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Summary

The Local Government Boundary Commission for England is an independent body that 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 Shepway District Council to provide improved levels of electoral equality across the authority.

The review aims to ensure that the number of voters represented by each councillor is approximately the same. The Commission commenced the review in September 2012. This review is being conducted as follows:

Stage starts	Description
23 October 2012	Consultation on council size
29 January 2013	Submission of proposals for warding arrangements to LGBCE
8 April 2013	LGBCE's analysis and formulation of draft recommendations
18 June 2013	Publication of draft recommendations and consultation on them
10 September 2013	Analysis of submissions received and formulation of final recommendations

Submissions received

We received 27 submissions during our consultation on council size and 37 submissions during consultation on warding arrangements. All submissions can be viewed on our website at www.lgbce.org.uk

Analysis and draft recommendations

Electorate figures

As part of this review, Shepway District Council submitted electorate forecasts for the year 2019, projecting an increase in the electorate of just over 7% over the period from 2012–19. The Council made an amendment to its figures after consultation had ended, to reflect the fact that a housing development in Stanford parish was no longer expected to proceed.

Having considered the information provided by the Council, we are satisfied that the projected figures are the best available at the present time and these figures form the basis of our draft recommendations.

Council size

Shepway District Council currently has 46 councillors. During preliminary discussions on council size, a working group on the Council proposed a council size of 30, a

reduction of 16 councillors. The Council later passed a resolution proposing a council size of 38.

We considered that the evidence we received supported a council size of 30, rather than a council size of 38. Therefore, we consulted publicly on a council size of 30.

Following the consultation we considered that the Council's initial submission represented the most persuasive evidence available, and we have therefore based our draft recommendations on a council size of 30.

General analysis

During our consultation on warding arrangements, we received 37 submissions. We received a district-wide submission from Shepway District Council. Folkestone and Hythe Labour Party and Shepway Liberal Democrats each commented on the District Council's proposals and made proposals of their own. The other submissions we received made localised proposals, while some submissions did not refer directly to warding arrangements.

Our draft recommendations are broadly based on Shepway District Council's proposals, although we have proposed different ward boundaries in some areas in order to improve electoral equality and provide for more easily identifiable boundaries. Our draft recommendations are for a pattern of one single-member, seven two-member and five three-member wards.

What happens next?

There will now be a consultation period, during which time we encourage comment on the draft recommendations on the proposed electoral arrangements for Shepway District Council contained in the report. **We take this consultation very seriously and it is therefore important that all those interested in the review should let us have their views and evidence, whether or not they agree with these draft proposals.** We will take into account all submissions received by **9 September 2013**. Any received after this date may not be taken into account.

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

Review Officer Shepway Review
The Local Government Boundary Commission for England
Layden House
76–86 Turnmill Street
London EC1M 5LG
reviews@lgbce.org.uk

The full report is available to download at www.lgbce.org.uk

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

1 Introduction

1 The Local Government Boundary Commission for England is an independent body that conducts electoral reviews of local authority areas. This electoral review is being conducted to ensure that the number of voters represented by each councillor is approximately the same across the authority.

2 During our consultation on warding arrangements, we invited the submission of proposals on warding patterns for the district. The submissions received during this stage of the review have informed our draft recommendations.

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

What is an electoral review?

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

5 Our three main considerations – equalising the number of electors each councillor represents; reflecting community identity; and providing for effective and convenient local government – are set out in 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 Shepway?

6 We decided to conduct this review following a request from Shepway District Council and because, based on December 2011 electorate figures, 36% of wards in Shepway had a variance of greater than 10% from the average for the district. Additionally, one ward (Folkestone Harvey Central) has 41% more electors per councillor than the average for the district. The electoral inequality in this ward is not forecast to improve significantly before 2019.

How will the recommendations affect you?

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

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

8 It is therefore important that you let us have your comments and views on the draft recommendations. We encourage comments from everyone in the community, regardless of whether you agree with the draft recommendations or not. The draft recommendations are evidence based and we therefore stress the importance of providing evidence in any comments on our recommendations, rather than relying on assertion. We will accept comments and views until 9 September 2013. After this point, we will be formulating our final recommendations which we are due to publish in early 2014. Details on how to submit proposals can be found on page 17 and more information can be found on our website, www.lgbce.org.uk. You can also view our draft recommendations for the Council on our interactive maps at <http://consultation.lgbce.org.uk>

What is the Local Government Boundary Commission for England?

