

Draft recommendations on the  
future electoral arrangements for  
Wealden in East Sussex

*February 2001*

# LOCAL GOVERNMENT COMMISSION FOR ENGLAND

The Local Government Commission for England is an independent body set up by Parliament. Our task is to review and make recommendations to the Government on whether there should be changes to local authorities' electoral arrangements.

Members of the Commission are:

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

Barbara Stephens (Chief Executive)

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

© Crown Copyright 2001

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

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

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

This report is printed on recycled paper.

# CONTENTS

	page
SUMMARY	<i>v</i>
1 INTRODUCTION	<i>1</i>
2 CURRENT ELECTORAL ARRANGEMENTS	<i>5</i>
3 REPRESENTATIONS RECEIVED	<i>9</i>
4 ANALYSIS AND DRAFT RECOMMENDATIONS	<i>11</i>
5 NEXT STEPS	<i>35</i>
APPENDICES	
A Draft Recommendations for Wealden: Detailed Mapping	<i>37</i>
B Wealden District Council's Proposed Electoral Arrangements	<i>47</i>
C The Statutory Provisions	<i>49</i>
D Code of Practice on Written Consultation	<i>53</i>

A large map illustrating the existing and proposed ward boundaries for Crowborough, Hailsham, Heathfield & Waldron and Uckfield is inserted inside the back cover of the report.



## SUMMARY

The Commission began a review of the electoral arrangements for Wealden on 25 July 2000.

- **This report summarises the representations we received during the first stage of the review, and makes draft recommendations for change.**

We found that the existing electoral arrangements provide unequal representation of electors in Wealden:

- **in 20 of the 34 wards the number of electors represented by each councillor varies by more than 10 per cent from the average for the district and 12 wards vary by more than 20 per cent from the average;**
- **by 2005 this unequal representation is not expected to improve, with the number of electors per councillor forecast to vary by more than 10 per cent from the average in 21 wards and by more than 20 per cent in 12 wards.**

Our main draft recommendations for future electoral arrangements (Figures 1 and 2 and paragraphs 97-98) are that:

- **Wealden District Council should have 55 councillors, three fewer than at present;**
- **there should be 35 wards, instead of 34 as at present;**
- **the boundaries of 32 of the existing wards should be modified, resulting in a net increase of one, and two wards should retain their existing boundaries;**
- **elections should continue to take place every four years.**

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

- **In all of the proposed 35 wards the number of electors per councillor would vary by no more than 9 per cent from the district average, both initially and by 2005.**

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

- **revised warding arrangements and the re-distribution of councillors for the parishes of Crowborough, Hailsham, Hartfield, Heathfield & Waldron, Maresfield, Mayfield & Five Ashes, Polegate, Rotherfield, Uckfield and Warbleton;**

- **an increase in the number of councillors serving Hartfield, Maresfield and Warbleton parish councils and a reduction in the number of councillors serving Crowborough and Uckfield town councils.**

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

- **We will consult on our draft recommendations for nine weeks from 20 February 2001. Because we take this consultation very seriously, we may move away from our draft recommendations in the light of Stage Three responses. It is therefore important that all interested parties let us have their views and evidence, *whether or not* they agree with our draft recommendations.**
- **After considering local views, we will decide whether to modify our draft recommendations and then make our final recommendations to the Secretary of State for the Environment, Transport and the Regions.**
- **It will then be for the Secretary of State to accept, modify or reject our final recommendations. He will also determine when any changes come into effect.**

You should express your views by writing directly to the Commission at the address below by 23 April 2001:

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

**Fax: 020 7404 6142  
E-mail: [reviews@lgce.gov.uk](mailto:reviews@lgce.gov.uk)  
Website: [www.lgce.gov.uk](http://www.lgce.gov.uk)**

Figure 1: The Commission's Draft Recommendations: Summary

	<b>Ward name</b>	<b>Number of councillors</b>	<b>Constituent areas</b>	<b>Map reference</b>
1	Alfriston	1	Alfriston ward (part – the parishes of Alciston, Alfriston, Berwick and Selmeston); Arlington ward (part – Chalvington with Ripe parish)	Map 2
2	Buxted & Maresfield	2	Buxted ward (the parishes of Buxted and Hadlow Down); Maresfield ward (part – the proposed Maresfield parish ward of Maresfield parish)	Map 2 and Map A4
3	Chiddingly & East Hoathly	1	Arlington ward (part – Laughton parish); Chiddingly & East Hoathly ward (the parishes of Chiddingly and East Hoathly)	Map 2
4	Cross in Hand/ Five Ashes	1	Mayfield ward (part – the proposed Five Ashes parish ward of Mayfield & Five Ashes parish); Waldron ward (part – the proposed Cross in Hand parish ward of Heathfield & Waldron parish)	Large Map and Map A5
5	Crowborough East	2	Crowborough East ward (part – the proposed East parish ward of Crowborough parish)	Large Map
6	Crowborough Jarvis Brook	1	Crowborough East ward (part – part of the proposed Jarvis Brook parish ward of Crowborough parish); Crowborough North ward (part – part of the proposed Jarvis Brook parish ward of Crowborough parish)	Large Map
7	Crowborough North	2	Crowborough East ward (part – part of the proposed North parish ward of Crowborough parish); Crowborough North ward (part – part of the proposed North parish ward of Crowborough parish); Crowborough West ward (part – part of the proposed North parish ward of Crowborough parish)	Large Map
8	Crowborough St Johns	1	Crowborough North ward (part – part of the proposed St Johns parish ward of Crowborough parish); Crowborough St Johns ward (part – part of the proposed St Johns parish ward of Crowborough parish); Crowborough West ward (part – part of the proposed St Johns parish ward of Crowborough parish)	Large Map
9	Crowborough West	2	Crowborough St Johns ward (part – part of the proposed West parish ward of Crowborough parish); Crowborough West ward (part – part of the proposed West parish ward of Crowborough parish)	Large Map
10	Danehill/ Fletching/ Nutley	2	Danehill ward (Danehill parish); Fletching ward (the parishes of Fletching, Isfield and Little Horsted); Maresfield ward (part – the proposed Nutley parish ward of Maresfield parish)	Map 2 and Map A3
11	East Dean	1	Alfriston ward (part – Lullington and Litlington parish wards of Cuckmere Valley parish and Folkington and Wilmington parish wards of Long Man parish); Arlington ward (part – Milton Street parish ward of Long Man parish); East Dean ward (East Dean & Friston parish and West Dean parish ward of Cuckmere Valley parish)	Map 2
12	Forest Row	2	Forest Row ward (Forest Row parish); Hartfield ward (part – the proposed Hammerwood parish ward of Hartfield parish)	Map 2 and Map A2

<b>Ward name</b>	<b>Number of councillors</b>	<b>Constituent areas</b>	<b>Map reference</b>
13 Framfield	1	Framfield ward (Framfield parish); Waldron ward (part – the proposed Waldron parish ward of Heathfield & Waldron parish)	Large Map
14 Frant/ Withyham	2	Frant ward (Frant parish); Rotherfield ward (part – the proposed Eridge & Mark Cross parish ward of Rotherfield parish); Withyham ward (Withyham parish)	Map 2 and Map A8
15 Hailsham Central & North	2	Hailsham Central & North ward (part – part of the proposed Central & North parish ward of Hailsham parish); Hailsham East ward (part – part of the proposed Central & North parish ward of Hailsham parish); Hellingly ward (part – part of the proposed Central & North parish ward of Hailsham parish)	Large Map
16 Hailsham East	1	Hailsham East ward (part – the proposed East parish ward of Hailsham parish)	Large Map
17 Hailsham South & West	3	Hailsham Central & North ward (part – part of the proposed South & West parish ward of Hailsham parish); Hailsham East ward (part – part of the proposed South & West parish ward of Hailsham parish); Hailsham South & West ward (part of the proposed South & West parish ward of Hailsham parish)	Large Map
18 Hartfield	1	Hartfield ward (part – the proposed Hartfield parish ward of Hartfield parish); Maresfield ward (part – the proposed Fairwarp parish ward of Maresfield parish)	Map 2 and Maps A2-A4
19 Heathfield East	1	Heathfield ward (part – the proposed East parish ward of Heathfield & Waldron parish); Herstmonceux ward (part – the proposed Warbleton parish ward of Warbleton parish)	Large Map and Map A9
20 Heathfield North & Central	3	Heathfield ward (part – part of the proposed Heathfield parish ward of Heathfield & Waldron parish); Waldron ward (part – part of the proposed Heathfield parish ward of Heathfield & Waldron parish)	Large Map
21 Hellingly	2	Arlington ward (part – Arlington parish); Hellingly ward (part – Hellingly parish and the modified Upper Horsebridge parish ward of Hailsham parish)	Large Map
22 Herstmonceux	1	Herstmonceux ward (part – Herstmonceux parish and the proposed Bodle Street Green parish ward of Warbleton parish)	Map 2 and Map A9
23 Horam	1	<i>Unchanged</i> Horam ward (Horam parish)	Map 2
24 Mayfield	1	Mayfield ward (part – the proposed Mayfield parish ward of Mayfield & Five Ashes parish)	Large Map and Maps A5-A6
25 Pevensey & Westham	3	<i>Unchanged</i> Pevensey & Westham ward (the parishes of Pevensey and Westham)	Map 2
26 Pevensey/ Ninfield	1	Herstmonceux ward (part – Wartling parish); Ninfield ward (the parishes of Hooe and Ninfield)	Map 2
27 Polegate North	2	Polegate North ward (part of the proposed North parish ward of Polegate parish); Polegate South ward (part – part of the proposed North parish ward of Polegate parish)	Map 2 and Map A7

	<b>Ward name</b>	<b>Number of councillors</b>	<b>Constituent areas</b>	<b>Map reference</b>
28	Polegate South	1	Polegate South ward (part – the proposed South parish ward of Polegate parish)	Map 2 and Map A7
29	Rotherfield	1	Rotherfield ward (part – the proposed Rotherfield parish ward of Rotherfield parish)	Map 2 and Map A8
30	Uckfield Central	1	Uckfield ward (part – the proposed Central parish ward of Uckfield parish)	Large Map
31	Uckfield New Town	1	Uckfield ward (part – the proposed New Town parish ward of Uckfield parish)	Large Map
32	Uckfield North	2	Uckfield ward (part – the proposed North parish ward of Uckfield parish)	Large Map
33	Uckfield Ridgewood	1	Uckfield ward (part – the proposed Ridgewood parish ward of Uckfield parish)	Large Map
34	Wadhurst	2	Mayfield ward (part – the proposed Rusher’s Cross parish ward of Mayfield & Five Ashes parish); Wadhurst ward (Wadhurst parish)	Map 2 and Map A6
35	Willingdon	3	Polegate South ward (part – the proposed Watermill parish ward of Polegate parish); Willingdon ward (Willingdon & Jevington parish)	Map 2 and Map A7

