

Draft recommendations on the  
future electoral arrangements for  
East Sussex County Council

*January 2004*

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# What is The Boundary Committee for England?

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

Members of the Committee:

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

Archie Gall (Director)

We are required by law to review the electoral arrangements of every principal local authority in England. Our aim is to ensure that the number of electors represented by each councillor in an area is as nearly as possible the same, taking into account local circumstances. We can recommend changes to the number of councillors elected to the council, division boundaries and division names.



# Summary

We began a review of the electoral arrangements for East Sussex County Council on 10 December 2002.

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

We found that the current arrangements provide unequal representation of electors in East Sussex:

- **In 26 of the 44 divisions, each of which is currently represented by a single councillor, the number of electors per councillor varies by more than 10% from the average for the county and in seven divisions varies by more than 20%.**
- **By 2007 this situation is expected to worsen, with the number of electors per councillor forecast to vary by more than 10% from the average in 23 divisions, and by more than 20% in 11 divisions.**

Our main proposals for East Sussex County Council's future electoral arrangements (see Tables 1 and 2 and Paragraphs 129–130) are:

- **East Sussex County Council should have 49 councillors, five more than at present, representing 46 divisions.**
- **As the divisions are based on district wards, which have themselves been changed as a result of recent district reviews, the boundaries of all divisions will be subject to change.**

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

- **In 38 of the proposed 46 divisions, the number of electors per councillor would vary by no more than 10% from the average for the county, with one division varying by more than 20%.**
- **By 2007, the number of electors per councillor in 37 divisions is expected to vary by no more than 10% from the average for the county, but no division is expected to vary by more than 20%.**

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

- **Revised warding arrangements and the redistribution of councillors for the parish of Newhaven.**

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

- **We will consult on these proposals for eight weeks from 13 January to 8 March 2004. We take this consultation very seriously. We may decide to move away from our draft recommendations in light of comments or suggestions that we receive. 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. We will then submit our final recommendations to The Electoral Commission, which will then be responsible for implementing change to the local authority electoral arrangements.**

- **The Electoral Commission will decide whether to accept, modify or reject our final recommendations. It will also decide when any changes will come into effect.**

You should express your views by writing directly to us at the address below by 8 March 2004.

**The Team Leader  
East Sussex County Review  
The Boundary Committee for England  
Trevelyan House  
Great Peter Street  
London SW1P 2HW**

Table 1: Draft recommendations: Summary

Division name (by district council area)		Number of councillors	Constituent district wards
<b>Eastbourne</b>			
1	Devonshire	1	Devonshire ward
2	Hampden Park	1	Hampden Park ward
3	Langney	1	Langney ward
4	Meads	1	Meads ward
5	Old Town	1	Old Town ward
6	Ratton	1	Ratton ward
7	St Anthony's	1	St Anthony's ward
8	Sovereign	1	Sovereign ward
9	Upperton	1	Upperton ward
<b>Hastings</b>			
10	Ashdown & Conquest	1	Ashdown ward and Conquest ward
11	Baird & Ore	1	Baird ward and Ore ward
12	Braybrooke & Castle	1	Braybrooke ward and Castle ward
13	Central St Leonards & Gensing	1	Central St Leonards ward and Gensing ward
14	Hollington & Wishing Tree	1	Hollington ward and Wishing Tree ward
15	Maze Hill & West St Leonards	1	Maze Hill ward and West St Leonards ward
16	Old Hastings & Tressell	1	Old Hastings ward and Tressell ward
17	St Helens & Silverhill	1	St Helens ward and Silverhill ward
<b>Lewes</b>			
18	Chailey	1	Chailey & Wivelsfield ward, Ditchling & Westmeston ward, Newick ward and Plumpton, Streat, East Chiltington & St John (without) ward
19	Lewes	1	Lewes Castle ward and Lewes Priory ward
20	Newhaven & Kingston	1	Kingston ward, Newhaven Valley ward and part of Newhaven, Denton & Meeching ward (the proposed Newhaven Meeching parish ward of Newhaven parish)
21	Newhaven East, Ouse Valley & Seaford West	1	Seaford West ward, part of Newhaven, Denton & Meeching ward (the proposed Newhaven Denton parish ward of Newhaven parish) and part of Ouse Valley & Ringmer ward (the parishes of Beddingham, Firle, Glynde, South Heighton and Tarring Neville)
22	Peacehaven & Telscombe	2	East Saltdean & Telscombe Cliffs ward, Peacehaven East ward, Peacehaven North ward and Peacehaven West ward
23	Ringmer	1	Barcombe & Hamsey ward, Lewes Bridge ward, part of Ouse Valley & Ringmer ward (the parish of Ringmer)
24	Seaford Blatchington	1	Seaford Central ward and Seaford North ward

<b>Division name (by district council area)</b>	<b>Number of councillors</b>	<b>Constituent district wards</b>
25 Seaford Sutton	1	Seaford East ward and Seaford South ward
<b>Rother</b>		
26 Battle & Crowhurst	1	Battle Town ward, Crowhurst ward and part of Darwell ward (the parishes of Mountfield and Whatlington and Netherfield parish ward of Battle parish)
27 Bexhill Central	2	Central ward, Collington ward, Old Town ward, St Stephens ward and Sidley ward
28 Bexhill East	1	Sackville ward and St Michaels ward
29 Bexhill West	1	Kewhurst ward and St Marks ward
30 Brede Valley & Marsham	1	Brede Valley ward and Marsham ward
31 Rother Levels & Salehurst	1	Ewhurst & Sedlescombe ward, Rother Levels ward and part of Salehurst ward (the parishes of Bodiam and Salehurst & Robertsbridge)
32 Rye & Winchelsea	1	Eastern Rother ward and Rye ward
33 Ticehurst	1	Ticehurst & Etchingham ward, part of Darwell ward (the parishes of Brightling, Burwash and Dallington) and part of Salehurst ward (the parish of Hurst Green)
<b>Wealden</b>		
34 Alfriston, East Hoathly & Hellingly	1	Alfriston ward, Chiddingly & East Hoathly ward and Hellingly ward
35 Crowborough North	1	Crowborough Jarvis Brook ward, Crowborough North ward and Crowborough St Johns ward
36 Crowborough South	1	Crowborough East ward and Crowborough West ward
37 Forest Row	1	Forest Row ward, Hartfield ward and part of Frant/Withyham ward (the parish of Withyham and Eridge & Mark Cross parish ward of Rotherfield parish)
38 Framfield & Horam	1	Cross in Hand/Five Ashes ward, Framfield ward, Horam ward and Uckfield Ridgewood ward
39 Hailsham North, Herstmonceux & Ninfield	1	Hailsham Central & North ward, Herstmonceux ward and Ninfield & Hooe with Wartling ward
40 Hailsham South	1	Hailsham East ward and Hailsham South & West ward
41 Heathfield	1	Heathfield East ward and Heathfield North & Central ward
42 Pevensey & Westham	1	Pevensey & Westham ward
43 Polegate, Willingdon & East Dean	2	East Dean ward, Polegate North ward, Polegate South ward and Willingdon ward
44 Uckfield	1	Uckfield Central ward, Uckfield New Town ward and Uckfield North ward