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

Members of the Commission are:

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

Chief Executive: Alan Cogbill
Director of Reviews: Archie Gall

2 Analysis and draft recommendations

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

11 As described earlier, our prime aim when recommending new electoral arrangements for Shepway 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

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

13 In reality, the achievement of absolute electoral 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.

14 These recommendations cannot affect the external boundaries of Shepway 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.

15 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.

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

16 Under the 2009 Act we only have the power to make such changes as a direct consequence of our recommendations for principal authority ward arrangements. However, principal councils have powers under the Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act 2007 to conduct Community Governance Reviews to effect changes to parish electoral arrangements.

Submissions received

17 During the initial stage of the review, we visited Shepway District Council and met with members, parish council representatives and officers. We are grateful to all concerned for their co-operation and assistance.

18 We received a preliminary submission on council size from a working group on the Council which favoured a council size of 30. The Council later resolved to support a council size of 38 and submitted new evidence to us in support of this figure. We felt that the evidence we received made a stronger case for a council size of 30 and so decided to consult publicly on this figure. We received 27 submissions in response to our council size consultation. During consultation on proposed ward boundaries we received one district-wide submission – from the Council – and submissions from Folkestone and Hythe Labour Party and Shepway Liberal Democrats, which commented on the Council's submission and provided alternative proposals in some areas. We also received seven representations from district councillors, 12 from town and parish councils and one from a group of parish councillors, one local organisation, and 12 local residents.

19 All representations received can also be viewed on our website at www.lgbce.org.uk.

Electorate figures

20 As part of this review, Shepway District Council submitted electorate forecasts for the year 2019, projecting an increase in the electorate of just over 7% over the period from 2012–19. The Council made an amendment to its figures after consultation had ended, to reflect the fact that a housing development in Stanford parish was no longer expected to proceed.

21 The Council provided details of all of the proposed housing developments expected to take place across the forecast period, and a year-by-year breakdown of how each development will progress. The most significant development in the district is at Shorncliffe Barracks, on land sold by the Ministry of Defence to a property developer.

22 Having considered the information provided by the Council, we are satisfied that the projected figures are the best available at the present time and these figures form the basis of our draft recommendations.

Council size

23 Shepway District Council currently has 46 councillors elected from 22 wards, comprising four single-member, 12 two-member and six three-member wards. During preliminary discussions on council size, the Council had considered reducing the council size to 30 members. The Council's formal proposal to us, however,

argued in favour of a council size of 38. We considered that, based on the evidence received from the Council, that a council size of 30 was most appropriate.

24 During the consultation on council size we received 27 submissions. In general, respondents supported a reduction from 46, with many of those supporting a reduction favouring a council size of 30.

25 We considered that the Council's initial submission had sufficient regard to the governance and management structure which would exist under a council size of 30, and to the scrutiny of the Council, work on outside bodies, members' representational role and the Council's other statutory functions.

26 During our consultation on warding patterns we received seven submissions commenting on council size. We are content that a council size of 30 members would not impact adversely on governance arrangements, member workload or councillors' representational role. Therefore, our draft recommendations for Shepway District Council are based on a council size of 30.

Electoral fairness

27 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.

28 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 (82,514 in 2012 and 88,795 by 2019) by the total number of councillors representing them on the council, 30 under our draft recommendations. Therefore, the average number of electors per councillor under our draft recommendations is 2,750 in 2012 and 2,960 by 2019.

29 Under our draft recommendations, all of our proposed wards will have electoral variances of less than 10% from the average for the district by 2019. We are therefore satisfied that we have achieved good levels of electoral fairness for Shepway.

General analysis

30 We received 37 submissions in response to our consultation on warding arrangements for Shepway. The Council submitted district-wide proposals based on a council size of 30. Folkestone and Hythe Labour Party and Shepway Liberal Democrats commented on the Council's submission and provided alternative proposals in some areas. We received additional representations from seven district councillors, including a joint one from two councillors and from one councillor who sent more than one submission; 12 town and parish councils; (as well as a submission from some town councillors on Hythe Town Council), one local organisation; and 12 local residents.

31 The Council's district-wide proposal resulted in good levels of electoral equality across the district and generally used recognisable boundaries.