Figure 2: The Commission's Draft Recommendations for Wealden

Ward name	Number of councillors	Electorate (2000)	Number of electors per councillor	Variance from average %	Electorate (2005)	Number of electors per councillor	Variance from average %
1 Alfriston	1	2,032	2,032	0	2,055	2,055	-2
2 Buxted & Maresfield	2	4,072	2,036	0	4,144	2,072	-1
3 Chiddingly & East Hoathly	1	2,183	2,183	7	2,273	2,273	9
4 Cross in Hand/Five Ashes	1	2,008	2,008	-2	2,047	2,047	-2
5 Crowborough East	2	3,879	1,940	-5	4,029	2,015	-4
6 Crowborough Jarvis Brook	1	2,019	2,019	-1	2,095	2,095	0
7 Crowborough North	2	3,993	1,997	-2	4,143	2,072	-1
8 Crowborough St Johns	1	1,970	1,970	-4	2,048	2,048	-2
9 Crowborough West	2	3,952	1,976	-3	4,100	2,050	-2
10 Danehill/Fletching/Nutley	2	4,030	2,015	-1	4,136	2,068	-1
11 East Dean	1	1,952	1,952	-4	2,007	2,007	-4
12 Forest Row	2	3,935	1,968	-4	3,978	1,989	-5
13 Framfield	1	2,132	2,132	4	2,163	2,163	4
14 Frant/Withyham	2	3,906	1,953	-4	3,981	1,991	-5
15 Hailsham Central & North	2	4,373	2,187	7	4,453	2,227	7
16 Hailsham East	1	2,093	2,093	3	2,143	2,143	3
17 Hailsham South & West	3	6,362	2,121	4	6,424	2,141	2
18 Hartfield	1	2,080	2,080	2	2,114	2,114	1
19 Heathfield East	1	1,898	1,898	-7	1,934	1,934	-7
20 Heathfield North & Central	3	5,902	1,967	-4	6,033	2,011	-4
21 Hellingly	2	4,041	2,021	-1	4,245	2,123	2
22 Herstmonceux	1	2,049	2,049	0	2,067	2,067	-1
23 Horam	1	2,066	2,066	1	2,127	2,127	2

	<b>Ward name</b>	<b>Number of councillors</b>	<b>Electorate (2000)</b>	<b>Number of electors per councillor</b>	<b>Variance from average %</b>	<b>Electorate (2005)</b>	<b>Number of electors per councillor</b>	<b>Variance from average %</b>
24	Mayfield	1	2,040	2,040	0	2,084	2,084	0
25	Pevensey & Westham	3	6,593	2,198	8	6,855	2,285	9
26	Pevensey/Ninfield	1	1,868	1,868	-9	1,900	1,900	-9
27	Polegate North	2	4,040	2,020	-1	4,121	2,061	-1
28	Polegate South	1	2,014	2,014	-1	2,074	2,074	-1
29	Rotherfield	1	1,954	1,954	-4	1,983	1,983	-5
30	Uckfield Central	1	2,182	2,182	7	2,220	2,220	6
31	Uckfield New Town	1	1,952	1,952	-4	1,972	1,972	-6
32	Uckfield North	2	4,444	2,222	9	4,518	2,259	8
33	Uckfield Ridgewood	1	2,166	2,166	6	2,185	2,185	5
34	Wadhurst	2	4,005	2,003	-2	4,096	2,048	-2
35	Willingdon	3	6,115	2,038	0	6,159	2,053	-2
	<b>Totals</b>	<b>55</b>	<b>112,300</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>114,905</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>
	<b>Averages</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>2,042</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>2,089</b>	<b>-</b>

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

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



# 1 INTRODUCTION

1 This report contains our draft recommendations on the electoral arrangements for the district of Wealden in East Sussex on which we are now consulting. We are reviewing the five districts in East Sussex as part of our programme of periodic electoral reviews (PERs) of all 386 principal local authority areas in England. Our programme started in 1996 and is currently expected to be completed by 2004.

2 This is our first review of the electoral arrangements of Wealden. The last such review was undertaken by our predecessor, the Local Government Boundary Commission (LGBC), which reported to the Secretary of State in April 1979 (Report No. 327). The electoral arrangements of East Sussex County Council were last reviewed in August 1981 (Report No. 417). We expect to review the County Council's electoral arrangements in 2002.

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

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

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

5 We also have regard to our *Guidance and Procedural Advice for Local Authorities and Other Interested Parties* (fourth edition published in December 2000). This sets out our approach to the reviews.

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

7 The broad objective of PERs is to achieve, as far as possible, equality of representation across the district as a whole. Having regard to the statutory criteria, our aim is to achieve as low a level of electoral imbalance as is practicable. We will require particular justification for schemes which would result in, or retain, an electoral imbalance of over 10 per cent in any ward. Any imbalances

of 20 per cent or more should only arise in the most exceptional circumstances, and will require the strongest justification.

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

9 The review is in four stages (Figure 3).

Figure 3: Stages of the Review

Stage	Description
One	Submission of proposals to the Commission
Two	The Commission’s analysis and deliberation
Three	Publication of draft recommendations and consultation on them
Four	Final deliberation and report to the Secretary of State

10 In July 1998 the Government published a White Paper, *Modern Local Government – In Touch with the People*, which set out legislative proposals for local authority electoral arrangements. In two-tier areas, it proposed introducing a pattern in which both the district and county councils would hold elections every two years, ie in year one half of the district council would be elected, in year two half the county council would be elected, and so on. The Government stated that local accountability would be maximised where every elector has an opportunity to vote every year, thereby pointing to a pattern of two-member wards (and divisions) in two-tier areas. However, it stated that there was no intention to move towards very large electoral wards in sparsely populated rural areas, and that single-member wards (and electoral divisions) would continue in many authorities. The proposals have been taken forward in the Local Government Act 2000 which, among other matters, provides that the Secretary of State may make Orders to change authorities’ electoral cycles. However, until such time as the Secretary of State makes any Order under the 2000 Act, we will continue to operate on the basis of existing legislation, which provides for elections by thirds or whole-council elections in two-tier areas, and our present *Guidance*.

11 Stage One began on 25 July 2000, when we wrote to Wealden District Council inviting proposals for future electoral arrangements. We also notified East Sussex County Council, Sussex Police Authority, the local authority associations, East Sussex Association of Parish Councils, parish and town councils in the district, the Members of Parliament with constituency interests in the district, the Members of the European Parliament for the South East Region, and the

headquarters of the main political parties. We placed a notice in the local press, issued a press release and invited the District Council to publicise the review further. The closing date for receipt of representations, the end of Stage One, was 16 October 2000.

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

13 Stage Three began on 20 February 2001 and will end on 23 April 2001. This stage involves publishing the draft recommendations in this report and public consultation on them. **We take this consultation very seriously and it is therefore important that all those interested in the review should let us have their views and evidence, whether or not they agree with our draft recommendations.**

14 During Stage Four we will reconsider the draft recommendations in the light of the Stage Three consultation, decide whether to move away from them in any areas, and submit final recommendations to the Secretary of State. Interested parties will have a further six weeks to make representations to the Secretary of State. It will then be for him to accept, modify or reject our final recommendations. If the Secretary of State accepts the recommendations, with or without modification, he will make an Order. The Secretary of State will determine when any changes come into effect.



## 2 CURRENT ELECTORAL ARRANGEMENTS

15 Wealden borders Surrey and Kent in the north, West Sussex in the west and the English Channel in the south. It is also bordered by the East Sussex districts of Lewes, Eastbourne and Rother to the west, south and east, respectively. Wealden has a population of some 139,950, making it the largest district in East Sussex, and covers an area of 83,659 hectares. The district includes the towns of Crowborough, Hailsham and Uckfield, with the High Weald and Ashdown Forest in the north of the district, and Pevensey levels, Sussex Downs and Cuckmere Valley to the south. The district contains 42 parishes and is entirely parished.

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

17 The electorate of the district is 112,300 (February 2000). The Council presently has 58 members who are elected from 34 wards. Crowborough is represented by seven members and Hailsham is represented by six members. Four of the wards are each represented by three councillors, 16 are each represented by two councillors and 14 are single-member wards. The Council is elected as a whole every four years.

18 Since the last electoral review there has been an increase in the electorate in Wealden district, with around 17 per cent more electors than two decades ago as a result of new housing developments. The most notable increases have been in Uckfield and Hailsham South & West wards, which have 79 per cent and 57 per cent more electors than 20 years ago.

19 At present, each councillor represents an average of 1,936 electors, which the District Council forecasts will increase to 1,981 by the year 2005 if the present number of councillors is maintained. However, due to demographic and other changes over the past two decades, the number of electors per councillor in 20 of the 34 wards varies by more than 10 per cent from the district average, 12 wards by more than 20 per cent and six wards by more than 30 per cent. The worst imbalance is in Uckfield ward where each of the three councillors represents 85 per cent more electors than the district average.

*Map 1: Existing Wards in Wealden*

Figure 4: Existing Electoral Arrangements

Ward name	Number of councillors	Electorate (2000)	Number of electors per councillor	Variance from average %	Electorate (2005)	Number of electors per councillor	Variance from average %
1 Alfriston	1	1,507	1,507	-22	1,537	1,537	-22
2 Arlington	1	1,828	1,828	-6	1,856	1,856	-6
3 Buxted	2	3,131	1,566	-19	3,181	1,591	-20
4 Chiddingly & East Hoathly	1	1,755	1,755	-9	1,841	1,841	-7
5 Crowborough East	2	5,279	2,640	36	5,430	2,715	37
6 Crowborough North	2	4,562	2,281	18	4,740	2,370	20
7 Crowborough St Johns	1	1,809	1,809	-7	1,844	1,844	-7
8 Crowborough West	2	4,163	2,082	8	4,400	2,200	11
9 Danehill	1	1,501	1,501	-22	1,528	1,528	-23
10 East Dean	1	1,493	1,493	-23	1,521	1,521	-23
11 Fletching	1	1,428	1,428	-26	1,466	1,466	-26
12 Forest Row	2	3,709	1,855	-4	3,750	1,875	-5
13 Framfield	1	1,475	1,475	-24	1,494	1,494	-25
14 Frant	1	1,090	1,090	-44	1,105	1,105	-44
15 Hailsham Central & North	2	3,537	1,769	-9	3,574	1,787	-10
16 Hailsham East	2	3,880	1,940	0	3,981	1,991	0
17 Hailsham South & West	2	5,304	2,652	37	5,358	2,679	35
18 Hartfield	1	1,692	1,692	-13	1,713	1,713	-14
19 Heathfield	3	5,437	1,812	-6	5,555	1,852	-7
20 Hellingly	2	3,732	1,866	-4	3,932	1,966	-1
21 Herstmonceux	2	3,242	1,621	-16	3,283	1,642	-17
22 Horam	1	2,066	2,066	7	2,127	2,127	7
23 Maresfield	2	2,656	1,328	-31	2,734	1,367	-31
24 Mayfield	2	2,770	1,385	-28	2,825	1,413	-29
25 Ninfield	1	1,575	1,575	-19	1,605	1,605	-19