<b>Division name (by district council area)</b>	<b>Number of councillors</b>	<b>Constituent district wards</b>
45 Wealden North East	1	Mayfield ward, Rotherfield ward, Wadhurst ward and part of Frant/Withyham ward (the parish of Frant)
46 Wealden West	1	Buxted & Maresfield ward and Danehill/Fletching/Nutley ward

**Notes**

- 1. The constituent district wards are those resulting from the electoral reviews of the five East Sussex County Council districts which were completed in 2001. Where whole district wards do not form the building blocks, constituent parishes and parish wards are listed.*
- 2. The large map (Sheet 1) illustrates the proposed divisions outlined above and Map 1 (Sheet 2) illustrates the proposed boundaries in Newhaven, Lewes, in more detail.*

Table 2: Draft recommendations for East Sussex

Division name (by district council area)	Number of councillors	Electorate (2002)	Number of electors per councillor	Variance from average %	Electorate (2007)	Number of electors per councillor	Variance from average %	
<b>Eastbourne</b>								
1	Devonshire	1	7,823	7,823	0	8,115	8,115	-1
2	Hampden Park	1	7,414	7,414	-6	7,480	7,480	-8
3	Langney	1	7,499	7,499	-4	7,655	7,655	-6
4	Meads	1	7,872	7,872	0	8,181	8,181	0
5	Old Town	1	7,738	7,738	-1	7,809	7,809	-4
6	Ratton	1	7,795	7,795	-1	7,887	7,887	-3
7	St Anthony's	1	8,250	8,250	5	8,353	8,353	2
8	Sovereign	1	6,061	6,061	-23	7,451	7,451	-9
9	Upperton	1	7,539	7,539	-4	7,777	7,777	-5
<b>Hastings</b>								
10	Ashdown & Conquest	1	7,945	7,945	1	8,384	8,384	3
11	Baird & Ore	1	7,581	7,581	-3	7,912	7,912	-3
12	Braybrooke & Castle	1	8,215	8,215	5	8,549	8,549	5
13	Central St Leonards & Gensing	1	8,665	8,665	10	8,851	8,851	8
14	Hollington & Wishing Tree	1	7,833	7,833	0	8,713	8,713	7
15	Maze Hill & West St Leonards	1	7,808	7,808	-1	8,137	8,137	0
16	Old Hastings & Tressell	1	7,819	7,819	0	8,063	8,063	-1
17	St Helens & Silverhill	1	7,530	7,530	-4	7,725	7,725	-5
<b>Lewes</b>								
18	Chailey	1	8,935	8,935	14	9,300	9,300	14
19	Lewes	1	8,699	8,699	11	8,824	8,824	8
20	Newhaven & Kingston	1	7,687	7,687	-2	8,790	8,790	8
21	Newhaven East, Ouse Valley & Seaford West	1	7,606	7,606	-3	8,133	8,133	0
22	Peacehaven & Telscombe	2	16,153	8,077	3	16,613	8,307	2
23	Ringmer	1	8,661	8,661	10	9,138	9,138	12
24	Seaford Blatchington	1	7,548	7,548	-4	7,934	7,934	-3

Division name (by district council area)	Number of councillors	Electorate (2002)	Number of electors per councillor	Variance from average %	Electorate (2007)	Number of electors per councillor	Variance from average %
25 Seaford Sutton	1	7,331	7,331	-7	7,464	7,464	-9
<b>Rother</b>							
26 Battle & Crowhurst	1	6,962	6,962	-11	7,200	7,200	-12
27 Bexhill Central	2	17,144	8,572	9	17,988	8,994	10
28 Bexhill East	1	7,162	7,162	-9	7,492	7,492	-8
29 Bexhill West	1	7,687	7,687	-2	7,715	7,715	-5
30 Brede Valley & Marsham	1	6,915	6,915	-12	6,985	6,985	-14
31 Rother Levels & Salehurst	1	7,669	7,669	-2	7,884	7,884	-3
32 Rye & Winchelsea	1	6,789	6,789	-14	7,042	7,042	-14
33 Ticehurst	1	6,911	6,911	-12	7,107	7,107	-13
<b>Wealden</b>							
34 Alfriston, East Hoathly & Hellingly	1	8,431	8,431	7	9,177	9,177	12
35 Crowborough North	1	7,970	7,970	2	8,689	8,689	6
36 Crowborough South	1	8,005	8,005	2	8,393	8,393	3
37 Forest Row	1	8,669	8,669	10	8,821	8,821	8
38 Framfield & Horam	1	8,317	8,317	6	8,686	8,686	6
39 Hailsham North, Herstmonceux & Ninfield	1	8,389	8,389	7	8,486	8,486	4
40 Hailsham South	1	8,362	8,362	7	8,597	8,597	5
41 Heathfield	1	7,831	7,831	0	8,013	8,013	-2
42 Pevensey & Westham	1	7,325	7,325	-7	7,467	7,467	-8
43 Polegate, Willingdon & East Dean	2	14,266	7,133	-9	14,406	7,203	-12
44 Uckfield	1	8,635	8,635	10	8,835	8,835	8
45 Wealden North East	1	9,024	9,024	15	9,169	9,169	12
46 Wealden West	1	8,116	8,116	3	8,437	8,437	3
<b>Totals</b>	<b>49</b>	<b>384,586</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>399,827</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>
<b>Averages</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>7,849</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>8,160</b>	<b>-</b>

Source: Electorate figures are based on East Sussex County 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 county. 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 proposals for the electoral arrangements for the county of East Sussex, on which we are now consulting. Our review of the county is part of the programme of periodic electoral reviews (PERs) of all 386 principal local authority areas in England. This programme started in 1996 and is expected to finish in 2004.

2 In carrying out these county reviews, we must have regard to:

- the statutory criteria contained in section 13(5) of the Local Government Act 1992 (as amended by SI 2001 no. 3692), i.e. the need to;
  - reflect the identities and interests of local communities;
  - secure effective and convenient local government; and
  - achieve equality of representation;Schedule 11 to the Local Government Act 1972;
- The general duty set out in section 71(1) of the Race Relations Act 1976 and the statutory Code of Practice on the Duty to Promote Race Equality (Commission for Racial Equality, May 2002), i.e. to have due regard to:
  - eliminate unlawful racial discrimination;
  - promote equality of opportunity; and
  - promote good relations between people of different racial groups.

3 Details of the legislation under which we work are set out in The Electoral Commission's *Guidance and Procedural Advice for Periodic Electoral Reviews* (published by the EC in July 2002). This *Guidance* sets out our approach to the reviews.

4 Our task is to make recommendations on the number of councillors who should serve on a council, and the number, boundaries and names of electoral divisions. In each two-tier county, our approach is first to complete the PERs of all the constituent districts and, when the Orders for the resulting changes in those areas have been made, then to commence a PER of the county council's electoral arrangements. Orders were made for the new electoral arrangements in the districts in East Sussex in December 2001 and we are now embarking on our county review in this area.

5 Prior to the commencement of Part IV of the Local Government Act 2000, each county council division could only return one member. This restraint has now been removed by section 89 of the 2000 Act, and we may now recommend the creation of multi-member county divisions. In areas where we are unable to identify single-member divisions that are coterminous with ward boundaries and provide acceptable levels of electoral equality we will consider recommending multi-member divisions if they provide a better balance between these two factors. However, we do not expect to recommend large numbers of multi-member divisions other than, perhaps, in the more urban areas of a county.