32 We note that the Council carried out some consultation with some stakeholders in the district and that many of the responses we received were as a result of having viewed the Council's proposals. As mentioned above, two political organisations commented on the Council's submissions and proposed alternative warding arrangements in some areas of the district. The remainder of the submissions we received were focused on particular local areas.

33 We have largely adopted the wards proposed by the Council in its submission. However, we have departed from its warding pattern around Hythe, and more significantly, in Folkestone. These modifications are proposed to improve electoral equality and provide for more easily identifiable ward boundaries.

34 Our draft recommendations are for one single-member, seven two-member and five three-member wards. We consider that our draft recommendations will provide for good electoral equality while reflecting community identities and interests where we have received such evidence during consultation.

35 A summary of our proposed electoral arrangements is set out in Table A1 (on pages 20–21) and the large map accompanying this report.

36 We welcome all comments on these draft recommendations. We also welcome comments on the ward names we have proposed as part of the draft recommendations.

Electoral arrangements

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

- West Shepway (pages 8–10)
- Central Shepway (pages 10–11)
- North-east Shepway (pages 12–13)
- Folkestone (pages 13–15)

West Shepway

38 West Shepway is largely a rural area, containing Walland Marsh and Dungeness power station. The main settlements in this area are New Romney and Lydd.

39 The Council proposed two two-member wards covering this area: New Romney and Walland & Denge Marsh. Both wards would have good electoral equality and good internal communications links.

Walland & Denge Marsh

40 The Council's proposal for a two-member Walland & Denge Marsh ward included the town of Lydd, as well as a number of rural parishes to the north of Lydd. This proposed ward also included the Dungeness area and would run up the coastline to Greatstone-on-Sea. It was supported by Lydd Town Council, as well as a local resident. Shepway Liberal Democrats considered that the Council's proposal,

while not ideal, was the only viable arrangement for this area.

41 We received a submission from the Coastal Community Group which proposed a different warding arrangement for the area. The proposal from the Coastal Community Group was to have a ward based on coastal areas, running from the south-eastern tip of the district up to the edge of New Romney. This proposal was supported by three local residents. The Group provided evidence of community links along the coastal area and indicated that it has been attempting to establish a parish council in the area as it considered the coastal area is separate from Lydd town. The Group also provided electorate figures for its proposed wards. However, on investigating the proposals we were concerned that the Group's proposed Lade ward (covering the coastal area) would have 19% fewer electors than the district average by 2019. We consider evidence has not been received to support such a variance.

42 Having considered the different warding proposals for this part of the district, we have decided to adopt the Council's proposed two-member Walland & Denge Marsh ward as part of our draft recommendations. This ward would have 4% more electors per councillor than the district average by 2019.

43 Councillor Tillson (Dymchurch and St Mary's Bay) suggested that the ward be named Romney Marsh West, as this name would be more familiar with local electors. We have decided not to adopt this alternative ward name as it was supported by limited community identity evidence. We welcome views on our proposed ward name of Walland & Denge Marsh during this consultation period.

New Romney

44 The Council proposed a two-member ward for New Romney which was based on combining two existing wards, New Romney Coast and New Romney Town. This ward would comprise the town of New Romney as well as part of Greatstone-on-Sea. New Romney Town Council stated that it was 'content with the proposed SDC [Shepway District Council] representation of two District Councillors'.

45 The Coastal Community Group submission recommended dividing New Romney into two single-member wards and suggested including Dunes Road in its proposed Lade ward. Shepway Liberal Democrats also supported two single-member wards for New Romney, as did Councillor Tillson and three local residents. Two of the residents stated that Greatstone-on-Sea ought to be in a ward with New Romney rather than with Lydd, as its residents are more likely to use New Romney's services and facilities.

46 As mentioned above, we considered the possibility of a coastal ward as we recognise the community links in the area. However, given the large electoral variance that would result from such a ward, we are unable to recommend it as part of our draft recommendations.

47 The other proposals for single-member wards covering New Romney would use existing district ward boundaries to divide the parish. This would result in single-member New Romney Coast and New Romney Town wards, with equal to the average and 7% more electors than the district average by 2019, respectively.

48 On balance, having considered the different proposals for New Romney, we have decided to adopt the Council's proposed two-member ward as part of our draft recommendations. We consider that a two-member ward would not divide the

community and would provide for good electoral equality as it would have 4% more electors per councillor than the district average by 2019. We would, however, welcome views on this proposal, as we recognise the views of those favouring two single-member wards in this area.