Ward name	Number of councillors	Electorate (2000)	Number of electors per councillor	Variance from average %	Electorate (2005)	Number of electors per councillor	Variance from average %
26 Pevensey & Westham	3	6,593	2,198	14	6,855	2,285	15
27 Polegate North	2	3,618	1,809	-7	3,687	1,844	-7
28 Polegate South	2	3,249	1,625	-16	3,344	1,672	-16
29 Rotherfield	1	2,587	2,587	34	2,626	2,626	33
30 Uckfield	3	10,744	3,581	85	10,895	3,632	83
31 Wadhurst	2	3,799	1,900	-2	3,890	1,945	-2
32 Waldron	2	3,604	1,802	-7	3,672	1,836	-7
33 Willingdon	3	5,302	1,767	-9	5,323	1,774	-10
34 Withyham	1	2,183	2,183	13	2,233	2,233	13
<b>Totals</b>	<b>58</b>	<b>112,300</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>114,905</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>
<b>Averages</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>1,936</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>1,981</b>	<b>-</b>

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

Note: The 'variance from average' column shows by how far, in percentage terms, the number of electors per councillor varies from the average for the district. The minus symbol (-) denotes a lower than average number of electors. For example, in 2000, electors in Maresfield ward were relatively over-represented by 31 per cent, while electors in Uckfield ward were relatively under-represented by 85 per cent. Figures have been rounded to the nearest whole number.

### 3 REPRESENTATIONS RECEIVED

20 At the start of the review we invited members of the public and other interested parties to write to us giving their views on the future electoral arrangements for Wealden District Council and its constituent parish and town councils.

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

#### **Wealden District Council**

22 The District Council proposed a council of 55 members, three fewer than at present, serving 36 wards, an increase of two, in a pattern of predominantly single-member wards. The District Council had consulted on two schemes, Option A and Option B, and had based its submission on the results of this consultation.

23 The District Council proposed boundary changes in all but two wards. It proposed for the urban areas that Crowborough be represented by eight councillors, an increase of one, that Hailsham be represented by six councillors, as at present, that the Polegate/Willingdon area be represented by six councillors, a decrease of one, and that Uckfield be represented by five councillors, an increase of two, together with a number of ward boundary changes and alternative parish warding for the parishes of Crowborough, Hailsham, Polegate and Uckfield.

24 In the rural areas, the District Council proposed parish warding for the parishes of Buxted, Hartfield, Maresfield, Mayfield & Five Ashes, Rotherfield and Warbleton, and revised parish warding for Heathfield & Waldron parish. The District Council also proposed new names for 13 wards. The proposals would provide good electoral equality throughout the district with no wards varying by more than 9 per cent by 2005. The Council's proposal is summarised at Appendix B.

#### **Parish and Town Councils**

25 We received representations from four parish and town councils. Buxted Parish Council objected to the District Council's proposal to split the parish between the proposed single-member Buxted East and Buxted West wards, preferring the consultation scheme Option A. This had proposed that Buxted and Hadlow Down parishes would be combined with a proposed Maresfield parish ward of Maresfield parish in a two-member ward. Maresfield Parish Council objected to the District Council's proposal to ward the parish, instead proposing that the parish form a ward, represented by one councillor. As a second preference it supported the District Council's consultation scheme Option B, for separate Buxted East and Buxted West wards.

26 Frant Parish Council objected to the proposed two-member Frant/Withyham ward, preferring the consultation scheme Option B for two single-member wards. Polegate Town Council objected to the District Council's proposal to transfer part of the parish to a ward with Willingdon & Jevington parish, and also challenged the principle of electoral equality.

## 4 ANALYSIS AND DRAFT RECOMMENDATIONS

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

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

29 It is therefore impractical to design an electoral scheme which provides for exactly the same number of electors per councillor in every ward of an authority. There must be a degree of flexibility. However, our approach, in the context of the statutory criteria, is that such flexibility must be kept to a minimum.

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

### **Electorate Forecasts**

31 The District Council submitted electorate forecasts for the year 2005, projecting an increase in the electorate of some 2 per cent from 112,300 to 114,905 over the five-year period from 2000 to 2005. It expects most of the growth to be in Pevensy & Westham ward, although a significant amount is also expected in Crowborough West and Hellingly wards. The Council has estimated rates and locations of housing development with regard to structure and local plans, the expected rate of building over the five-year period and assumed occupancy rates. Advice from the District Council on the likely effect on electorates of changes to ward boundaries has been obtained.

32 We accept that forecasting electorates is an inexact science and, having given consideration to the District Council’s figures, are content that they represent the best estimates that can reasonably be made at this time.

## **Council Size**

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

34 Wealden District Council presently has 58 members. The District Council proposed a council of 55 members, a reduction by three. It stated that, given new political structures being implemented, it had considered a number of alternative council sizes and that the Council considered “a small reduction in the number of members to say 55 would be appropriate”.

35 The District Council stated that the four urban areas of Crowborough, Hailsham, Uckfield and the combined parishes of Polegate and Willingdon were “identified as having distinct boundaries between urban and rural” and considered that it would not be “appropriate” to attempt to achieve electoral equality by combining these areas with “all or part of any neighbouring rural parishes”. The Council argued that it had compared a range of council sizes and had found that a council of 55 would maintain the integrity of the four areas while providing for good levels of electoral equality.

36 Having considered the size and distribution of the electorate, the geography and other characteristics of the area, together with the representations received, we have concluded that the achievement of electoral equality and the statutory criteria would best be met by a council of 55 members.

## **Electoral Arrangements**

37 Having proposed a council size of 55, we have carefully considered the District Council’s 55-member scheme, together with other submissions which we have received. In view of the support on the Council for the proposals, and the consultation exercise which it undertook with interested parties, we have concluded that we should base our recommendations on the District Council’s scheme. We consider that this scheme would provide a better balance between electoral equality and the statutory criteria than the current arrangements. However, to improve electoral equality further and having regard to local community identities and interests, we have decided to move away from the District Council’s proposals in one area, reflecting Buxted Parish Council’s submission, and also propose minor modifications to its proposed boundaries, to follow ground features, in Crowborough, Hailsham and Uckfield. For district warding purposes, the following areas, based on existing wards, are considered in turn:

- (a) Crowborough (four wards);
- (b) Hailsham (three wards);
- (c) Polegate North, Polegate South and Willingdon wards;
- (d) Uckfield ward;
- (e) Frant, Rotherfield and Withyham wards;
- (f) Framfield, Heathfield, Mayfield, Wadhurst and Waldron wards;
- (g) Buxted, Danehill, Fletching, Forest Row, Hartfield and Maresfield wards;

- (h) Alfriston, Arlington, Chiddingly & East Hoathly, East Dean and Hellingly wards;
- (i) Herstmonceux, Horam, Ninfield and Pevensey & Westham wards.

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

## **Urban wards**

### **Crowborough (four wards)**

39 The parish of Crowborough is situated in the north of the district and is bounded by the parishes of Withyham, Rotherfield, Buxted and Maresfield. The town area is represented by four district wards: Crowborough St Johns ward is represented by a single member, while Crowborough East, Crowborough North and Crowborough West wards are each represented by two members. The number of electors per councillor is 36 per cent above the district average in Crowborough East ward (37 per cent in 2005), 18 per cent above in Crowborough North ward (20 per cent in 2005), 7 per cent below in Crowborough St Johns ward (unchanged in 2005) and 8 per cent above in Crowborough West ward (11 per cent in 2005).

40 At Stage One Wealden District Council proposed that Crowborough be represented by eight members, one more than at present, serving five wards, an increase of one for the area. The District Council proposed that the two-member Crowborough West ward be modified in the north, so that the area north of Saxonbury Close and east of Croft Road be transferred to Crowborough North ward. It proposed that the single-member Crowborough St Johns ward be extended to include that part of Crowborough North ward west of London Road and Norbury Close. Crowborough North ward would be further modified to the south so that the boundary followed Montargis Way, the backs of properties on Beeches Farm Road, then along Hilders Farm Close and the backs of properties on Loxfield Gardens, but would remain a two-member ward. To the east of the parish, the District Council proposed a new single-member Crowborough Jarvis Brook ward, formed from parts of Crowborough East and Crowborough North wards. The ward's boundary would run to the west of Shawfield, Rochester Way, Osborne Hill and Windsor Court, then follow the railway from Crowborough Station south. Crowborough East ward would continue to be represented by two members.

41 Under the District Council's proposals the number of electors per councillor would be 4 per cent below the district average in Crowborough East ward (3 per cent in 2005), 4 per cent below in Crowborough Jarvis Brook ward (3 per cent in 2005), 2 per cent below in Crowborough North ward (equal to the average in 2005), 4 per cent below in Crowborough St Johns ward (2 per cent in 2005) and 3 per cent below in Crowborough West ward (2 per cent in 2005).

42 We have carefully considered the District Council's proposals for Crowborough, and note that they provide for improved electoral equality, while appearing to reflect local communities. We also note that Crowborough Town Council expressed support for the District Council's proposals during its local consultation and therefore consider that the District Council's proposals

provide a good balance between the need to provide for improved electoral equality and the statutory criteria.

43 However, we have noted that the existing boundary between Crowborough St Johns and Crowborough West wards, which the District Council proposed retaining, follows features that no longer exist. We also note that under the District Council's proposals the properties on Hilders Farm Close would have no direct vehicular access to the remainder of Crowborough North ward and the properties on Osborne Road would have no direct vehicular access to the remainder of Crowborough East ward.

44 We therefore propose minor modifications to the District Council's proposals for Crowborough as part of our draft recommendations, which would not impact significantly on electoral variances. We propose amending the boundary between the proposed Crowborough St Johns and Crowborough West ward in four areas, to follow ground features. We also propose amending the proposed boundary between Crowborough East and Crowborough North wards to include all of Hilders Farm Close in Crowborough East ward. Additionally, we propose modifying the boundary between Crowborough East and Crowborough Jarvis Brook wards to include all of Osborne Road in Crowborough Jarvis Brook ward. Our proposals for the boundaries of the five Crowborough wards are illustrated on the large map at the back of the report.

45 Under our draft recommendations the number of electors per councillor would be 5 per cent below the district average in Crowborough East ward (4 per cent in 2005), 1 per cent below in Crowborough Jarvis Brook ward (equal to the average in 2005), 2 per cent below in Crowborough North ward (1 per cent in 2005), 4 per cent below in Crowborough St Johns ward (2 per cent in 2005) and 3 per cent below in Crowborough West ward (2 per cent in 2005).