6 Schedule 11 to the Local Government Act 1972 sets out the *Rules to be Observed in Considering Electoral Arrangements*. These statutory rules state that each division should be wholly contained within a single district and that division boundaries should not split unwarded parishes or parish wards.

7 In the *Guidance*, we state that we wish wherever possible to build on schemes which have been created locally on the basis of careful and effective consultation. Local people are normally in a better position to judge what council size and division configurations are most likely to secure effective and convenient local government in their areas, while also reflecting the identities and interests of local communities.

8 The broad objective of PERs is to achieve, as far as possible, equal representation across the local authority as a whole. Schemes which would result in, or retain, an electoral

imbalance of over 10% in any division will have to be fully justified. Any imbalances of 20% or more should only arise in the most exceptional circumstances, and will require the strongest justification.

9 Similarly, we will seek to ensure that each district area within the county is allocated the correct number of county councillors with respect to the district's proportion of the county's electorate.

10 The *Rules* provide that, in considering county council electoral arrangements, we should have regard to the boundaries of district wards. We attach considerable importance to achieving coterminosity between the boundaries of divisions and wards. The term 'coterminosity' is used throughout the report and refers to situations where the boundaries of county electoral divisions and district wards are the same, that is to say where county divisions comprise either one or more whole district wards.

11 We recognise, however, that it is unlikely to be possible to achieve absolute coterminosity throughout a county area while also providing for the optimum level of electoral equality. In this respect, county reviews are different from those of districts. We will seek to achieve the best available balance between electoral equality and coterminosity, taking into account the statutory criteria. While the proportion of electoral divisions that will be coterminous with the boundaries of district wards is likely to vary between counties, we would normally expect coterminosity to be achieved in a significant majority of divisions. The average level of coterminosity secured under our final recommendations for the first 11 counties that we have reviewed (excluding the Isle of Wight) is 70%. We would normally expect to recommend levels of coterminosity of around 60% to 80%.

12 Where coterminosity is not possible in parished areas, and a district ward is to be split between electoral divisions, we would normally expect this to be achieved without dividing (or further dividing) a parish between divisions. There are likely to be exceptions to this, however, particularly where larger parishes are involved.

13 We are not prescriptive on council size. However, we believe that any proposals relating to council size, whether these are for an increase, a reduction or no change, should be supported by evidence and argumentation. Given the stage now reached in the introduction of new political management structures under the provisions of the Local Government Act 2000, it is important that whatever council size interested parties may propose to us they can demonstrate that their proposals have been fully thought through, and have been developed in the context of a review of internal political management and the role of councillors in the new structure. 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 electorate should automatically result in an increase in the number of councillors, nor that changes should be made to the size of a council simply to make it more consistent with the size of other similar councils.

14 A further area of difference between county and district reviews is that we must recognise that it will not be possible to avoid the creation of some county divisions which contain diverse communities, for example, combining rural and urban areas. We have generally sought to avoid this in district reviews in order to reflect the identities and interests of local communities. Some existing county council electoral divisions comprise a number of distinct communities, which is inevitable given the larger number of electors represented by each councillor, and we would expect that similar situations would continue under our recommendations in seeking the best balance between coterminosity and the statutory criteria.

15 As a part of this review we may also make recommendations for change to the electoral arrangements of parish and town councils in the county. However, we made some

recommendations for new parish electoral arrangements as part of our district reviews. We therefore expect to put forward such recommendations during county reviews only on an exceptional basis. In any event, we are *not* able to review administrative boundaries *between* local authorities or parishes, or consider the establishment of new parish areas as part of this review.

## The review of East Sussex County Council

16 The LGCE completed the reviews of the five district council areas in East Sussex in August 2001 and Orders for the new electoral arrangements have since been made. This is our first review of the electoral arrangements of East Sussex County Council. The last such review was undertaken by the Local Government Boundary Commission, which reported to the Secretary of State in August 1981 (Report No.417).

17 The review is in four stages (see Table 3).

*Table 3: Stages of the review*

Stage	Description
One	Submission of proposals to us
Two	Our analysis and deliberation
Three	Publication of draft recommendations and consultation on them
Four	Final deliberation and report to The Electoral Commission

18 Stage One began on 10 December 2002, when we wrote to East Sussex County Council inviting proposals for future electoral arrangements. We also notified the five district councils in the county, East Sussex Police Authority, the Local Government Association, East Sussex Association of Local Councils, parish and town councils in the county, Members of Parliament with constituencies in the county, 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 East Sussex County Council to publicise the review further. The closing date for receipt of submissions (the end of Stage One) was 14 April 2003.

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

20 We are currently at Stage Three. This stage, which began on 13 January 2004 and will end on 8 March 2004, involves publishing the draft proposals 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 these draft proposals.**

21 During Stage Four we will reconsider the draft recommendations in the light of the Stage Three consultation, decide whether to modify them, and submit final recommendations to The Electoral Commission. The Electoral Commission will decide whether to accept, modify or reject our final recommendations. If The Electoral Commission accepts the recommendations, with or without modification, it will make an Order and decide when any changes come into effect.

## Equal opportunities

22 In preparing this report the Committee has had regard to the general duty under section 71(1) of the Race Relations Act 1976 to promote racial equality and to the approach set out in BCFE (03) 35, *Race Relations Legislation*, which the Committee considered and agreed at its meeting on 9 April 2003.

## 2 Current electoral arrangements

23 The county of East Sussex consists of three districts and two boroughs; Eastbourne, Hastings, Lewes, Rother and Wealden (Brighton & Hove is a unitary authority) and covers an area of 172,534 hectares. Located in the coast of the South East of England, it shares its borders with Kent to the north and West Sussex to the west. Eastbourne and Hastings boroughs cover small urban areas while Lewes, Rother and Wealden districts consist of a mix of towns and large rural areas. All of the districts have good road and rail links and the north-west of the county is in close proximity to Gatwick airport.

24 The electorate of the county is 384,586 (December 2002). The Council presently has 44 members, with one member elected from each division.

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

26 At present, each councillor represents an average of 8,741 electors, which the County Council forecasts will increase to 9,087 by the year 2007 if the present number of councillors is maintained. However, due to demographic change and migration over the last two decades, the number of electors per councillor in 26 of the 44 divisions varies by more than 10% from the county average, in seven divisions by more than 20% and in four divisions by more than 30%. All five districts and boroughs have seen a growth in their population over the last 25 years. The increase has been greatest in Lewes and Wealden, which have a 25% and 31% bigger electorate respectively than 25 years ago. Currently, the worst imbalance is in Uckfield division in Wealden, where the councillor represents 53% more electors than the county average.

27 As detailed previously, in considering the County Council's electoral arrangements we must have regard to the boundaries of district wards. Following the completion of the reviews of district warding arrangements in East Sussex, we are therefore faced with a new starting point for considering electoral divisions. Our proposals for county divisions will be based on the new district wards as opposed to those, which existed prior to the recent reviews. In view of the effect of these new district wards and changes in the electorate over the past 20 years, which have resulted in electoral imbalances across the county, changes to most if not all of the existing county electoral divisions are inevitable.