Central Shepway

49 The central Shepway area consists of the eastern part of Romney Marsh. It includes a coastal area as well as some rural parishes inland. Hythe town is also in this part of the district.

Romney Marsh

50 The Council proposed a two-member ward for Romney Marsh, consisting of the parishes of Burmarsh, Dymchurch, Newchurch and St Mary in the Marsh. St Mary in the Marsh and Dymchurch parish councils supported the Council's proposal for this area. However, we also received submissions proposing alternative warding arrangements for this part of the district.

51 Shepway Liberal Democrats and Folkestone and Hythe Labour Party both favoured single-member wards covering Hythe. Folkestone and Hythe Labour Party proposed having one ward based on Dymchurch parish and the other comprising the remaining three parishes of Burmarsh, Newchurch and St Mary in the Marsh. Both of these two wards would provide for good levels of electoral equality. Shepway Liberal Democrats proposed two single-member wards. One ward would comprise Dymchurch and Burmarsh parishes, with the other comprising Newchurch and St Mary in the Marsh parishes. This proposal would result in a Dymchurch & Burmarsh ward having 13% more electors than the district average by 2019. This is a higher variance than we would normally propose, particularly as we have received limited community identity evidence to warrant such an imbalance.

52 Councillor Mullard (Dymchurch and St Mary's Bay) commented on the Council's proposals to the effect that the reduction in councillors in this area would be detrimental to representation for electors. The increase in workload would make 'ward representation almost impossible unless councillors are prepared to do the job as an almost full-time occupation'.

53 Councillor Tillson and a local resident also proposed a ward for Dymchurch and Burmarsh parishes. Councillor Tillson stated that there are 'historical antipathies' between Dymchurch and St Mary in the Marsh and so they ought not to be in the same ward. He also suggested that the Council's proposed two-member ward be named Romney Marsh East.

54 Burmarsh Parish Council stated that it would prefer to be in a ward with rural parishes with similar concerns, for example, the parishes to its west. It asserted that it did not want to be in a ward with areas with a coastal focus 'such as Dymchurch and St Mary's Bay'.

55 We have considered the different warding proposals for the Romney Marsh area. We consider that on the basis of evidence received the Council's proposed two-member Romney Marsh ward provides the best balance between the statutory criteria. This ward would have good electoral equality, with 6% more electors per councillor than the district average by 2019. We have therefore decided to adopt this ward as part of our draft recommendations.

Hythe Rural and Hythe

56 Hythe is the second-largest settlement in the district, after Folkestone. The District Council proposed two wards based on Hythe. One was a three-member Hythe ward focused on the centre of the town and the area to the east. The other, a two-member Hythe Rural, comprised the western part of Hythe town and the parishes of Lymپne and Saltwood.

57 Hythe Town Council supported the District Council's proposed Hythe ward. However, some town councillors on Hythe Town Council proposed an alternative warding pattern for Hythe. They proposed four wards based on Hythe parish, in contrast to the District Council which had proposed to include the western part of Hythe parish in a ward with the parishes of Lymپne and Saltwood. The town councillors' proposal would result in an unacceptably high electoral variance for their proposed Hythe North, as it would have 16% more electors than the district average. Additionally, significant reorganisation of warding arrangements in the rural area around Hythe would be required in order to achieve a pattern of wards with good electoral equality.

58 In response to our consultation on warding arrangements we received a representation from Saltwood Parish Council. Under the Council's proposed warding pattern, Saltwood parish would be included in a Hythe Rural ward. In its representation Saltwood Parish Council stated that it would prefer to be in Hythe ward. It cited the fact that it liaises with Hythe Town Council over highway and planning matters on School Road, their shared boundary. Both Shepway Liberal Democrats and Folkestone and Hythe Labour Party support the proposal to include Saltwood parish in Hythe ward. Folkestone and Hythe Labour Party stated that 'people from Saltwood shop in Hythe and use Hythe's facilities' in support of this proposal.

59 We consider that including Saltwood in Hythe ward would reflect community links in the area and have decided to adopt this proposal as part of our draft recommendations.

60 We received another alternative warding pattern in this part of the district. A local resident proposed a ward comprising the parishes of Lymپne, Sellindge and Stanford. This proposal would result in a ward with 12% more electors than the district average by 2019. However, this proposal would require a number of significant changes to the Hythe Rural and Hythe wards. We do not consider evidence has been received to justify adopting this warding pattern bearing in mind its knock-on effect. We consider that on the basis of evidence received our proposed Hythe and Hythe Rural wards provide for a better balance between the statutory criteria.