### **Hailsham (three wards)**

46 Hailsham parish is situated in the south of the district, and is bordered by Hellingly to the north, Herstmonceux to the east, Pevensey and Polegate to the south and Arlington to the west. The majority of the town area is represented by three two-member district wards: Hailsham Central & North, Hailsham East and Hailsham South & West, although the rural Hellingly ward also contains part of the parish. The number of electors per councillor is 9 per cent below the district average in Hailsham Central & North ward (10 per cent in 2005), equal to the average in Hailsham East ward (unchanged in 2005) and 37 per cent above in Hailsham South & West ward (35 per cent in 2005).

47 At Stage One the District Council proposed that Hailsham continue to be served by six members, representing three wards. The District Council proposed that Hailsham South & West ward be represented by three members, an increase of one, and that it be extended east so that the boundary run south along The Cuckoo Trail and Station Road, then east along Bell Banks Road and the backs of properties on Mill Road, south along the backs of properties on Howard Close and Butts Field, returning west along the south side of Station Road Industrial Estate to the existing boundary. It proposed that Hailsham East ward be represented by a single member, a reduction of one, and that the boundaries be further modified to the north, so that the area north

of Bell Banks Road and west of St Mary's Avenue would be transferred to the two-member Hailsham Central & North ward. The District Council stated that these boundaries were based on proposals developed by the Town Council, with minor modifications. It stated "the proposed wards are considered to have strong local boundaries and the adjustments have been agreed by the Town Council".

48 Under the District Council's proposals the number of electors per councillor would be 4 per cent above the district average in Hailsham Central & North ward (unchanged in 2005), 3 per cent above in Hailsham East ward (unchanged in 2005) and 4 per cent above in Hailsham South & West ward (2 per cent in 2005).

49 We have carefully considered the District Council's proposals for Hailsham and note that they retain most of the existing boundaries, while utilising identifiable boundaries in other areas. We consider that the District Council's proposals provide a good balance between the need to provide for improved electoral equality and the statutory criteria. However, we have noted that a number of the boundaries, which the District Council proposed retaining, follow features which no longer exist.

50 We therefore propose minor modifications to the District Council's proposals for Hailsham as part of our draft recommendations, which would have a minimal affect on electoral variances. We propose amending part of the boundary between Hailsham Central & North and Hellingly wards so that the boundary continue along Hawks Road to the parish boundary. We also propose modifying part of the boundary between Hailsham Central & North and Hailsham South & West wards to unite Derwent Close in Hailsham South & West ward. Our proposals for ward boundaries in Hailsham are illustrated on the large map at the back of the report.

51 Under our draft recommendations the number of electors per councillor would be 7 per cent above the district average in Hailsham Central & North ward (unchanged in 2005), 3 per cent above in Hailsham East ward (unchanged in 2005) and 4 per cent above in Hailsham South & West ward (2 per cent in 2005).

### **Polegate North, Polegate South and Willingdon wards**

52 Polegate North and Polegate South wards, which together form Polegate parish, are situated south of Hailsham parish. Willingdon ward, which contains the parish of Willingdon & Jevington, borders Polegate to the north and Eastbourne borough to the south. Together, the two parishes are represented by seven district councillors: Polegate North and Polegate South wards are each represented by two members, while Willingdon ward is represented by three members. The number of electors per councillor is 7 per cent below the district average in Polegate North ward (unchanged in 2005), 16 per cent below in Polegate South ward (unchanged in 2005) and 9 per cent below in Willingdon ward (10 per cent in 2005).

53 At Stage One we received representations regarding these wards from the District Council and Polegate Town Council. The District Council proposed that the two parishes be represented by six district councillors, one fewer than at present. It proposed that the two-member Polegate North ward be extended south so that the boundary would follow the Lewes–Eastbourne railway line

east to Eastbourne Road (the A22), and then run north along High Street, and east along the backs of properties on Black Path and Heron Ridge, returning to the existing boundary at the railway line. The proposed Polegate South ward, to be represented by a single member, would also be modified to the south, so that the area bounded by Wannock Road, Grosvenor Close and Eastbourne Road would be transferred to the three-member Willingdon ward. The District Council noted that Polegate parish had insufficient electors to maintain the existing pattern of two two-member wards, and stated it had therefore been necessary to cross the parish boundary. It argued that the proposed boundary “was considered to follow logical geographical boundaries”, and noted that during its local consultation Willingdon & Jevington Parish Council had accepted this proposal.

54 Under the District Council’s proposals the number of electors per councillor would be 1 per cent below the district average in Polegate North ward (unchanged in 2005), 1 per cent below in Polegate South ward (unchanged in 2005) and equal to the average in Willingdon ward (2 per cent below in 2005).

55 Polegate Town Council objected to the District Council’s proposal to transfer part of the parish to Willingdon ward, stating it “is not sure” that electoral equality “should just mean equality of numbers”. The Town Council also expressed concern that any district ward changes would be “a natural forerunner” to a parish boundary review.

56 We have carefully considered the representations from the District Council and Polegate Town Council. Regarding Polegate Town Council’s comments, as our *Guidance* states, our principal aim is to achieve electoral equality, having regard to the statutory criteria, ie. to ensure that “the number of electors represented by each councillor is as nearly as possible the same”, taking into account local circumstances. We cannot recommend changes to external parish boundaries as part of this review, nor should we speculate on the outcome of possible future parish reviews as part of this review.

57 Having visited the area, we consider that the District Council’s proposals provide for good electoral equality, while providing identifiable boundaries and reflecting the interests of local communities. First, we note that the District Council’s proposed boundary between Polegate North and Polegate South wards unites the commercial properties on the High Street in Polegate North ward. We also note that properties on Black Path look north towards the railway line, and consider these electors would have a community of interest with those resident on the north side of the railway line. Second, we note that while the properties in the area of Polegate parish to be transferred to Willingdon ward are separated from the remainder of the parish by social housing, they are of a similar profile to those in the north of Willingdon & Jevington parish. We consider that this provides an identifiable ward boundary and that electors on either side of the parish boundary would share a community of interest.

58 Therefore, we propose adopting the District Council’s proposals for the wards of Polegate North, Polegate South and Willingdon as part of our draft recommendations. Under our draft recommendations the number of electors per councillor would be 1 per cent below the district average in Polegate North ward (unchanged in 2005), 1 per cent below in Polegate South ward (unchanged in 2005) and equal to the average in Willingdon ward (2 per cent below in 2005). Our

proposals for the parishes of Polegate and Willingdon & Jevington are illustrated on Map 2 and Map A7 in Appendix A.

### **Uckfield ward**

59 The three-member Uckfield ward is situated in the west of the district and contains the parish of the same name. It is bounded by the parishes of Buxted, Framfield, Little Horsted, Fletching and Maresfield. The number of electors per councillor is 85 per cent above the district average (83 per cent in 2005).

60 At Stage One the District Council proposed that Uckfield be represented by five members, two more than at present, and four wards, three more than at present. The District Council argued that the Uckfield–Crowborough railway line “forms a strong geographical boundary” and therefore proposed that it should form a boundary, so that that part of the parish north of the railway line would be represented by three members, and that part of the parish to the south of the railway line would be represented by two members. It proposed the northern part of the parish form two wards: a two-member Uckfield North ward and a single-member Uckfield Central ward, and the southern part of the parish form two single-member wards: Uckfield New Town and Uckfield Ridgewood.

61 In the north of the parish, the District Council proposed that from the B212, the area bounded by Hunters Way, Church Street, Regency Close, Bedford Court, Linden Chase and Hempstead Road should form Uckfield Central ward, with the remainder of the area north of the railway line forming Uckfield North ward.

62 In the south of the parish, the District Council proposed that the southern boundary of Uckfield New Town ward should run along field edges from Ridgewood Stream to Hill View Cottage. The boundary would then run along Longbury, south along High Street, along the backs of properties on Belfry Orchard and Selby Gardens, continuing generally east to the parish boundary. The area south of this boundary would form Uckfield Ridgewood ward.

63 Under the District Council’s proposals the number of electors per councillor would be 6 per cent above the district average in Uckfield Central ward (unchanged in 2005), 4 per cent below in Uckfield New Town ward (6 per cent in 2005), 9 per cent above in Uckfield North ward (8 per cent in 2005) and 6 per cent above in Uckfield Ridgewood ward (5 per cent in 2005).

64 We have carefully considered the District Council’s proposals for Uckfield, and note that the views of the Town Council were taken into account in formulating the new wards. We consider that the District Council’s proposals provide for a good balance between the need to secure electoral equality, while having regard to the statutory criteria. In particular, we consider that the Uckfield–Crowborough railway line constitutes a strong boundary. However, we note that under the District Council’s proposals the boundary between Uckfield Central and Uckfield North wards would run between numbers 4 and 6 The Drive, thus separating numbers 2 and 4 from the remainder of the street. We also note that Thimble, Moonraker and 31-32 Linden Chase would be separated from the remainder of Linden Chase.

65 We therefore propose adopting the District Council’s proposals for Uckfield as part of our draft recommendations, subject to two boundary amendments, which would have a negligible impact on electoral variances. We propose amending the boundary between the proposed Uckfield Central and Uckfield North wards to include all of The Drive in Uckfield North ward and to include all of Linden Chase in Uckfield Central ward. Our proposals for the boundaries of the four Uckfield wards are illustrated on the large map at the back of the report.

66 Under our draft recommendations the number of electors per councillor would be 7 per cent above the district average in Uckfield Central ward (6 per cent in 2005), 4 per cent below in Uckfield New Town ward (6 per cent in 2005), 9 per cent above in Uckfield North ward (8 per cent in 2005) and 6 per cent above in Uckfield Ridgewood ward (5 per cent in 2005).

## **Rural wards**

### **Frant, Rotherfield and Withyham wards**

67 The three single-member wards of Frant, Rotherfield and Withyham, each containing the parish of the same name, are situated in the north of the district and border Tunbridge Wells borough to the north, Wadhurst to the east, Crowborough to the south and Hartfield to the west. The number of electors per councillor is 44 per cent below the district average in Frant ward (unchanged in 2005), 34 per cent above in Rotherfield ward (33 per cent in 2005) and 13 per cent above in Withyham ward (unchanged in 2005).

68 At Stage One we received representations regarding these wards from the District Council and Frant Parish Council. The District Council proposed that Rotherfield parish be warded, so that Rotherfield village form a new single-member ward. The remainder of Rotherfield parish, Eridge and Mark Cross polling districts, would be combined with Frant and Withyham wards to form a new Frant/Withyham ward, to be represented by two members. The District Council argued that the proposed Frant/Withyham ward would have “the added benefit of linking the two polling districts covering Eridge, one of which had been in Rotherfield ward, the other in Frant ward”.

