Bloxworth and Morden parishes in St Martin ward. However, it expressed disappointment and considered that 'it felt pressured into submitting proposals to meet the criteria of electoral equality when community identity is evidently more important'.

48 Overall, we consider that the draft recommendations for Bloxworth and Morden parishes provide for the best balance between our statutory criteria in this area. We do not consider that sufficient evidence has been received to justify the consequential poor electoral equality that would result if they were transferred to other wards. We therefore confirm our draft recommendations in this area as final, with a small modification as outlined in paragraphs 51-53.

49 Councillor Brenton (Egdon Heath division) provided a scheme for the north and west areas of Purbeck. This included creating a North Wareham ward to include the settlement north of the railway line and south of the Heath area in Wareham Town and the Sandford area in Wareham St Martin parish. This warding pattern would result in a South Wareham ward based on the remainder of Wareham Town.

Councillor Brenton also proposed that Affpuddle & Turnerspudde parish, Moreton parish, Morden parish and Bloxworth parish form an expanded two-member ward with Bere Regis parish.

50 While we accept that Councillor Brenton's scheme would provide for a Bere Regis ward with reasonable community identity, it would also split Wareham and Wareham St Martin parishes, resulting in significant modifications and creating several knock-on effects. Without further modifications, the councillor's proposed Wareham South ward would be projected to contain 27% more electors than the district average by 2017. During the initial consultation on warding patterns, evidence was provided by the Council, Wareham St Martin Parish Council and Wareham Town Council which argued for Wareham to be in a separate ward to Wareham St Martin due to a lack of shared community identity. Consequently, we have decided not to adopt Councillor Brenton's proposals.

51 We received four submissions opposing our draft recommendation to create an Organford parish ward to improve electoral equality in St Martin ward. The Council considered that creating this ward would result in splitting an 'established community'. The Liberal Democrat Group also opposed an Organford parish ward and suggested two alternatives: the first to transfer Organford into Lytchett Minster & Upton West ward; the second to transfer Lytchett Minster into St Martin ward, which would also include the proposed Organford parish ward.

52 Wareham St Martin parish argued that it had 'no community connection' with the proposed Organford parish ward. A late submission was received from Lytchett Minster & Upton Town Council which similarly opposed the draft recommendation for an Organford parish ward, stating that 'the residents of Organford and Slepe have no connections with St Martin, their connections for schools, health, dentistry, library, shopping and community facilities are all in Lytchett Minster and Upton'.

53 In light of this evidence, we recommend that Organford parish ward be included in Lytchett Minster & Upton West ward. While this would result in St Martin ward being forecast to have 11% fewer electors than the district average by 2017, it avoids unnecessarily dividing community connections between Organford, Slepe, Lytchett Minster and Upton. It also avoids creating an additional parish ward in Lytchett Minster & Upton parish. Lytchett Minster & Upton West ward would contain 4% more electors than the average by 2017.

54 No other comments were received on the draft recommendations in the north Purbeck and Wareham area. We therefore confirm as final the draft recommendations in this area, with the exception of a minor modification to include Organford in Lytchett Minster & Upton West ward.

West Purbeck

55 The area of west Purbeck covers the Purbeck Hills, the Jurassic Coast and a number of settlements and Ministry of Defence (MoD) sites. The majority of electors reside in the parish of Wool.

56 Our draft recommendations for the west Purbeck area were for a single-member Lulworth & Winfrith ward and a three-member Wool ward. These wards are projected to have 4% fewer and 11% more electors than the district average by 2017,

respectively.

57 The draft recommendations were a departure from the scheme proposed by the Council. We were concerned that the Council's proposed Wool ward contained no internal communication links between the areas of north and south Wool. Furthermore, the Council's proposed ward did not achieve good electoral equality, as the Wool ward is projected to have 16% more electors than the district average by 2017. We were also concerned that the Council's proposed ward appeared to split the Wool community, particularly as the Council had proposed that Bovington Middle School, part of the Cologne Road area, would be included in the West Purbeck ward. We considered this school to be part of the wider Wool community.

58 During consultation on the draft recommendations, few comments were received for the single-member Lulworth & Winfrith ward. The county councillor for this area, Councillor Brenton, commented that 'Winfrith and Chaldon parishes seem quite happy with the proposal to move into a coastal ward along with Lulworth, as they have many similar issues and contacts'. However, Councillor Brenton opposed the proposals for the Wool ward, as she considered that developments in Wool would create a future electoral imbalance. Our draft recommendations for Purbeck do, however, have regard for the 2017 projected electorate in Purbeck, and account for known planned development in Wool.

59 The majority of submissions received during consultation on the draft recommendations were in opposition to our draft recommendations for a Wool ward. We received 69 submissions commenting on west Purbeck wards. A total of 33 submissions commented specifically on Affpuddle & Turnerspudde parish, while 23 submissions were received commenting on East Stoke and East Holme parishes. The remainder commented on Moreton parish and the Wool ward more broadly.

60 In general, these submissions opposed a three-member Wool ward which included several rural parishes, arguing that Wool is an urban area and should not form a ward with rural parishes.