Table 4: Existing electoral arrangements

Division name (by district council area)	Number of councillors	Electorate (2002)	Variance from average %	Electorate (2007)	Variance from average %
<b>Eastbourne</b>					
1 Cavendish	1	8,446	-1	8,677	-5
2 College	1	7,872	-6	8,182	-10
3 Old Town	1	7,151	-17	7,217	-21
4 Park	1	7,416	-14	7,482	-18
5 Princes	1	10,240	34	11,752	29
6 Priory	1	10,947	28	11,146	23
7 St Mary's	1	8,041	-5	8,281	-9
8 Woodlands	1	7,878	-9	7,971	-12
<b>Hastings</b>					
9 Braybrooke & Castle	1	7,968	-5	8,346	-8
10 Broomgrove & Ore	1	6,662	-20	7,020	-23
11 Central St Leonards & Gensing	1	9,256	9	9,493	4
12 Hollington & Ashdown	1	9,622	20	10,489	15
13 Old Hastings & Mount Pleasant	1	7,072	-18	7,197	-21
14 St Helens & Elphinstone	1	6,766	-20	6,996	-23
15 Silverhill & Wishing Tree	1	7,435	-11	7,739	-15
16 West St Leonards & Maze Hill	1	8,615	4	9,054	0
<b>Lewes</b>					
17 Chailey	1	9,389	12	9,746	7
18 Lewes	1	7,806	-10	7,887	-13
19 Newhaven	1	8,464	15	10,024	10
20 Peacehaven	1	10,492	25	10,899	20
21 Ringmer	1	9,100	10	9,609	6
22 Seaford Blatchington	1	8,961	5	9,205	1
23 Seaford Sutton	1	9,743	15	10,057	11
24 Telscombe	1	8,665	0	8,769	-3
<b>Rother</b>					
25 Battle	1	8,567	1	8,823	-3
26 Bexhill East	1	8,048	-4	8,370	-8
27 Bexhill North	1	7,108	-14	7,556	-17
28 Bexhill South	1	7,309	-16	7,384	-19
29 Bexhill West	1	9,528	13	9,893	9

Division name (by district council area)	Number of councillors	Electorate (2002)	Variance from average %	Electorate (2007)	Variance from average %
30 Rye	1	8,250	-1	8,611	-5
31 Ticehurst	1	9,422	11	9,678	7
32 Winchelsea	1	9,007	4	9,098	0
<b>Wealden</b>					
33 Buxted Maresfield	1	8,113	-4	8,402	-8
34 Crowborough Beacon	1	9,659	17	10,202	12
35 Crowborough Rotherfield	1	9,287	13	9,872	9
36 Forest Row	1	7,020	-18	7,151	-21
37 Hailsham	1	7,481	-12	7,657	-16
38 Heathfield	1	12,164	43	12,458	37
39 Hellingly	1	10,785	33	11,600	28
40 Pevensey	1	11,163	30	11,351	25
41 Polegate	1	9,060	5	9,166	1
42 Uckfield	1	12,891	53	13,386	47
43 Wadhurst	1	7,632	-11	7,773	-14
44 Willingdon	1	8,085	-7	8,158	-10
<b>Totals</b>	<b>44</b>	<b>384,586</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>399,827</b>	<b>-</b>
<b>Averages</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>8,741</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>9,087</b>	<b>-</b>

Source: Electorate figures are based on information provided by East Sussex County Council.

Note: Each division is represented by a single councillor, and the electorate columns denote the number of electors represented by each councillor. The 'variance from average' column shows how far, in percentage terms, the number of electors represented by each councillor varies from the average for the county. The minus symbol (-) denotes a lower than average number of electors. For example, in 2002, electors in St Helens & Elphinstone division in Hastings were relatively over-represented by 20%, while electors in Uckfield division in Wealden were relatively under-represented by 53%. Figures have been rounded to the nearest whole number.



### 3 Submissions received

28 At the start of this review we invited members of the public and other interested parties to write to us giving their views on the future electoral arrangements for East Sussex County Council.

29 During this initial stage of the review, officers from The Boundary Committee visited the area and met officers and members of the County Council. We are grateful to all concerned for their co-operation and assistance. We received 19 submissions during Stage One, including a county-wide scheme from East Sussex County Council, all of which may be inspected at our offices and those of the County Council.

#### East Sussex County Council

30 The County Council proposed a council of 49 members, compared to the existing 44, all representing single-member divisions. Under its proposals, none of the divisions in Lewes district would be coterminous, while all divisions in Eastbourne and Hastings boroughs would be coterminous with the borough ward boundaries. The Council's scheme would provide 65% coterminosity overall. Under the Council's proposals, just one division would have an electoral variance of more than 10% above the county average by 2007. In order to achieve good electoral equality, the County Council proposed to divide ten wards between county divisions.

#### District and borough councils

31 Eastbourne Borough Council supported the County Council's proposals for Eastbourne borough.

32 Hastings Borough Council put forward its own proposals for Hastings, which it stated would provide the best reflection of existing community links, would be 100% coterminous and all divisions would have electoral variances within 10% of the county average number of electors per councillor by 2007.

33 Lewes District Council strongly objected to the County Council's proposals for its area. It stated that the County Council's proposals would divide communities and split wards and therefore would not meet the statutory criteria. It also stated that the County Council should reconsider its proposal to increase the number of councillors to 49, and consider whether a different number of councillors would result in a more acceptable scheme.

34 Rother District Council stated that it was opposed to the County Council's proposals to split wards between county divisions. It stated that these proposals would result in confusion among the electorate and candidates and would place increased demands on the District Council's electoral staff. It also stated that the proposal would go against The Electoral Commission's guidance to include whole wards in divisions wherever possible.

35 Wealden District Council stated that it considered the County Council's proposal to split Willingdon ward between two divisions to be unnecessary and contrary to The Electoral Commission's guidance. It also expressed concern regarding the inclusion of rural and urban wards within the same divisions.

#### Political groups

36 The Liberal Democrat Group on the County Council and the Liberal Democrat Group on Wealden District Council (the Liberal Democrat groups) jointly submitted a scheme for Wealden district. They stated that their scheme would create clearly defined rural and urban

divisions, with acceptable electoral equality and just two divisions with electoral variances over 10% by 2007. They stated their scheme would also provide a 'high degree' of coterminosity between divisions and district wards and a 'close' reflection of the statutory criteria. The Liberal Democrat Groups also contended that the County Council provided no justification for its proposed divisions and its proposed increase in council size.

## Parish and town councils

37 We received responses from eight parish and town councils. In Lewes district, Newick Parish Council opposed the division that the parish would be placed in under the County Council's proposals and stated it would prefer Newick parish to remain in Chailey division. Ringmer Parish Council stated that it would like the existing arrangements to be retained.