61 Having considered all the warding patterns proposed and the evidence provided in support of them, we have decided to adopt the Council's Hythe and Hythe Rural wards, subject to the inclusion of Saltwood parish in the former, as part of our draft recommendations.

62 Our proposed three-member Hythe ward and our two-member Hythe Rural ward would have 7% more and 7% fewer electors per councillor than the district average by 2019, respectively.

North-east Shepway

63 North-east Shepway comprises the North Downs area, to the north of Folkestone. The area consists mainly of rural parishes.

North Downs West

64 The Council proposed a two-member North Downs West ward, comprising the parishes of Elmsted, Lyminge, Monks Horton, Postling, Sellindge, Stanford, Stelling Minnis and Stowting.

65 Postling Parish Council supported the Council's proposal on the basis that it would be 'in a ward with villages that share similar interests and concerns'.

66 Stelling Minnis Parish Council proposed dividing the Council's proposed ward to create two single-member wards. One ward would comprise the parishes of Lyminge, Postling and Stelling Minnis, and the other the remaining parishes in the District Council's proposed North Downs West ward. The parish argued that the existing North Downs West ward 'is already too large and too diverse' and that the District Council's proposed ward was just adding another parish to it. It also stated that the main road links in this part of the district run north-south. The parish also stated that a single-member ward with just three parishes would ensure a good working relationship between the parish councils and the district councillor.

67 However, as detailed in paragraph 20, the District Council informed us that a proposed development in Stanford parish, at Folkestone Racecourse, is no longer going to take place. The Council had forecast that there would have been an additional 321 electors in 2019 than there are presently. This reduction in the forecast has an impact on the ward proposed by Stelling Minnis Parish Council. The ward comprising the parishes of Elmsted, Monks Horton, Sellindge, Stanford and Stowting would have a variance of -20%, which is significantly high.

68 We are therefore proposing, as part of our draft recommendations, a two-member North Downs West ward, which would have 10% fewer electors per councillor than the district average by 2019.

North Downs East

69 The Council proposed a three-member North Downs East ward which would comprise the parishes of Acrise, Elham, Hawkinge, Newington, Paddlesworth and Swingfield.

70 We received four other submissions regarding this area. Hawkinge Town Council and Swingfield Parish Council stated their preference for being part of a three-member ward (as they are under the current arrangements). Swingfield Parish Council stated it would prefer to be in a ward with Hawkinge.

71 We also received two submissions from local residents in Paddlesworth, who stated that they wanted to be part of Hawkinge parish. However, we are unable to amend parish boundaries as part of this review.

72 Folkestone and Hythe Labour Party proposed including Newington parish in Cheriton & Morehall ward (discussed in paragraph 76), which is one of the proposed wards based on Folkestone. They argued that residents of Newington use shopping facilities at Cheriton and that there is a road link between the areas. We consider

that the M20 and Channel Tunnel entrance complex provide a clear division between Folkestone town and the rural area to the north. The majority of the Council's proposed Cheriton & Morehall ward is south of the M20 and so we consider there would not be strong community links between this area and Newington parish.

73 We did investigate whether the proposed three-member North Downs East ward could be divided to form wards which were smaller in geographic size. Our investigations indicated that a two-member Hawkinge ward, comprising the parish of Hawkinge, and a single-member Swingfield & Newington ward covering the remaining parishes would result in electoral equality of 6% more and 6% fewer electors than the district average by 2019, respectively. We note that these wards would both provide for reasonable levels of electoral equality and effective and convenient local government. However, we have limited evidence as to whether this pattern of wards would reflect community identity.

74 Having considered the evidence received we are content to adopt the Council's North Downs East ward as part of our draft recommendations. This three-member ward would have 3% more electors per councillor than the district average by 2018. We welcome comments on whether dividing this ward into a single-member ward and two-member ward (as outlined in paragraph 73) would better reflect community identity and provide for effective and convenient local government.

Folkestone

75 Folkestone is the largest settlement in the district. The town is parished and has an active town council. Shepway District Council proposed seven wards based on the town, with Sandgate ward including within it an area outside of Folkestone town.