69 Frant Parish Council objected to the District Council’s proposed two-member Frant/Withyham ward, arguing that the ward “would cover too wide an area”. The Parish Council stated its preference for the District Council’s alternative consultation proposal, Option B, where the area would be represented by two single-member wards. However, it added that the council supported the proposal to unite Eridge in the proposed Frant/Withyham ward.

70 Under the District Council’s proposals the number of electors per councillor would be 4 per cent below the district average in Frant/Withyham ward (5 per cent in 2005) and 4 per cent below in Rotherfield ward (5 per cent in 2005).

71 We have carefully considered representations from the District Council and Frant Parish Council. We have examined Frant Parish Council’s proposal that the parish be placed in a single-member ward, but have noted that this would require that Withyham parish be split between two district wards. However, we also note that, regarding the proposed two-member Frant/Withyham

ward, Frant Parish Council stated “the council is, however, pleased to note that it is proposed to include the whole of Eridge”. We note that Withyham Parish Council objected to the two single-member ward option during the District Council’s consultation and do not consider that such a proposal would best reflect communities in this area. We consider that the District Council’s proposals for a two-member Frant/Withyham ward and single-member Rotherfield ward provide a good balance between the need to secure electoral equality and the statutory criteria, and are therefore proposing to adopt the District Council’s proposals for Frant/Withyham and Rotherfield wards as part of our draft recommendations.

72 Under our draft recommendations the number of electors per councillor would be 4 per cent below the district average in Frant/Withyham ward (5 per cent in 2005) and 4 per cent below in Rotherfield ward (5 per cent in 2005). Our proposals for these wards are illustrated on Map 2 and Map A8 in Appendix A.

### **Framfield, Heathfield, Mayfield, Wadhurst and Waldron wards**

73 Mayfield and Wadhurst wards are situated in the east of the district, on the boundary with Rother district, while Framfield, Waldron and Heathfield wards run east-west across the centre of the district, south of Buxted, Hadlow Down and Mayfield & Five Ashes parishes. The single-member Framfield and the two-member Wadhurst wards each contain the parish of the same name, while the two-member Mayfield ward contains Mayfield & Five Ashes parish, and the three-member Heathfield and two-member Waldron wards together comprise Heathfield & Waldron parish. The number of electors per councillor is 24 per cent below the district average in Framfield ward (25 per cent in 2005), 6 per cent below in Heathfield ward (7 per cent in 2005), 28 per cent below in Mayfield ward (29 per cent in 2005), 2 per cent below in Wadhurst ward (unchanged in 2005) and 7 per cent below in Waldron ward (unchanged in 2005).

74 At Stage One the District Council proposed that this area be represented by six wards, one more than at present and eight members, two fewer than at present. It proposed that Wadhurst ward should be extended to include part of Mayfield & Five Ashes parish, and be represented by two members, as at present. It argued “the electors in the sparsely populated area in the north of the parish have no particularly strong links with Mayfield village” and noted that both Mayfield & Five Ashes and Wadhurst parish councils accepted this transfer during its own consultation.

75 The District Council proposed that Mayfield & Five Ashes parish be further warded, so that Mayfield village would form a modified single-member Mayfield ward, and Five Ashes polling district would form a new single-member ward with Cross in Hand polling district of Heathfield & Waldron parish, to be named Cross in Hand/Five Ashes ward. It argued that Five Ashes is “close to the centre of the settlement of Cross-in-Hand and the area could be said to have closer geographical links to Cross-in-Hand than to Mayfield village”.

76 The District Council noted that the town of Heathfield is currently split between Heathfield ward and Waldron ward. Therefore “to give some identity to the town of Heathfield” it proposed that Heathfield village and “the linked settlement” of Broad Oak form a new Heathfield North & Central ward, to be represented by three members. The District Council further proposed that the “more sparsely populated rural area” in the west of Heathfield & Waldron parish, including

Waldron village, should be transferred to an extended single-member Framfield ward, arguing that this would combine Waldron with “the similar areas of Framfield and Blackboys”.

77 Under the District Council’s proposals the number of electors per councillor would be 2 per cent below the district average in Cross in Hand/Five Ashes ward (unchanged in 2005), 4 per cent above in Framfield ward (unchanged in 2005), 4 per cent below in Heathfield North & Central ward (unchanged in 2005), equal to the average in Mayfield ward (unchanged in 2005) and 2 per cent below the average in Wadhurst ward (unchanged in 2005).

78 We note the District Council’s proposal to include part of Mayfield & Five Ashes parish in an enlarged Wadhurst ward and, noting that both parishes accepted this transfer during the District Council’s consultation and that good levels of electoral equality would result, we propose adopting the modified Wadhurst ward as part of our draft recommendations. We have carefully considered the District Council’s proposals for two new district wards to represent the settlements of Heathfield and Mayfield, and having visited the area, consider that these proposals have merit. In particular, we consider that the proposed new Heathfield North & Central ward would better reflect local community identity in the Heathfield area than the existing wards, which divide the settlement between two wards, and are therefore adopting the proposed Heathfield North & Central and the modified Mayfield ward as part of our draft recommendations. We have examined the proposed Cross in Hand/Five Ashes ward and the modified Framfield ward, and consider that the communities of Cross in Hand and Five Ashes, and the communities of Wadhurst, Blackboys and Framfield, share a community of interest and therefore propose adopting the District Council’s Cross in Hand/Five Ashes and Framfield wards as part of our draft recommendations.

79 Under our draft recommendations the number of electors per councillor would be 2 per cent below the district average in Cross in Hand/Five Ashes ward (unchanged in 2005), 4 per cent above in Framfield ward (unchanged in 2005), 4 per cent below in Heathfield North & Central ward (unchanged in 2005), equal to the average in Mayfield ward (unchanged in 2005) and 2 per cent below the average in Wadhurst ward (unchanged in 2005). Our proposals for these five wards are illustrated on the large map at the back of the report and on Map 2 and Maps A5 and A6 in Appendix A.

### **Buxted, Danehill, Fletching, Forest Row, Hartfield and Maresfield wards**

80 The three single-member wards of Danehill, Fletching and Hartfield, and the two-member Buxted, Forest Row and Maresfield wards are situated in the north-west of the district, and border Withyham and Crowborough to the east, the districts of Lewes and Mid Sussex to the west and Tandridge and Sevenoaks to the north. Danehill, Forest Row, Hartfield and Maresfield wards each contain the parish of the same name, while Buxted ward comprises Buxted and Hadlow Down parishes and Fletching ward comprises the parishes of Fletching, Isfield and Little Horsted. The number of electors per councillor is 19 per cent below the district average in Buxted ward (20 per cent in 2005), 22 per cent below in Danehill ward (23 per cent in 2005), 26 per cent below in Fletching ward (unchanged in 2005), 4 per cent below in Forest Row ward (5 per cent in 2005), 13 per cent below in Hartfield ward (14 per cent in 2005) and 31 per cent below in Maresfield ward (unchanged in 2005).

81 At Stage One we received representations regarding these wards from the District Council, Buxted Parish Council and Maresfield Parish Council. The District Council proposed that the north-west of the district be represented by five wards, one fewer than at present and seven members, two fewer than at present. It proposed that Buxted ward be split into two, so that that part of Buxted parish east of Uckfield–Oxted railway line and Hadlow Down parish form a new single-member Buxted East ward, and the western part of Buxted parish, together with Maresfield polling district of Maresfield parish, form a new single-member Buxted West ward. It further proposed that Nutley polling district, in the north-west of Maresfield parish, and Danehill ward, would be combined with Fletching ward in a new Danehill/Nutley/Fletching ward, to be represented by two members. The District Council proposed that the remainder of Maresfield parish, Fairwarp polling district, be transferred to an extended single-member Hartfield ward. It proposed that Hartfield ward be further modified to the north, transferring Hammerwood polling district to Forest Row ward, which would continue to be represented by two members.

82 Under the District Council’s proposals the number of electors per councillor would be 5 per cent below the district average in Buxted East ward (unchanged in 2005), 4 per cent above in Buxted West ward (3 per cent in 2005), 1 per cent below in Danehill/Fletching/Nutley ward (unchanged in 2005), 4 per cent below in Forest Row ward (5 per cent in 2005) and 2 per cent above in Hartfield ward (1 per cent in 2005).

83 Buxted Parish Council objected to the District Council’s proposal to split the parish between the proposed single-member Buxted East and Buxted West wards, preferring the consultation scheme Option A. This had proposed that Buxted and Hadlow Down parishes should be combined with Maresfield polling district of Maresfield parish in a two-member ward.

84 Maresfield Parish Council objected to the District Council’s proposal to ward the parish, instead proposing that the parish form a ward, represented by one councillor. As a second preference it supported the District Council’s consultation scheme Option B, for separate Buxted East and Buxted West wards.

85 We note the objection from Maresfield Parish Council, and its proposal that the parish form a single-member ward. However, under a council of 55, such a ward would be under-represented by 30 per cent. Furthermore, the Commission considers that the proposed warding of Maresfield is integral to the scheme as a whole, and were Maresfield parish not warded, this would have much wider implications for this part of the district. However, we consider that Buxted Parish Council’s preference for the District Council’s consultation proposal (Option A), that the single-member Buxted East and Buxted West wards should be combined to form a new two-member ward, has merit. We note that such a proposal was supported by Buxted and Hadlow Downs parish councils during the District Council’s consultation, would not have a knock-on effect on any other wards, would reduce the number of parishes to be warded, and would provide for improved electoral equality. We therefore propose adopting the two-member ward as part of our draft recommendations, and propose that it should be named Buxted & Maresfield ward to reflect the constituent communities. We consider that the District Council provides a good balance between the need to secure electoral equality and the statutory criteria in its proposed Danehill/Fletching/Nutley and Hartfield wards, noting in particular that Fairwarp polling district of Maresfield parish and Hartfield parish are linked by the Ashdown Forest. Having visited the

area, we consider that in the area on the Kent border around Holtye Road the road acts as a community focus, and it would therefore be in the interests of community identity to unite the Hammerwood community, currently divided between Forest Row and Hartfield parishes, in one district ward. We are therefore adopting the District Council's modified Forest Row ward as part of our draft recommendations.

86 Under our draft recommendations the number of electors per councillor would be equal to the district average in Buxted & Maresfield ward (1 per cent below in 2005), 1 per cent below in Danehill/Fletching/Nutley ward (unchanged in 2005), 4 per cent below in Forest Row ward (5 per cent in 2005) and 2 per cent above in Hartfield ward (1 per cent in 2005). Our proposals for the north-west of the district are illustrated on Map 2 and Maps A2-A4 in Appendix A.