38 In Wealden district, Arlington Parish Council stated that it wished to remain in a rural division and that parishes with similar interests ought to be linked together rather than the main criterion being electoral equality. Forest Row Parish Council stated that it would like to retain its natural community links with Hartfield, rather than be linked with other parishes to its south. It put forward a proposal for three divisions based on the parishes covering the north of the district. Hartfield Parish Council opposed the County Council's proposals for Wealden and put forward three alternative divisions for the north of the district in order to better reflect the strong economic and social links between the parishes. Withyham Parish Council agreed with Forest Row and Hartfield parish councils' proposals.

39 Polegate Town Council stated that Polegate should be represented by one county councillor and should not be split between divisions. In order to achieve electoral equality it proposed that part of Lower Willingdon should make up part of a Polegate division, as this area has similar interests and concerns. Uckfield Town Council stated that Uckfield should remain in one division with one county councillor and not be split between divisions, as this would cause confusion.

## Other representations

40 We received a further four submissions, from a county councillor, a residents' association and two local residents.

41 County Councillor Whetstone (representing Forest Row division) opposed the County Council's proposals, and put forward alternative divisions for the north of Wealden district. He stated that the County Council's proposals placed too much emphasis on the requirement to achieve equality of representation and not enough on ensuring the reflection of communities.

42 Seaford Residents' Association stated it would like to retain two county councillors to represent Seaford.

43 One resident of Saltdean requested that East Saltdean be included in the Brighton & Hove Unitary Authority area. Another Saltdean resident requested that East Saltdean should not be transferred into Brighton & Hove's administration, but remain under East Sussex County Council's administration.

## 4 Analysis and draft recommendations

44 We have not finalised our conclusions on the electoral arrangements for East Sussex and welcome comments from all those interested relating to the proposed division boundaries, number of councillors and division names. We will consider all the evidence submitted to us during the consultation period before preparing our final recommendations.

45 As with our reviews of districts, our primary aim in considering the most appropriate electoral arrangements for East Sussex is to achieve electoral equality. In doing so we have regard to section 13(5) of the Local Government Act 1992 (as amended) – the need to secure effective and convenient local government, and reflect the identities and interests of local communities; and secure the matters referred to in paragraph 3(2)(a) of Schedule 11 to the Local Government Act 1972 (equality of representation). Schedule 11 to the Local Government Act 1972 refers to the number of electors per councillor being ‘as nearly as may be, the same in every division of the county’.

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

47 We have discussed in Chapter One the additional parameters which apply to reviews of county council electoral arrangements and the need to have regard to the boundaries of district wards in order to achieve coterminosity. In addition, our approach is to ensure that, having reached conclusions on the appropriate number of councillors to be elected to the county council, each district council area is allocated the number of county councillors to which it is entitled.

48 It is therefore impractical to design an electoral scheme which results in exactly the same number of electors per councillor in every division of a county.

49 We accept that the achievement of absolute electoral equality for an authority as a whole is likely to be unattainable, especially when also seeking to achieve coterminosity in order to facilitate convenient and effective local government, so 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. Accordingly, we consider that, if electoral imbalances are to be minimised, the aim of electoral equality should be the starting point in any review. We therefore strongly recommend that, in formulating electoral schemes, local authorities and other interested parties should make electoral equality their starting point, and then make adjustments to reflect relevant factors such as the boundaries of district wards and community identity. Five-year forecasts of changes in electorate must also be taken into account and we would aim to recommend a scheme which provides improved electoral equality over this five-year period.

50 The recommendations do not affect county, district or parish external boundaries or local taxes, or result in changes to postcodes. Nor is there any evidence that these recommendations will have an adverse effect on house prices, or car and house insurance premiums. Our proposals do not take account of parliamentary boundaries, and therefore we are not able to take into account any representations that are based on these issues.

### Electorate forecasts

51 Since 1975 there has been a 20% increase in the electorate of the area covered by the current East Sussex County Council. The County Council submitted electorate forecasts for the year 2007, projecting an increase in the electorate of approximately 4% from 384,586 to

399,827 over the five-year period from 2002 to 2007. It expects most of the growth to be in Lewes, although a significant amount is also expected in Wealden district. In order to prepare these forecasts, the Council estimated rates and locations of housing development with regard to structure and local plans, the expected rate of building over the five-year period and assumed occupancy rates. Advice from the County Council on the likely effect on electorates of changes to division boundaries has been obtained.

52 We know that forecasting electorates is difficult and, having considered all the evidence received concerning electorate forecasts we accept that the County Council's figures are the best estimates that can reasonably be made at this time.

## Council size

53 As explained earlier, we now require justification for any council size proposed, whether it is an increase, decrease or retention of the existing council size.

54 East Sussex County Council presently has 44 members. The County Council proposed a council of 49 members which would result in an increase of five councillors. We did not receive any other proposals for alternative council sizes. The County Council stated that the current council size was established when the 26 divisions of Brighton and Hove were transferred to Brighton & Hove unitary authority in 1997. The County Council's membership was then simply reduced from 70 to 44. The County Council stated that it proposed to increase the council size in order to take account of significant changes to 'the current decision making arrangements and the roles of councillors' within the last few years.

55 The County Council stated that it adopted a Leader and Cabinet structure in May 1999, with seven cabinet members and five Scrutiny committees. The Scrutiny committees 'undertake in-depth reviews', which take four to six months, 'of particular service areas in accordance with an agreed programme'. The Scrutiny committees also 'hold the Cabinet to account', monitoring its performance and challenging its decisions. The County Council also noted that local authorities have recently been awarded a new health scrutiny role, which will involve establishing an additional Scrutiny committee. It stated that the 'workload of non-executive members, particularly arising from Best Value and Scrutiny reviews is significant'. The County Council contended that it is 'sometimes difficult to recruit members to project boards because of the time commitment involved'. Additionally, it stated that county councillors are also involved in Local Strategic Partnerships and serve on the boards of various outside bodies such as Sussex police and fire authorities and school governing bodies, as well as attending parish and town council meetings. The County Council stated that members of the Council took part in a survey which revealed that members have difficulty finding time to fulfil their duties. The County Council contended that the work of these various committees and boards and the implementation of Best Value require extensive reviews during the year, which had also increased workloads. It argued that councillors' workloads had increased under the new political management structure. It considered 'that the increased emphasis on councillors' community leadership role and the additional partnerships in which they are expected to become involved', as well as the Scrutiny process, 'justify moving to a slightly larger council'.

56 We considered that the County Council had demonstrated how the current council size is inappropriate for meeting its current needs, but that it had not provided sufficient evidence as to how the council believed it would benefit under its proposed council size. We therefore requested additional information from the County Council, outlining how it anticipated its proposed increase in council size would improve the effectiveness of the Council in the future. In response, the County Council contended that increasing the number of councillors would reduce the 'heavy workload on members' involved in Scrutiny committees and community leadership, for 'as a result of modernisation there is a much greater emphasis on these two areas'. The County Council noted that its new powers to scrutinise health services will be 'time-consuming' and contended that 'increasing the number of members to 49'

would ensure 'that there are sufficient members to cover the committees'. It noted that members' involvement in Local Strategic Partnerships 'involves the formal meetings but also a plethora of sub-groups'. The County Council noted that members now serve on Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnerships and management boards of government initiatives. It also stated that East Sussex includes 'a large rural hinterland' and so many members 'have larger electoral divisions in geographical terms, serving up to nine parish councils whose meetings they are expected to and do attend'. Therefore, it contended that 'reducing the average electorate served by councillors would help them to perform these roles more effectively'.