Folkestone West

76 The Council proposed two wards in the western part of Folkestone: a three-member Cheriton & Morehall ward and a two-member Sandgate ward. Its proposed Cheriton & Morehall ward followed parish boundaries on its northern, southern and western boundaries. Its eastern boundary would follow the A2034, running up to the M20 and the Channel Tunnel entrance.

77 The Council's proposed Sandgate ward includes Sandgate parish, as well as part of Folkestone town. We received some submissions which opposed the Council's proposed wards in this area. Shepway Liberal Democrats opposed the Council's proposed Sandgate ward, stating that the proposal would divide the community.

78 District Councillors Love and Bunting (both Folkestone Harvey West) argued that Sandgate was a separate community from Folkestone, with Sandgate Hill being the dividing point between the communities. The Councillors proposed a different pattern of wards from the Council's proposed Sandgate, Cheriton & Morehall and Folkestone Central wards. We considered that, while the proposals had merit, the proposed boundary between Councillors Love and Bunting's Harvey and Sandgate wards was not easily identifiable and departed considerably from the existing parish boundary.

79 We consider that the District Council's proposed boundary between Cheriton & Morehall and Sandgate is more easily identifiable. Given the geographic positioning

of electors in this area and the need to achieve good electoral equality, it has been necessary to include some part of Folkestone with Sandgate parish. We have departed from the Council's proposed boundary between Sandgate and its proposed Folkestone Central ward (discussed below). However, we have decided to adopt the Council's proposed three-member Cheriton & Morehall ward as part of our draft recommendations. This ward would have 2% fewer electors per councillor than the district average by 2019. Sandgate would have 6% fewer electors per councillor than the district average by 2019.

Central and East Folkestone

80 We are proposing some modifications to the Council's proposed wards in the centre of Folkestone. We consider that the area of housing off Broadmead Road, north of the railway line, ought to be included in a ward with properties to its north, rather than included in the Council's proposed Folkestone Central ward to the south. The railway would provide a clear, recognisable boundary in this area, and we are proposing that this area off Broadmead Road become part of an enlarged Folkestone East ward.

81 In order to achieve good electoral equality, while ensuring that communities are not divided, we are proposing to combine the Council's proposed Foord and Folkestone East wards, along with the aforementioned area around to the north of Broadmead Road, to form a three-member ward. This modification results in our three-member Folkestone East ward having a variance of 2% more electors per councillor than the district average by 2019. However, this modification does not provide for reasonable levels of electoral equality in the proposed three-member Folkestone Central ward. Therefore, we are proposing two further modifications to the Council's proposed Folkestone Central ward.

82 We are proposing that the boundary between Sandgate and Folkestone Central runs along Shorncliffe Road, before going south along the backs of properties on Godwyn Road. The boundary would then continue south to join the parish boundary at Radnor Cliff. We are proposing to have the ward's eastern boundary incorporate Peter Street and Queen Street and run between Tontine Street and St Michael's Street. This boundary would be more easily identifiable on the ground than the boundary proposed by the Council. This boundary would also ensure that there are complete internal road connections throughout the Folkestone Central ward. These modifications would result in the three-member Folkestone Central ward having 4% fewer electors per councillor than the district average by 2019.

83 Folkestone and Hythe Labour Party proposed including the area off Hill Road, which includes Dallas-Brett Crescent and Keyes Place, in Folkestone Harbour ward. The Council had included this area in its proposed Folkestone East ward. We consider that using the A260 in this area would be more recognisable as a boundary between the wards. Using this boundary also improves the electoral equality of both wards. Our three-member Folkestone East and two-member Folkestone Harbour wards would have 2% more and 2% fewer electors per councillor than the district average by 2019, respectively.

84 Shepway District Council also proposed a single-member Folkestone Park ward. We are content to adopt this ward as part of our draft recommendations. This ward would have 6% more electors than the district average by 2019.

85 During consultation on warding patterns we also received a representation from Folkestone Town Council proposing an increase in the number of town councillors, to reflect anticipated additional responsibilities currently under negotiation with the county council and district council. The Town Council suggested the number of town councillors should be increased from the current size of 18 to 25. We have not adopted this proposal as part of our parish electoral arrangements for Folkestone Town Council (see paragraphs 88–90). We did not consider that the Town Council provided sufficient evidence to persuade us that such a large increase was justified at this time. We also considered that such a substantial change to the number of town councillors for the area would best be considered as part of a community governance review, which the District Council may wish to undertake after this electoral review.