### **Alfriston, Arlington, Chiddingly & East Hoathly, East Dean and Hellingly wards**

87 The four single-member wards of Alfriston, Arlington, Chiddingly & East Hoathly and East Dean and the two-member Hellingly ward are situated in the south-west of the district, and are bounded by the English Channel to the south, Lewes district to the west and Hailsham and Polegate to the east. Alfriston ward comprises Alciston, Alfriston, Berwick and Selmeston parishes, and Lullington and Litlington parish wards of Cuckmere Valley parish. Arlington ward consists of Arlington, Chalvington with Ripe and Laughton parishes and Milton Street parish ward of Long Man parish. Chiddingly & East Hoathly ward comprises the parishes of the same name. East Dean ward contains East Dean & Friston parish and West Dean parish ward of Cuckmere Valley parish. Hellingly ward contains the parish of the same name. The number of electors per councillor is 22 per cent below the district average in Alfriston ward (unchanged in 2005), 6 per cent below in Arlington ward (unchanged in 2005), 9 per cent below in Chiddingly & East Hoathly ward (7 per cent in 2005), 23 per cent below in East Dean ward (unchanged in 2005) and 4 per cent below in Hellingly ward (1 per cent in 2005).

88 At Stage One the District Council proposed that all of Cuckmere Valley and Long Man parishes should be united in the single-member East Dean ward, together with East Dean & Friston parish. It proposed that Alfriston ward should be further modified to include Chalvington with Ripe parish, and that it should continue to be represented by a single member. The single-member Chiddingly & East Hoathly ward would be extended to include Laughton parish, and Arlington parish would be transferred from Arlington ward to Hellingly ward, to be represented by two councillors.

89 Under the District Council's proposals the number of electors per councillor would be equal to the district average in Alfriston ward (2 per cent below in 2005), 7 per cent above in Chiddingly & East Hoathly ward (9 per cent in 2005), 4 per cent below in East Dean ward (unchanged in 2005) and 2 per cent above in Hellingly ward (4 per cent in 2005).

90 We have carefully considered the District Council's proposals for the south-west of the district, and note that it proposed using whole parishes as building blocks in this area, which we consider generally provides a good reflection of the statutory criteria, and would provide for good electoral equality, and therefore we propose adopting the District Council's proposals for Alfriston, Chiddingly & East Hoathly, East Dean and Hellingly wards as part of our draft

recommendations. Under our draft recommendations the number of electors per councillor would be equal to the district average in Alfriston ward (2 per cent below in 2005), 7 per cent above in Chiddingly & East Hoathly ward (9 per cent in 2005), 4 per cent below in East Dean ward (unchanged in 2005) and 1 per cent below in Hellingly ward (2 per cent above in 2005). Our proposals for the south-west of the district are illustrated on Map 2 in Appendix A.

### **Herstmonceux, Horam, Ninfield and Pevensey & Westham wards**

91 The single-member Horam and Ninfield wards, the two-member Herstmonceux ward and the three-member Pevensey & Westham ward are situated in the south-east of the district and are bordered by Polegate and Hailsham to the west, Heathfield & Waldron to the north, Rother district to the east and the English Channel and Eastbourne borough to the south. Herstmonceux ward contains Herstmonceux, Warbleton and Wartling parishes, Horam ward contains the parish of the same name, Ninfield ward comprises the parishes of Hooe and Ninfield and Pevensey & Westham ward contains the parishes of the same names. The number of electors per councillor is 16 per cent below the district average in Herstmonceux ward (17 per cent in 2005), 7 per cent above in Horam ward (unchanged in 2005), 19 per cent below in Ninfield ward (unchanged in 2005) and 14 per cent above in Pevensey & Westham ward (15 per cent in 2005).

92 The District Council proposed at Stage One that Horam ward remain unchanged. It proposed that Warbleton parish form a new single-member Heathfield East ward, together with the rural southern part of the existing Heathfield ward. However, it proposed that Warbleton parish should be warded so that the Bodle Street Green settlement, in the far south of the parish, would form part of a modified Herstmonceux ward, to be represented by a single member, one fewer than at present. The District Council proposed that the single-member Ninfield ward be extended to include Wartling parish, and be renamed Pevensey/Ninfield. Finally in this area, it proposed that Pevensey & Westham ward remain unchanged.

93 Under the District Council's proposals the number of electors per councillor would be 7 per cent below the district average in Heathfield East ward (unchanged in 2005), equal to the average in Herstmonceux ward (1 per cent below in 2005), 1 per cent above in Horam ward (2 per cent in 2005), 8 per cent above in Pevensey & Westham ward (9 per cent in 2005) and 9 per cent below in Pevensey/Ninfield ward (unchanged in 2005).

94 We have carefully considered the District Council's proposals for the south-east of the district and consider that the more rural southern part of Heathfield & Waldron parish and Warbleton parish have many similarities. Having visited the area, we also note that while the Bodle Street Green settlement is distant from the centre of Warbleton parish, it is relatively close to Herstmonceux and consider that residents of Bodle Street Green would look towards Herstmonceux. In the light of our proposals for other district wards, and, considering that the proposed Heathfield East and Herstmonceux wards contain areas that share a community of interest, we are adopting the District Council's proposals for Heathfield East and Herstmonceux wards as part of our draft recommendations. The District Council proposed no change to the existing Horam and Pevensey & Westham wards. In view of the improved levels of electoral equality which would result under a council of 55, and considering that the retention of the existing arrangements for these wards would not have an adverse effect on our proposals for other

wards in this area, we propose retaining these wards as part of our draft recommendations. We also consider that the proposal for Pevensey/Ninfield ward provides a good balance between the need to secure electoral equality and the statutory criteria and therefore are adopting the District Council's proposals for Pevensey/Ninfield ward as part of our draft recommendations.

95 Under our draft recommendations the number of electors per councillor would be 7 per cent below the district average in Heathfield East ward (unchanged in 2005), equal to the average in Herstmonceux ward (1 per cent below in 2005), 1 per cent above in Horam ward (2 per cent in 2005), 8 per cent above in Pevensey & Westham ward (9 per cent in 2005) and 9 per cent below in Pevensey/Ninfield ward (unchanged in 2005). Our proposals for the five wards in the south-east of the district are illustrated on the large map at the back of the report, and on Map 2 and Map A9 in Appendix A.

## **Electoral Cycle**

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

## **Conclusions**

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

- there should be a reduction in council size from 58 to 55;
- there should be 35 wards;
- the boundaries of 32 of the existing wards should be modified, resulting in a net increase of one ward;
- elections should continue to be held for the whole council.

98 As already indicated, we have based our draft recommendations on the District Council's proposals, but propose departing from them in the following areas:

- in Buxted we propose combining the District Council's proposed single-member Buxted East and Buxted West wards to form a new two-member Buxted & Maresfield ward;
- in Crowborough we propose minor boundary amendments in six areas affecting five wards;
- in Hailsham we propose minor boundary amendments in two areas affecting three wards;

- in Uckfield we propose minor boundary amendments in two areas affecting two wards.

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

*Figure 5: Comparison of Current and Recommended Electoral Arrangements*

	2000 electorate		2005 forecast electorate	
	Current arrangements	Draft recommendations	Current arrangements	Draft recommendations
Number of councillors	58	55	58	55
Number of wards	34	35	34	35
Average number of electors per councillor	1,936	2,042	1,981	2,089
Number of wards with a variance more than 10 per cent from the average	20	0	21	0
Number of wards with a variance more than 20 per cent from the average	12	0	12	0

100 As shown in Figure 5, our draft recommendations for Wealden District Council would result in a reduction in the number of wards varying by more than 10 per cent from the district average from 20 to none. By 2005 no wards are forecast to vary by more than 10 per cent from the average for the district.

#### **Draft Recommendation**

Wealden District Council should comprise 55 councillors serving 35 wards, as detailed and named in Figures 1 and 2, and illustrated on Map 2 and in Appendix A, including the large map inside the back cover. The Council should continue to hold whole-council elections every four years.

### **Parish and Town Council Electoral Arrangements**

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

Hartfield, Heathfield & Waldron, Maresfield, Mayfield & Five Ashes, Polegate, Rotherfield, Uckfield and Warbleton to reflect the proposed district wards.

102 Crowborough Town Council is currently served by 18 councillors representing four parish wards: Crowborough East, Crowborough North, Crowborough St Johns and Crowborough West, represented by six, five, two and five councillors respectively.

103 The District Council proposed that Crowborough parish should be served by five district wards, named Crowborough East, Crowborough Jarvis Brook, Crowborough North, Crowborough St Johns and Crowborough West, and five coterminous parish wards.

104 During the District Council’s local consultation Crowborough Town Council proposed that the parish be represented by 16 parish councillors, two fewer than at present, serving East, Jarvis Brook, North, St Johns and West parish wards. It proposed that these wards be represented by four, two, four, two and four parish councillors respectively.

105 In the light of our draft recommendations for district warding in Crowborough parish, reflecting the District Council’s proposals for the five Crowborough wards, we propose adopting the District Council’s proposed parish ward boundaries to correspond with the district wards within the parish. In addition we note that the Town Council’s proposals would provide for a ratio of two parish councillors to one district councillor. We consider this would provide for convenient and effective local government and therefore propose adopting the Town Council’s number and distribution of councillors and parish ward names.

**Draft Recommendation**  
Crowborough Town Council should comprise 16 councillors, two fewer than at present, representing five wards: East (returning four councillors), Jarvis Brook (two), North (four), St Johns (two) and West (four). The parish ward boundaries should reflect the proposed district ward boundaries in the area, as illustrated and named on the large map at the back of the report.

106 Hailsham Town Council is currently served by 24 councillors representing the four parish wards of Hailsham Central & North, Hailsham East, Hailsham South & West and Hailsham Upper Horsebridge, which are represented by seven, seven, seven and three councillors respectively.

107 The District Council proposed that Hailsham parish be served by four district wards: Hailsham Central & North, Hailsham East, Hailsham South & West and Hellingly wards. It proposed four parish wards, three of which would be coterminous with the three Hailsham district wards, while the fourth would form part of Hellingly ward. Neither parish ward names nor the number and distribution of parish councillors were proposed.

108 In the light of our draft recommendations for district warding in Hailsham parish, reflecting the District Council’s proposals for Hailsham Central & North, Hailsham East, Hailsham South & West and Hellingly wards, we propose adopting the District Council’s proposed parish ward boundaries to correspond with the district wards within the parish. In addition we propose that Hailsham Central & North, Hailsham East, Hailsham South & West district wards should comprise Central & North, East and South & West parish wards, represented by seven, three and 10 parish councillors respectively. That part of Hailsham parish in Hellingly ward, Upper Horsebridge parish ward, should be represented by four parish councillors. In total Hailsham parish would be represented by 24 councillors, as at present. We would welcome comments on these names and the number and distribution of councillors at Stage Three.

**Draft Recommendation**  
Hailsham Town Council should comprise 24 councillors, as at present, representing four wards: Central & North (returning seven councillors), East (three), South & West (10) and Upper Horsebridge (four). The parish ward boundaries should reflect the proposed district ward boundaries in the area, as illustrated and named on the large map at the back of the report.