57 The County Council stated that 'in addition, the proposed number of councillors will enable a greater degree of coterminosity with the new district and borough council wards than exists at present which will give better opportunities for partnership working with the local councillors and constituents'. It also stated that it is 'attempting to attract a greater cross-section of people to put themselves forward as candidates for election', which would be difficult if councillors 'are expected to put in ... an unreasonable number of hours on their council duties', as they are under the current council size.

58 It concluded that an increase in council size would enable 'Scrutiny to operate more effectively by spreading the workload and avoiding delays' and 'ensure that councillors have the time to undertake their community leadership roles effectively'. It contended that it would also 'ensure a council which better reflects the make-up of the local community which must be good for democratic local government'.

59 In their joint submission, the Liberal Democrat Group on the County Council and the Liberal Democrat Group on Wealden District Council stated that the County Council had not put forward any justification for its proposed increase from 44 to 49 county councillors. Lewes District Council contended that 'the County Council should be asked to reconsider its proposal to increase the number of councillors from 44 to 49 and to consider whether a more acceptable scheme could be achieved if a different total number of councillors was selected'.

60 We consider that the County Council put forward a convincing argument for increasing the number of councillors from 44 to 49 in terms of their political management structure and the associated increased workload of councillors. We consider that the County Council provided sufficient evidence of additional scrutiny committees, increased responsibilities and councillor workloads to justify an increase in council size.

61 However, we also noted that the minutes of the Electoral Boundary Review Panel meeting held on 10 January 2003, included in the County Council's submission, concluded that a council size of between 48 and 51 would ensure that Eastbourne and Hastings could have nine and eight coterminous divisions respectively. As this decision appears to have been taken early on in the process, we had some concerns that the County Council's decision to propose a council size of 49 may have been influenced by these allocation issues rather than matters of political management. Under a council size of 49, Eastbourne would be entitled to nine councillors, matching the number of wards in the borough, and Hastings would be entitled to eight councillors, which would allow for eight coterminous divisions each comprising two borough wards. However, under a council size of 45, for example, Eastbourne and Hastings boroughs would be allocated eight and seven county councillors respectively, which would not allow for the creation of coterminous divisions in both boroughs. We also noted that while a council size of 49 would provide 100% coterminosity in Eastbourne and Hastings, it would make achieving coterminosity and electoral equality difficult in Lewes and Rother. Having itself stressed the importance of coterminosity, we note that the County Council proposed wholly non-coterminous divisions in Lewes district and just 33% coterminosity in Rother district. Additionally, we note that the County Council stated that its proposed council size would allow for 'a greater degree of coterminosity ... than exists at present'. We note, however, that its proposals would result in

65% coterminosity between divisions and wards overall, just 1% more than at present, therefore we do not consider that its proposals would offer a significant improvement in terms of coterminosity. We note the County Council's comments regarding coterminosity, however, we are required to determine an appropriate council size based on the number of councillors that we consider would enable a council's political management structure to be most effective based on the evidence received. Other factors, such as the impact of a proposed council size on levels of coterminosity, can only be taken into account after a convincing case for the County Council's political management structures has been made.

62 We note that the Liberal Democrat groups stated that the County Council had not put forward any justification for its proposed council size increase. We also note that Lewes District Council expressed concern regarding the proposal to increase the council size, although it did not submit proposals for an alternative council size. We consider that the County Council put forward a clear argument stating that the existing council size does not facilitate convenient and effective local government and that a council size of 49 would. We have not received any proposals for alternative council sizes. Thus, despite some concerns over the determining factors for this council size being reached, we feel the County Council has provided enough evidence and argumentation to support its proposal.

63 Therefore, having looked at the County Council's arguments regarding changes to its political management structure and the subsequent increase in councillors' workloads, we conclude that the statutory criteria would best be met by a council of 49 members.

## Electoral arrangements

64 Whilst generating a scheme for East Sussex we have encountered various difficulties relating to the council size, structure and shape of the districts and concerns regarding rural and urban divisions. Lewes, Rother and Wealden districts are comprised of a combination of towns surrounded by large rural areas. Often the urban areas are concentrated on the coastal periphery of the districts while large rural areas compose the remainder. We are reluctant to include rural and urban areas in the same divisions, and avoid this where possible; however, in some cases it has been necessary to combine the two in order to improve coterminosity or electoral equality. Additionally, the decision to adopt a council size of 49 and the subsequent allocation of councillors between the districts and boroughs, has meant that some wards have had to be divided between divisions in order to achieve electoral equality. Otherwise, we have attempted to improve the coterminosity between divisions and borough or district wards, and we concur with the County Council's comment that 'a greater degree of coterminosity with the new district and borough wards than exists at present ... will give better opportunities for partnership working with local councillors and constituents'.

65 Having considered all the representations received at Stage One, we propose basing our draft recommendations on elements of locally generated proposals, as well as some of our own proposals. We have adopted our own proposals in areas where, in contrast to proposals received, we consider that coterminosity and electoral equality could be improved or community identities could be better reflected. Our recommendations would result in 83% coterminosity between divisions and borough and district ward boundaries and eight divisions with electoral variances of more than 10% from the county average in 2002.

66 Although we did not receive any proposals for two-member divisions, we are proposing such divisions in Lewes, Rother and Wealden districts. Following the commencement of Part IV of the Local Government Act 2000 and, in particular, section 89, the constraints that previously prevented the creation of multi-member county divisions have been removed. The Electoral Commission's *Guidance* to us states 'we do not envisage the BCFE recommending large numbers of multi-member divisions other than perhaps in the more urban areas of a county'. We consider that if single-member divisions were adopted in the

towns of Bexhill, Peacehaven, Polegate and Telscombe, this would result in rural and urban areas within the same divisions, or wards split between divisions. Therefore, we are recommending two-member divisions as a means to reflect community identities, while attaining good electoral equality. However, two-member divisions do not always provide suitable electoral arrangements, for example if the whole of Uckfield town were to be within a two-member division a large part of the surrounding rural area would have to be included in the division. In other areas, having looked into different options, we are proposing single-member divisions containing urban and rural areas, as we have been unable to identify suitable alternatives.

67 The County Council's county-wide scheme would improve electoral equality, compared to the existing arrangements. The County Council's proposals did not receive cross-party support, and we consider that it did not include much argumentation to justify its proposals. It appears that the County Council's proposals aimed to achieve electoral equality at the expense of the improvement of coterminosity and the reflection of community identities.

68 We note that as a result of adopting a council size of 49, as detailed earlier, it has been much simpler to achieve coterminosity and electoral equality in Eastbourne and Hastings. However, this has created difficulties in determining suitable division boundaries for Lewes and Rother districts. The split between the urban parts and very rural parts of the districts as well as their geography, the large size of the wards, and the number of councillors allocated to each district, have all affected our recommendations. When deciding upon appropriate divisions for these latter two districts, we have tried to keep wards and communities together where possible, and have improved upon the County Council's proposed level of coterminosity. However, it has been necessary to divide a number of wards in order to achieve electoral equality. Where we have divided wards, we have tried to do so along parish boundaries or clearly identifiable boundaries on the ground, at the same time as recognising community and road links within proposed divisions. We have attempted to adopt urban and rural divisions in Wealden district; however, some urban areas contain too many or too few electors for a single-member division that provides good electoral equality. Therefore, we are proposing a two-member division and propose to transfer parts of urban areas into divisions that are more rural.