61 The Council re-submitted the same ward pattern it had proposed during the initial consultation on warding arrangements. This included a single-member rural Winfrith ward, comprising the parishes of Affpuddle & Turnerspudde, Moreton, Winfrith Newburgh and Chaldon Herring. The Council's warding pattern also included a two-member Wool ward coterminous with the parish boundary – with the exception of the Cologne Road area, which it proposed be transferred into a single-member rural West Purbeck ward. The Council's single-member West Purbeck ward would comprise East Holme, East Stoke, Coombe Keynes, East Lulworth and West Lulworth parishes along with the Cologne Road area of Wool parish. The Council's proposals would result in West Purbeck, Winfrith and Wool wards projected to have 8% more, 8% fewer and 16% more electors than the average by 2017. As outlined in paragraph 57, we did not adopt the Council's proposal as our draft recommendations.

62 The Council argued that the Cologne Road area of Wool parish, which contains Bovington Middle School and 455 electors, should be included with parishes to the east and south of Wool. During consultation on the draft recommendations, the Council provided additional evidence that Bovington Middle School will become redundant as Purbeck is moving to a two-tier education system in 2013. Under the draft recommendations, we considered that the school is part of the wider Wool

community. However, we remained concerned that the Council's proposal for Wool appeared to result in a relatively arbitrary split of part of the Wool community.

63 The Council expressed strong concerns that our recommended Wool ward does 'not reflect significant community identities and linkages'. It argued that 'the road network between Wool and Affpuddle & Turnerspuddle and Moreton is poor and the people in these rural areas have little reason to visit Wool. Their more natural destination is Bere Regis [in a different ward], Dorchester [West Dorset District Council] or Puddletown [West Dorset District Council] where the communities' school is situated.' The Council further added that 'any ward members (where Wool constituents will constitute the large majority) are likely to focus more on the issues of Wool to the detriment of these small villages, where the issues are completely different'.

64 Moreton Parish Council and Affpuddle & Turnerspuddle Parish Council made similar arguments to those expressed by the Council, stating that there was little or no connection with Wool. Similar arguments were also made by local residents, South Dorset Conservative Association and three district and county councillors. Wool Parish Council opposed the draft recommendations for Wool and proposed a three-member Wool ward coterminous with the parish boundary, which would result in Wool ward being projected to have 31% more electors than the district average by 2017.

65 We recognise that there is little or no shared identity between Wool and the parishes of Affpuddle & Turnerspuddle and Moreton. However, our draft recommendations for Purbeck strived to avoid dividing communities and to avoid creating wards with poor electoral equality. We consider that our draft recommendations provide the best balance of the statutory criteria.

66 East Stoke Parish Council also opposed the proposed Wool ward. It argued that it had some shared community identity with Wool parish but 'no real connection at all with the parishes of Moreton and Affpuddle & Turnerspuddle'. East Stoke Parish Council provided good evidence of a shared identity with the rural parishes of Coombe Keynes, East Lulworth, West Lulworth, and East Holme, and proposed that the current arrangements should be retained. However, under a council size of 25 members, this would not resolve the electoral imbalance in Wool.

67 The majority of the submissions which commented on East Stoke also related to East Holme. East Holme Parish Meeting provided evidence of a shared community identity with East Stoke, and commented that its links with Creech Barrow ward were 'much more tenuous'. East Stoke Parish Council provided several examples of shared community connections between itself and East Holme. Purbeck District Council also opposed East Holme and East Stoke being in separate wards. It considered that 'damaging this community connection in order to move approximately 37 electorate in East Holme does not seem sensible'. We received submissions from local residents which provided further evidence to support the argument that these two parishes should be together in one ward.

68 Under the draft recommendations, we proposed to include East Holme in Creech Barrow ward on the basis that it marginally improved electoral equality in Wool ward and appeared to have reasonably strong transport links both west into East Stoke and east into Creech Barrow ward. Under the draft recommendations the Wool ward was projected to have 11% more electors than the district average by

2017. Transferring East Holme into Wool ward would result in Wool and Creech Barrow wards being projected to have 12% more and 1% more electors than the district average by 2017, respectively. In light of the evidence received, we now recommend that East Holme should be included in a Wool ward with East Stoke, and modify our draft recommendations accordingly.

69 Despite the strong opposition for the three-member Wool ward proposal, we consider that the draft recommendations broadly provide the best balance between our statutory criteria. We have explored alternative warding arrangement options, all of which either resulted in unacceptably poor electoral equality or the arbitrary splitting of communities.

70 We therefore recommend a minor modification to our draft recommendations for Wool, which is to transfer East Holme parish from Creech Barrow ward into Wool ward to maintain the shared community identity East Holme has with East Stoke. This would result in a three-member Wool ward being forecast to have 12% more electors than the district average by 2017. We confirm as final our draft recommendation for a single-member Lulworth & Winfrith ward containing 4% fewer electors than the district average by 2017.

East Purbeck

71 East Purbeck is characterised by a mixture of rural villages, MoD sites, coastland, nature reserves and the tourist towns of Swanage and Corfe Castle.