109 Hartfield Parish Council is currently served by 13 parish councillors and the parish is not warded. In order to facilitate its proposals for district warding in this area, the District Council proposed that Hartfield parish should be warded into two: one parish ward covering the main Hartfield settlement and the other parish ward covering the Hammerwood area. Neither parish ward names nor the number and distribution of parish councillors were proposed.

110 In the light of our draft recommendations for district warding in Hartfield parish, reflecting the District Council’s proposals for Forest Row and Hartfield wards, we propose adopting the District Council’s proposed parish ward boundaries to correspond with the district wards within the parish. In addition we propose that the parish ward covering Hartfield should be named Hartfield parish ward and be represented by 12 parish councillors, and the parish ward covering Hammerwood should be named Hammerwood parish ward and be represented by two parish councillors, a total of 14, one more than at present. We would welcome comments on these names and the number and distribution of councillors at Stage Three.

**Draft Recommendation**  
Hartfield Parish Council should comprise 14 parish councillors, one more than at present, representing two wards: Hartfield and Hammerwood, represented by 12 and two councillors respectively. The boundary between the two parish wards should reflect the proposed district ward boundary, as illustrated and named on Map A2 in Appendix A.

111 Heathfield & Waldron Parish Council is currently served by 21 councillors representing two parish wards: Heathfield, represented by 12 councillors, and Waldron, represented by nine councillors.

112 The District Council proposed that Heathfield & Waldron parish be warded into four: one parish ward covering the main Heathfield settlement, one parish ward covering the Cross in Hand settlement, one parish ward covering the Waldron area and the fourth parish ward covering the area nearest Warbleton parish. Neither parish ward names nor the number and distribution of parish councillors were proposed.

113 In the light of our draft recommendations for district warding in Heathfield & Waldron parish, reflecting the District Council’s proposals for Cross in Hand/Five Ashes, Framfield, Heathfield East and Heathfield North & Central wards, we propose adopting the District Council’s proposed parish ward boundaries to correspond with the district wards covering the parish. In addition we propose that the parish ward covering Heathfield be named Heathfield parish ward and be represented by 14 parish councillors, the parish ward covering Cross in Hand be named Cross in Hand parish ward and be represented by three parish councillors, the parish ward covering Waldron be named Waldron parish ward and be represented by two parish councillors and the parish ward covering the rural eastern part of the parish be named East parish ward and be represented by two parish councillors, a total of 21, as at present. We would welcome comments on these names and the number and distribution of councillors at Stage Three.

**Draft Recommendation**  
Heathfield & Waldron Parish Council should comprise 21 councillors, as at present, representing four wards: Cross in Hand (returning three councillors), East (two), Heathfield (14) and Waldron (two). The parish ward boundaries should reflect the proposed district ward boundaries in the area, as illustrated and named on the large map at the back of the report.

114 Maresfield Parish Council is currently served by 13 councillors and the parish is not warded. In order to facilitate its proposals for district warding in this area, the District Council proposed that Maresfield parish should be warded into three: one parish ward covering the main Maresfield settlement, one parish ward covering the Nutley settlement and one parish ward covering the Fairwarp area. Neither parish ward names nor the number and distribution of parish councillors were proposed.

115 In the light of our draft recommendations for district warding in Maresfield parish, for Buxted & Maresfield, Danehill/Fletching/Nutley and Hartfield wards, we propose adopting the District Council’s proposed parish ward boundaries to correspond with the district wards covering the parish. In addition we propose that the parish ward covering Maresfield be named Maresfield parish ward and be represented by five parish councillors, the parish ward covering Nutley be named Nutley parish ward and be represented by six parish councillors and the parish

ward covering Fairwarp be named Fairwarp parish ward and be represented by three parish councillors, a total of 14, one more than at present. We would welcome comments on these names and the number and distribution of councillors at Stage Three.

**Draft Recommendation**  
Maresfield Parish Council should comprise 14 councillors, one more than at present, representing three wards: Fairwarp (returning three councillors), Maresfield (five) and Nutley (six). The parish ward boundaries should reflect the proposed district ward boundaries in the area, as illustrated and named on Maps A3 and A4 in Appendix A.

116 Mayfield & Five Ashes Parish Council is currently served by 15 parish councillors and the parish is not warded. In order to facilitate its proposals for district warding in this area, the District Council proposed that Mayfield & Five Ashes parish should be warded into three: one parish ward covering the main Mayfield settlement, one parish ward covering the Five Ashes area and the other parish ward the area nearest Wadhurst parish. Neither parish ward names nor the number and distribution of parish councillors were proposed.

117 In the light of our draft recommendations for district warding in Mayfield & Five Ashes parish, reflecting the District Council’s proposals for Cross in Hand/Five Ashes, Mayfield and Wadhurst wards, we propose adopting the District Council’s proposed parish ward boundaries to correspond with the district wards covering the parish. In addition we propose that the parish ward covering Mayfield be named Mayfield parish ward and be represented by 11 parish councillors, the parish ward covering Five Ashes be named Five Ashes parish ward and be represented by three parish councillors and the parish ward covering the north of the parish be named Rusher’s Cross parish ward and be represented by one parish councillor, a total of 15, as at present. We would welcome comments on these names and the number and distribution of councillors at Stage Three.

**Draft Recommendation**  
Mayfield & Five Ashes Parish Council should comprise 15 parish councillors, as at present, representing three wards: Five Ashes (represented by three councillors), Mayfield (11) and Rusher’s Cross (one). The boundary between the two parish wards should reflect the proposed district ward boundaries in the area, as illustrated and named on Maps A5 and A6 in Appendix A.

118 Polegate Town Council is currently served by 17 parish councillors representing the two parish wards of Polegate North and Polegate South, which are represented by nine and eight councillors respectively.

119 The District Council proposed that Polegate parish be served by three district wards and three parish wards: Polegate North district ward would contain one parish ward, Polegate South

district ward would contain one parish ward, while the area nearest Willingdon & Jevington parish would form a parish ward, which would make up part of Willingdon district ward. Neither parish ward names nor the number and distribution of parish councillors were proposed.

120 In the light of our draft recommendations for district warding in Polegate parish, reflecting the District Council’s proposals for Polegate North, Polegate South and Willingdon wards, we propose adopting the District Council’s proposed parish ward boundaries to correspond with the district wards covering the parish. In addition we propose that the parish ward covering the north of the parish be named North parish ward and be represented by 10 parish councillors, the parish ward generally covering the south of the parish be named South parish ward and be represented by five parish councillors and the parish ward covering the far south of the parish be named Watermill parish ward and be represented by two parish councillors, a total of 17, as at present. We would welcome comments on these names and the number and distribution of councillors at Stage Three.

**Draft Recommendation**  
Polegate Town Council should comprise 17 parish councillors, as at present, representing three wards: North (returning 10 councillors), South (five) and Watermill (two). The parish ward boundaries should reflect the proposed district ward boundaries in the area, as illustrated and named on Map A7 in Appendix A.

121 Rotherfield Parish Council is currently served by 13 councillors and the parish is not warded. In order to facilitate its proposals for district warding in this area, the District Council proposed that Rotherfield parish should be warded into two: one parish ward covering the main Rotherfield settlement and one parish ward covering the remainder of the parish. Neither parish ward names nor the number and distribution of parish councillors were proposed.

122 In the light of our draft recommendations for district warding in Rotherfield parish, reflecting the District Council’s proposals for Frant/Withyham and Rotherfield wards, we propose adopting the District Council’s proposed parish ward boundaries to correspond with the district wards covering the parish. In addition we propose that the parish ward covering Rotherfield be named Rotherfield parish ward and be represented by 10 parish councillors and the parish ward covering the northern part of the parish be named Eridge & Mark Cross parish ward and be represented by three parish councillors, a total of 13, as at present. We would welcome comments on these names and the number and distribution of councillors at Stage Three.

**Draft Recommendation**  
Rotherfield Parish Council should comprise 13 councillors, as at present, representing two wards: Eridge & Mark Cross and Rotherfield, represented by three and 10 councillors respectively. The boundary between the two parish wards should reflect the proposed district ward boundary, as illustrated and named on Map A8 in Appendix A.

123 Uckfield Town Council is currently served by 20 councillors representing the four parish wards of Uckfield East, Uckfield New Town, Uckfield Ridgewood and Uckfield West, which are represented by six, four, four and six councillors respectively.

124 The District Council proposed that Uckfield parish be served by four district wards: Uckfield North, Uckfield Central, Uckfield New Town and Uckfield Ridgewood, with four coterminous parish wards. Parish ward names were not proposed.

125 During the District Council’s local consultation Uckfield Parish Council requested a reduction in parish councillors from 20 to 15, to reduce the number of uncontested elections.

126 In the light of our draft recommendations for district warding in Uckfield parish, reflecting the District Council’s proposals for the four new Uckfield wards, we propose adopting the District Council’s proposed parish ward boundaries to correspond with the district wards within the parish. In addition we propose that Uckfield North, Uckfield Central, Uckfield New Town and Uckfield Ridgewood district wards should comprise North, Central, New Town and Ridgewood parish wards.

127 We also note that the Town Council’s proposal for a council of 15, a reduction of five, would provide for a ratio of three parish councillors to one district councillor. We consider this would provide for convenient and effective local government and therefore propose adopting the Town Council’s proposed council size.

128 Therefore, we are proposing that North, Central, New Town and Ridgewood parish wards should be represented by three, three, six and three parish councillors respectively, a total of 15, five fewer than at present. We would welcome comments on these names and the number and distribution of councillors at Stage Three.

**Draft Recommendation**  
Uckfield Town Council should comprise 15 councillors, five fewer than at present, representing four wards: Central (returning three councillors), New Town (three), North (six) and Ridgewood (three). The parish ward boundaries should reflect the proposed district ward boundaries in the area, as illustrated and named on the large map at the back of the report.

129 Warbleton Parish Council is currently served by 11 parish councillors and the parish is not warded. In order to facilitate its proposals for district warding in this area, the District Council proposed that Warbleton parish should be warded into two: one parish ward covering the Bodle Street Green settlement and the other parish ward covering the remainder of the parish. Neither parish ward names nor the number and distribution of parish councillors were proposed.

130 In the light of our draft recommendations for district warding in Warbleton parish, reflecting the District Council’s proposals for Heathfield East and Herstmonceux wards, we propose adopting the District Council’s proposed parish ward boundaries to correspond with the district

wards within the parish. In addition we propose that the parish ward covering Bodle Street Green should be named Bodle Street Green parish ward and be represented by two parish councillors and the parish ward covering the majority of the parish should be named Warbleton parish ward and be represented by 11 parish councillors, a total of 13, two more than at present. We would welcome comments on these names and the number and distribution of councillors at Stage Three.