69 We propose adopting the County Council's proposals for Eastbourne, as we consider they provide excellent electoral equality and coterminosity. We also propose to adopt the majority of the County Council's proposals for Hastings, but we propose to move away from them in the east of the borough and to adopt two of Hastings Borough Council's proposed divisions. We consider that this combination of divisions would provide an improved reflection of community identity, while achieving good electoral equality.

70 We do not propose adopting the County Council proposals for Lewes, as they would result in no coterminosity between the divisions and district wards. We concur with the County Council's comment that 'a greater degree of coterminosity with the new district and borough wards than exists at present ... will give better opportunities for partnership working with local councillors and constituents'. We also agree with the District Council and Newick Parish Council's argument that the County Council's proposals would not reflect community identity. Therefore, given that no alternative proposals were submitted to us, and having considered a number of different options, we are proposing our own draft recommendations, including a two-member Peacehaven & Telscombe division. In light of the issues resulting from the district's allocation under a council size of 49, as noted above, we consider that our proposals would provide improved coterminosity between divisions and district wards and a better reflection of community identity than the County Council's proposals.

71 Similarly, we have sought to improve upon the County Council's proposals for Rother in order to increase coterminosity and the reflection of community links, in light of Rother District Council's concerns. No alternative proposals were submitted, and so having considered a number of options we intend to put forward our own proposals for six divisions,

three of which are coterminous. Our proposed two-member Bexhill Central division would ensure that the urban area would remain in an urban division rather than parts being included in a more rural division.

72 We propose adopting a number of the County Council's, Liberal Democrat groups' Councillor Whetstone's and Hartfield Parish Council's proposals for Wealden, alongside some of our own proposals which would include a two-member division. We consider that this arrangement of predominantly locally generated divisions would provide the best balance between electoral equality, coterminosity and community identities. However, we have not been able to reflect all the community arguments put forward.

73 During the review, the issue of attempting to keep rural and urban areas in separate divisions has arisen. We note the concerns raised by various organisations and individuals regarding this matter, and have endeavoured to ensure, as far as possible, that urban and rural areas are in different divisions. However, this has not always been possible due to the requirement for each councillor to represent a similar number of electors and other factors such as geography. For example, in Lewes district we are proposing two divisions which would divide a ward between them and contain both urban and rural areas. This is due to the requirement to achieve electoral equality and ensure that each division is represented by the correct number of county councillors in relation to the number of electors it contains. Urban areas are not always entitled to 'whole' numbers of councillors. In some cases they might be entitled to 2.6 councillors, for example, which would mean that additional electors from neighbouring areas would need to be included in a division in order to reach the correct allocation of three, and achieve electoral equality.

74 Our proposals would also involve further warding for Newhaven parish in order to facilitate electoral equality and a strong boundary. The proposed warding for Newhaven is described at the end of this chapter under the heading parish council electoral arrangements. For county division purposes, the five district areas in the county are considered in turn, as follows:

- i. Eastbourne borough (pages 30–31)
- ii. Hastings borough (pages 31–33)
- iii. Lewes district (pages 33–36)
- iv. Rother district (pages 37–39)
- v. Wealden district (pages 39–45)

75 Details of our draft recommendations are set out in Tables 1 and 2, and on the large maps.

## Eastbourne borough

76 Under the current arrangements, the borough of Eastbourne is represented by eight county councillors serving eight divisions. Cavendish, College and Old Town divisions currently have councillor:elector ratios of 1%, 6% and 17% below the county average respectively (5%, 10% and 21% below by 2007). Princes and Priory divisions have councillor:elector ratios of 34% and 28% above the county average respectively (29% and 23% above by 2007). Park, St Mary's and Woodlands divisions have councillor:elector ratios of 14%, 5% and 9% below the county average (18%, 9% and 12% below by 2007).

77 East Sussex County Council proposed nine single-member divisions, coterminous with the existing nine Eastbourne borough wards. It proposed that the divisions should have the same names as the borough wards. It stated that under its proposed council size the borough is entitled to the same number of county councillors as borough wards, and therefore 'logic dictates' that the county divisions should follow the same boundaries as the borough wards. It also stated that the resulting 100% coterminosity would meet the statutory criteria and avoid confusion among the electorate regarding division boundaries. Under the

County Council's proposals eight divisions would initially have electoral variances below 10% and all nine divisions would have electoral variances below 10% by 2007. Eastbourne Borough Council supported the County Council's proposals for Eastbourne in full.

78 We have carefully considered all representations received during Stage One. We note that the County Council's proposals would provide the correct allocation of nine councillors under a council size of 49 by 2007. We note that its proposals would result in 100% coterminosity between the proposed divisions and the borough wards as well as good electoral equality, since all divisions would have electoral variances below 10% by 2007. We are prepared to accept that Sovereign division will initially have a high electoral variance of 23%, as the County Council forecasts that this will improve to 9% by 2007. We also note the unanimous support of Eastbourne Borough Council for the County Council's proposals. We are therefore of the view that the County Council's proposals would provide the best balance between electoral equality and coterminosity and we propose to adopt them as our draft recommendations for Eastbourne.

79 Under our draft recommendations Devonshire and Meads divisions would both have councillor:elector ratios of 0% (1% below and 0% respectively by 2007). Hampden Park, Langney and Old Town divisions would have councillor:elector ratios of 6%, 4% and 1% below the county average respectively (8%, 6% and 4% below by 2007). Ratton, Sovereign and Upperton divisions would have councillor:elector ratios of 1%, 23% and 4% below the county average respectively (3%, 9% and 5% below by 2007). St Anthony's division would have a councillor:elector ratio of 5% above the county average (2% above by 2007). Our draft recommendations would achieve a level of coterminosity of 100% between divisions and borough wards. Our draft recommendations are illustrated on map Sheet 1.

## Hastings borough

80 Under the current arrangements, the borough of Hastings is represented by eight county councillors serving eight divisions. Braybrooke & Castle and Broomgrove & Ore divisions have councillor:elector ratios of 5% and 20% below the county average respectively (8% and 23% below by 2007). Central St Leonards & Gensing and Hollington & Ashdown divisions have councillor:elector ratios of 9% and 20% above the county average respectively (4% and 15% above by 2007). Old Hastings & Mount Pleasant, Silverhill & Wishing Tree and St Helens & Elphinstone divisions have councillor:elector ratios of 18%, 11% and 20% below the county average respectively (21%, 15% and 23% below by 2007). West St Leonards & Maze Hill division has a councillor:elector ratio of 4% above the county average (0% by 2007).