72 Our draft recommendations for east Purbeck were broadly based on the proposals received from the Council. In turn, the Council's proposals retained the majority of the existing arrangements in east Purbeck. The draft recommendations for this area comprised Castle, Creech Barrow, and Langton single-member wards and Swanage North and Swanage South three-member wards. These wards are projected to have 5% more, 3% more, 6% fewer, 10% fewer and 2% fewer electors than the district average by 2017, respectively.

73 For the draft recommendations, we proposed two modifications to the Council's scheme for this area. The first modification was to include the parish of East Holme in Creech Barrow ward. As mentioned above, we have decided to include East Holme parish in Wool ward as part of our final recommendations. The second modification we proposed for the east Purbeck area was a minor modification to the boundary between Swanage North and Swanage South. The Council had proposed that the boundary ran along the backs of the properties on the south side of the High Street. We considered that the centre of the High Street provided a more logical and identifiable boundary and provided better electoral equality.

74 During the consultation on the draft recommendations, we did not receive any representations opposing our proposals for Swanage. The Council supported the recommendation, adding that it was 'content for the boundary between Swanage North and Swanage South to run along the middle of the High Street as proposed by the Commission'.

75 We did not receive any other comments on our proposed wards in the east Purbeck area. We therefore confirm our draft recommendations as final in this area, with the exception of a minor modification to transfer East Holme parish from Creech

Barrow ward to Wool ward.

Conclusions

76 Table 1 shows the impact of our final recommendations on electoral equality, based on 2011 and 2017 electorate figures.

Table 1: Summary of electoral arrangements

	Final recommendations	
	2011	2017
Number of councillors	25	25
Number of electoral wards	13	13
Average number of electors per councillor	1,462	1,482
Number of wards with a variance more than 10% from the average	2	2
Number of wards with a variance more than 20% from the average	0	0

Final recommendation

Purbeck District Council should comprise 25 councillors serving 13 wards, as detailed and named in Table B1 and illustrated on Map 1 accompanying this report.

Parish electoral arrangements

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

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

79 To meet our obligations under the 2009 Act, we propose consequential parish warding arrangements for the parishes of Lytchett Minster & Upton and Swanage.

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

Final recommendation

Lytchett Minster & Upton Town Council should return 15 parish councillors, as at present, representing two wards: Lytchett Minster & Upton East (returning seven members) and Lytchett Minster & Upton West (returning eight members). The proposed parish ward boundaries are illustrated on Map 1.

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

Final recommendation

Swanage Town Council should return 12 parish councillors, as at present, representing two wards: Swanage North (returning six members) and Swanage South (returning six members). The proposed parish ward boundaries are illustrated on Map 1.

3 What happens next?

82 We have now completed our review of electoral arrangements for Purbeck District Council. A draft Order – the legal document which brings into force our recommendations – will be laid in Parliament. The draft Order will provide for new electoral arrangements which will come into force at the next elections for Purbeck District Council in 2015.

Equalities

83 This report has been screened for impact on equalities, with due regard being given to the general equalities duties as set out in section 149 of the Equality Act 2010. As no potential negative impacts were identified, a full equality impact analysis is not required.

4 Mapping

Final recommendations for Purbeck

84 The following map illustrates our proposed ward boundaries for Purbeck District Council:

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

Appendix A

Glossary and abbreviations

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

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

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

Appendix B

Table B1: Final recommendations for Purbeck District Council

	Ward name	Number of councillors	Electorate (2011)	Number of electors per councillor	Variance from average %	Electorate (2017)	Number of electors per councillor	Variance from average %
1	Bere Regis	1	1,483	1,483	1%	1,488	1,488	0%
2	Castle	1	1,544	1,544	6%	1,549	1,549	5%
3	Creech Barrow	1	1,488	1,488	2%	1,493	1,493	1%
4	Langton	1	1,354	1,354	-7%	1,392	1,392	-6%
5	Lulworth & Winfrith	1	1,417	1,417	-3%	1,427	1,427	-4%
6	Lytchett Matravers	2	2,804	1,402	-4%	2,821	1,411	-5%
7	Lytchett Minster & Upton East	2	3,166	1,583	8%	3,187	1,594	8%
8	Lytchett Minster & Upton West	2	3,055	1,528	5%	3,075	1,538	4%
9	St Martin	2	2,617	1,309	-10%	2,624	1,312	-11%
10	Swanage North	3	3,924	1,308	-11%	4,016	1,339	-10%
11	Swanage South	3	4,234	1,411	-3%	4,362	1,454	-2%
12	Wareham	3	4,583	1,528	5%	4,649	1,550	5%

Table B1 (cont.): Final recommendations for Purbeck District Council

Ward name	Number of councillors	Electorate (2011)	Number of electors per councillor	Variance from average %	Electorate (2017)	Number of electors per councillor	Variance from average %
13 Wool	3	4,873	1,624	11%	4,974	1,658	12%
Totals	25	36,542	–	–	37,057	–	–
Averages	–	–	1,462	–	–	1,482	–

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

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