86 Overall our draft recommendations for Folkestone are for one single-member ward, two two-member wards and three three-member wards. None of our proposed wards would have an electoral variance greater than 10% by 2019.

Conclusions

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

Table 1: Summary of electoral arrangements

	Draft recommendations	
	2012	2019
Number of councillors	30	30
Number of electoral wards	13	13
Average number of electors per councillor	2,750	2,960
Number of wards with a variance more than 10% from the average	2	0
Number of wards with a variance more than 20% from the average	1	0

Draft recommendation

Shepway District Council should comprise 30 councillors serving 13 wards, as detailed and named in Table A1 and illustrated on the large map accompanying this report.

Parish electoral arrangements

88 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 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.

89 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, Shepway 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.

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

Draft recommendation

Folkestone Town Council should comprise 18 councillors, the same as at present, representing seven wards: Central (returning four members), Cheriton & Morehall (returning four members), Folkestone East (returning four members), Folkestone North-East (returning one member), Harbour (returning two members), Harvey West (returning one member) and Park (returning two members). The proposed parish ward boundaries are illustrated and named on Map 1.

3 What happens next?

91 There will now be a consultation period of twelve weeks, during which everyone is invited to comment on the draft recommendations on future electoral arrangements for Shepway District Council contained in this report. We will fully take into account all submissions received by 9 September 2013. Any submissions received after this date may not be taken into account.

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

93 Express your views by writing directly to:

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

reviews@lgbce.org.uk

Submissions can also be made by using the consultation section of our website, consultation.lgbce.org.uk

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

95 If you are a member of the public and not writing on behalf of a council or organisation we will remove any personal identifiers, such as postal or email addresses, signatures or phone numbers from your submission before it is made public. We will remove signatures from all letters, irrespective of whom they are from.

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

97 After the publication of our final recommendations, the review will be implemented by order subject to Parliamentary scrutiny. A draft Order – the legal document which brings into force our recommendations – will be laid in Parliament. When made, the draft Order will provide for new electoral arrangements to be implemented at the next elections for Shepway District Council in 2015.

98 These draft recommendations have 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

Draft recommendations for Shepway

99 The following map illustrates our proposed ward boundaries for Shepway District Council:

- **Sheet 1, Map 1** illustrates in outline form the proposed ward boundaries for Shepway District Council.

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

Appendix A

Table A1: Draft recommendations for Shepway District Council

	Ward name	Number of councillors	Electorate (2012)	Number of electors per councillor	Variance from average %	Electorate (2019)	Number of electors per councillor	Variance from average %
1	Cheriton & Morehall	3	8,455	2,818	2%	8,690	2,897	-2%
2	Folkestone Central	3	8,137	2,712	-1%	8,496	2,832	-4%
3	Folkestone East	3	8,383	2,794	2%	9,026	3,009	2%
4	Folkestone Harbour	2	5,373	2,687	-2%	5,786	2,893	-2%
5	Folkestone Park	1	2,994	2,994	9%	3,149	3,149	6%
6	Hythe	3	9,076	3,025	10%	9,518	3,173	7%
7	Hythe Rural	2	4,746	2,373	-14%	5,526	2,763	-7%
8	New Romney	2	5,680	2,840	3%	6,151	3,076	4%
9	North Downs East	3	8,491	2,830	3%	9,114	3,038	3%
10	North Downs West	2	5,074	2,537	-8%	5,334	2,667	-10%
11	Romney Marsh	2	6,010	3,005	9%	6,282	3,141	6%

Table A1 (cont.): Draft recommendations for Shepway District Council

	Ward name	Number of councillors	Electorate (2012)	Number of electors per councillor	Variance from average %	Electorate (2019)	Number of electors per councillor	Variance from average %
12	Sandgate	2	4,175	2,088	-24%	5,555	2,778	-6%
13	Waland & Denge Marsh	2	5,920	2,960	8%	6,168	3,084	4%
	Totals	30	82,514	-	-	88,795	-	-
	Averages	-	-	2,750	-	-	2,960	-

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

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

Appendix B

Glossary and abbreviations

AONB (Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty)	A landscape whose distinctive character and natural beauty are so outstanding that it is in the nation's interest to safeguard it
Constituent areas	The geographical areas that make up any one ward, 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.

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 borough, 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 borough council