**Draft Recommendation**  
Warbleton Parish Council should comprise 13 parish councillors, two more than at present, representing two wards: Bodle Street Green and Warbleton, represented by two and 11 councillors respectively. The boundary between the two parish wards should reflect the proposed district ward boundaries in the area, as illustrated and named on Map A9 in Appendix A.

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

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

**132 We have not finalised our conclusions on the electoral arrangements for Wealden and welcome comments from the District Council and others relating to the proposed ward boundaries, number of councillors, electoral cycle, ward names, and parish and town council electoral arrangements. We will consider all the evidence submitted to us during the consultation period before preparing our final recommendations.**

*Map 2: The Commission's Draft Recommendations for Wealden*



## 5 NEXT STEPS

133 We are putting forward draft recommendations on future electoral arrangements for consultation. We will take fully into account all representations received by 23 April 2001. Representations received after this date may not be taken into account. All representations will be available for public inspection by appointment at the offices of the Commission and the District Council, and a list of respondents will be available on request from the Commission after the end of the consultation period.

134 Views may be expressed by writing directly to us:

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

Fax: 020 7404 6142  
E-mail: [reviews@lgce.gov.uk](mailto:reviews@lgce.gov.uk)  
[www.lgce.gov.uk](http://www.lgce.gov.uk)

135 In the light of representations received, we will review our draft recommendations to consider whether they should be altered. As indicated earlier, it is therefore important that all interested parties let us have their views and evidence, whether or not they agree with our draft recommendations. We will then submit our final recommendations to the Secretary of State for the Environment, Transport and the Regions. After the publication of our final recommendations, all further correspondence should be sent to the Secretary of State, who cannot make an Order giving effect to our recommendations until six weeks after he receives them.



## APPENDIX A

### **Draft Recommendations for Wealden: Detailed Mapping**

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

**Map A1** illustrates, in outline form, the proposed ward boundaries within the district and indicates the areas which are shown in more detail in Maps A2–A9 and the large map at the back of the report.

**Map A2** illustrates the proposed warding of Hartfield parish.

**Map A3** illustrates the proposed warding of Maresfield parish (part).

**Map A4** illustrates the proposed warding of Maresfield parish (part).

**Map A5** illustrates the proposed warding of Mayfield & Five Ashes parish (part).

**Map A6** illustrates the proposed warding of Mayfield & Five Ashes parish (part).

**Map A7** illustrates the proposed warding of Polegate parish.

**Map A8** illustrates the proposed warding of Rotherfield parish.

**Map A9** illustrates the proposed warding of Warbleton parish.

The **large map** inserted in the back of the report illustrates the existing and proposed warding arrangements for Crowborough, Hailsham, Healthfield & Waldron and Uckfield parishes.

*Map A1: Draft Recommendations for Wealden: Key Map*

*Map A2: Proposed Warding of Hartfield Parish*

*Map A3: Proposed Warding of Maresfield Parish (part)*

*Map A4: Proposed Warding of Maresfield Parish (part)*

*Map A5: Proposed Warding of Mayfield & Five Ashes Parish (part)*

*Map A6: Proposed Warding of Mayfield & Five Ashes Parish (part)*

*Map A7: Proposed Warding of Polegate Parish*

*Map A8: Proposed Warding of Rotherfield Parish*

*Map A9: Proposed Warding of Warbleton Parish*

## APPENDIX B

### Wealden District Council's Proposed Electoral Arrangements

Our draft recommendations detailed in Figures 1 and 2 differ from those put forward by the District Council in 12 wards, where the Council's proposals were as follows:

*Figure B1: Wealden District Council's Proposal: Constituent Areas*

Ward name	Constituent areas
Buxted East	Buxted ward (part – Hadlow Down parish and the proposed East ward of Buxted parish)
Buxted West	Buxted ward (part – the proposed West parish ward of Buxted parish and the proposed Maresfield parish ward of Maresfield parish)
Crowborough East	Crowborough East ward (part – the proposed East parish ward of Crowborough parish)
Crowborough Jarvis Brook	Crowborough East ward (part – part of the proposed Jarvis Brook parish ward of Crowborough parish); Crowborough North ward (part – part of the proposed Jarvis Brook parish ward of Crowborough parish)
Crowborough North	Crowborough East ward (part – part of the proposed North parish ward of Crowborough parish); Crowborough North ward (part – part of the proposed North parish ward of Crowborough parish); Crowborough West ward (part – part of the proposed North parish ward of Crowborough parish)
Crowborough St Johns	Crowborough North ward (part – part of the proposed St Johns parish ward of Crowborough parish); Crowborough St Johns ward (part – part of the proposed St Johns parish ward of Crowborough parish)
Crowborough West	Crowborough West ward (part – the proposed West parish ward of Crowborough parish)
Hailsham Central & North	Hailsham Central & North ward (part of the proposed Central & North parish ward of Hailsham parish); Hailsham East ward (part – part of the proposed Central & North parish ward of Hailsham parish)
Hailsham South & West	Hailsham East ward (part – part of the proposed South & West parish ward of Hailsham parish); Hailsham South & West ward (part of the proposed South & West parish ward of Hailsham parish)
Hellingly	Arlington ward (part – Arlington parish); Hellingly ward (Hellingly parish and Upper Horsebridge parish ward of Hailsham parish)
Uckfield Central	Uckfield ward (part – the proposed Central parish ward of Uckfield parish)
Uckfield North	Uckfield ward (part – the proposed North parish ward of Uckfield parish)

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

Ward name	Number of councillors	Electorate (2000)	Number of electors per councillor	Variance from average %	Electorate (2005)	Number of electors per councillor	Variance from average %
Buxted East	1	1,947	1,947	-5	1,984	1,984	-5
Buxted West	1	2,125	2,125	4	2,160	2,160	3
Crowborough East	2	3,917	1,959	-4	4,067	2,034	-3
Crowborough Jarvis Brook	1	1,959	1,959	-4	2,035	2,035	-3
Crowborough North	2	4,015	2,008	-2	4,165	2,083	0
Crowborough St Johns	1	1,969	1,969	-4	2,044	2,044	-2
Crowborough West	2	3,953	1,977	-3	4,103	2,052	-2
Hailsham Central & North	2	4,266	2,133	4	4,346	2,173	4
Hailsham South & West	3	6,362	2,121	4	6,424	2,141	2
Hellingly	2	4,148	2,074	2	4,352	2,176	4
Uckfield Central	1	2,174	2,174	6	2,212	2,212	6
Uckfield North	2	4,452	2,226	9	4,526	2,263	8

Source: Electorate figures are based on Wealden District Council's submission.

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

## APPENDIX C

### The Statutory Provisions

#### Local Government Act 1992: the Commission's Role

1 Section 13(2) of the Local Government Act 1992 places a duty on the Commission to undertake periodic electoral reviews of each principal local authority area in England, and to make recommendations to the Secretary of State.

2 Under section 13(5) of the 1992 Act, the Commission is required to make recommendations to the Secretary of State for any changes to the electoral arrangements within the areas of English principal authorities as appear desirable to it, having regard to the need to:

- (a) reflect the identities and interests of local communities; and
- (b) secure effective and convenient local government.

3 In reporting to the Secretary of State, the Commission may make recommendations for such changes to electoral arrangements as are specified in section 14(4) of the 1992 Act. In relation to principal authorities, these are:

- the total number of councillors to be elected to the council;
- the number and boundaries of electoral areas (wards or divisions);
- the number of councillors to be elected for each electoral area, and the years in which they are to be elected; and
- the name of any electoral area.

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

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

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

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

6 By virtue of section 27 of the Local Government Act 1992, in undertaking a review of electoral arrangements the Commission is required to comply so far as is reasonably practicable with the rules set out in Schedule 11 to the 1972 Act. For ease of reference, those provisions of Schedule 11 which are relevant to this review are set out below.

7 In relation to shire districts:

Having regard to any changes in the number or distribution of the local government electors of the district likely to take place within the period of five years immediately following the consideration (by the Secretary of State or the Commission):

- (a) the ratio of the number of local government electors to the number of councillors to be elected shall be, as nearly as may be, the same in every ward in the district;
- (b) in a district every ward of a parish council shall lie wholly within a single ward of the district;
- (c) in a district every parish which is not divided into parish wards shall lie wholly within a single ward of the district.

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

- (d) the desirability of fixing ward boundaries which are and will remain easily identifiable; and
- (e) any local ties which would be broken by the fixing of any particular ward boundary.

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

- (f) the number or distribution of electors in the parish is such as to make a single election of parish councillors impracticable or inconvenient; and
- (g) it is desirable that any area or areas of the parish should be separately represented on the parish council.

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

- (h) any change in the number or distribution of electors of the parish which is likely to take place within the period of five years immediately following the consideration;
- (i) the desirability of fixing boundaries which are and will remain easily identifiable; and
- (j) any local ties which will be broken by the fixing of any particular boundaries.

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



## APPENDIX D

### Code of Practice on Written Consultation

The Cabinet Office's November 2000 *Code of Practice on Written Consultation*, [www.cabinet-office.gov.uk/servicefirst/index/consultation.htm](http://www.cabinet-office.gov.uk/servicefirst/index/consultation.htm), requires all Government Departments and Agencies to adhere to certain criteria, set out below, on the conduct of public consultations. Non-Departmental Public Bodies, such as the Local Government Commission, are encouraged to follow the Code.

The Code of Practice applies to consultation documents published after 1 January 2001, which should reproduce the criteria, give explanations of any departures, and confirm that the criteria have otherwise been followed.

#### *Commission compliance with Code criteria*

<b>Criteria</b>	<b>Compliance/departure</b>
Timing of consultation should be built into the planning process for a policy (including legislation) or service from the start, so that it has the best prospect of improving the proposals concerned, and so that sufficient time is left for it at each stage	The Commission complies with this requirement
It should be clear who is being consulted, about what questions, in what timescale and for what purpose	The Commission complies with this requirement
A consultation document should be as simple and concise as possible. It should include a summary, in two pages at most, of the main questions it seeks views on. It should make it as easy as possible for readers to respond, make contact or complain	The Commission complies with this requirement
Documents should be made widely available, with the fullest use of electronic means (though not to the exclusion of others), and effectively drawn to the attention of all interested groups and individuals	The Commission complies with this requirement
Sufficient time should be allowed for considered responses from all groups with an interest. Twelve weeks should be the standard minimum period for a consultation	The Commission consults on draft recommendations for a minimum of eight weeks, but may extend the period if consultations take place over holiday periods
Responses should be carefully and open-mindedly analysed, and the results made widely available, with an account of the views expressed, and reasons for decisions finally taken	The Commission complies with this requirement
Departments should monitor and evaluate consultations, designating a consultation coordinator who will ensure the lessons are disseminated	The Commission complies with this requirement