81 The County Council proposed eight single-member coterminous divisions, each composed of two borough wards. It consulted on its initial proposals, and in light of comments received, it amended its proposals for three divisions. It stated that it used a division made up of Hollington and Wishing Tree wards as a 'starting point' in order to 'recognise the community of interest which exists' between the two wards. It contended that the area is in receipt of government grants and therefore 'it is appropriate that the area should be represented by one councillor who can champion its needs'. It further stated that it 'is appropriate that areas of greatest deprivation should have greater representation, i.e. fewer electors per councillor'. The County Council proposed Central St Leonards & Gensing, St Helens & Silverhill, Ashdown & Conquest and Braybrooke & Castle divisions, all comprising wards of the same names. Similarly, it proposed Baird & Tressell, Hollington & Wishing Tree, Maze Hill & West St Leonards and Old Hastings & Ore divisions. The County Council's proposals would provide a level of 100% coterminosity between divisions and borough wards and would provide for good electoral equality, as no division would have an electoral variance more than 10% from the county average, initially or by 2007.

82 Hastings Borough Council 'supported the need to retain eight county divisions'. It put forward its own proposals for eight single-member coterminous divisions for Hastings, which

it stated 'best reflects the existing community links and geographical barriers in the borough'. It did not provide names for its proposed divisions. Three of its proposed divisions were identical to the County Council's proposals, including a division comprising Braybrooke and Castle wards, where it stated that 'a strong community identity exists' between these two wards. It also proposed the same Central Leonards & Gensing and Maze Hill & West St Leonards divisions as the County Council. Hastings Borough Council also proposed divisions comprising Ashdown and Hollington wards, Baird and Ore wards, Conquest and St Helens wards, Old Hastings and Tressell wards and Silverhill and Wishing Tree wards. Regarding the County Council's proposal for a St Helens & Silverhill division, Hastings Borough Council stated that 'there is no common link between the two wards as they are ... divided completely by the park'. It also stated that its own proposal for a Baird & Ore division 'recognises the link between Ore and Baird through The Ridge', and noted that while Baird and Tressell wards could be linked by the Ore Valley, it felt that 'this was still a physical divide' between the two wards. All of the Borough Council's proposed divisions would be within 10% of the county average number of electors per councillor both initially and by 2007.

83 We have carefully considered the submissions received during Stage One. We note that the County Council and Hastings Borough Council's proposals would provide the correct allocation of eight councillors under a council size of 49 by 2007. We note that both sets of proposals would provide good electoral equality and 100% coterminosity. We note that they agreed on the composition of three coastal divisions, Braybrooke & Castle, Central St Leonards & Gensing and Maze Hill & West St Leonards divisions, comprising wards of the same names. Given the good levels of electoral equality and coterminosity, we propose to adopt these three locally generated divisions as part of our draft recommendations.

84 The County Council and Hastings Borough Council put forward alternative proposals for the remainder of the borough. We note that the County Council proposed a Hollington & Wishing Tree division in order to reflect community interests and to keep two wards together which receive government grants. We do not take funding grants into account when formulating our recommendations and do not consider that areas of deprivation should have greater representation. However, officers from the Committee visited the area and noted that Hollington and Wishing Tree wards have clear road links and appear to have a common community identity which would not be reflected by placing these two wards in different divisions. Therefore, we have decided to adopt the County Council's Hollington & Wishing Tree division as part of our draft recommendations, as we consider this would best reflect community identity. Having decided to adopt this division, this in turn informs our decisions regarding the neighbouring divisions. Therefore, we are unable to adopt Hastings Borough Council's divisions comprising Ashdown & Hollington, Conquest & St Helens and Silverhill & Wishing Tree wards. Additionally, when visiting the area, officers noted that Conquest and St Helens wards are divided by a steep valley and have no road links except for private tracks. Officers also noted the low levels of access between Silverhill and Wishing Tree wards. We acknowledge the Borough Council's comment that St Helens and Silverhill wards are divided by a park. However, we note that the wards are linked via St Helen's Road and consider that linking the two wards would result in the best arrangement in this part of Hastings, given the lack of access within the Borough Council's proposed divisions in this area. We are therefore adopting the County Council's proposed Ashdown & Conquest and St Helens & Silverhill divisions.

85 In the east of the borough, the County Council proposed a division comprising Baird and Tressell wards and a division comprising Old Hastings and Ore wards. The Borough Council proposed an alternative Old Hastings & Tressell division and a division comprising Baird and Ore wards, as it considered that the Ore Valley physically divides the wards of Baird and Tressell. Having visited the area and noted the lack of access and steep valley between Baird and Tressell wards, we concur with the Borough Council. We consider that, compared to the County Council's proposals, its proposed divisions for this area would provide better links, which may in turn facilitate a stronger community identity. Although Baird and Ore

wards are not immediate neighbours, we consider that they share a good road link along The Ridge and therefore are better linked than Baird & Tressell wards which do not have such easy access between them. Therefore, we propose to adopt the Borough Council's proposals for Baird & Ore and Old Hastings & Tressell divisions, comprising wards of the same names.

86 Under our draft recommendations, Ashdown & Conquest, Braybrooke & Castle and Central St Leonards & Gensing divisions would have councillor:elector ratios 1%, 5% and 10% above the county average respectively (3%, 5% and 8% above by 2007). Hollington & Wishing Tree and Old Hastings & Tressell divisions would both have a councillor:elector ratio of 0% (7% above and 1% below by 2007). Baird & Ore and St Helens & Silverhill divisions would have councillor:elector ratios of 3% and 4% below the county average respectively (3% and 5% below by 2007). Maze Hill & West St Leonards division would have a councillor:elector ratio of 1% below the county average (0% by 2007). Our draft recommendations would achieve a level of 100% coterminosity between divisions and borough wards. Our draft recommendations are illustrated on map Sheet 1.

## Lewes district

87 Under the current arrangements, the district of Lewes is represented by eight county councillors serving eight divisions. Chailey and Newhaven divisions currently have councillor:elector ratios of 12% and 15% above the county average respectively (7% and 10% above by 2007). Peacehaven and Ringmer divisions have councillor:elector ratios of 25% and 10% above the county average respectively (20% and 6% above by 2007). Seaford Blatchington and Seaford Sutton divisions currently have councillor:elector ratios of 5% and 15% above the county average respectively (1% and 11% above by 2007). Lewes division has a councillor:elector ratio of 10% below the county average (13% below by 2007). Telscombe division has a councillor:elector ratio of 0% (3% below by 2007).

88 The County Council proposed nine single-member divisions in Lewes, none of which would be coterminous with district wards. Under the County Council's proposals, no division would have an electoral variance above 10%, either initially or by 2007. In the south-east of the district, the County Council proposed a Seaford Sutton division comprising Seaford East and Seaford South wards and part of Seaford Central ward. The area of Seaford Central ward broadly to the south of St John's Road and Blatchington Road would be included in the County Council's Seaford Sutton division and the remainder would be incorporated into its proposed Seaford Blatchington division which would also comprise Seaford North ward and part of Seaford West ward. The area of Seaford West ward broadly south-east of Grand Avenue and north-east of the railway would be included in the County Council's Seaford Blatchington division. The remainder of Seaford West ward would be incorporated in its proposed Newhaven & West Seaford division, which would also include Newhaven Denton & Meeching ward. It also proposed a Peacehaven division comprising Peacehaven East and Peacehaven North wards and part of Peacehaven West ward to the east of Sutton Avenue. It proposed to transfer the remainder of Peacehaven West ward, west of Sutton Avenue, into its Telscombe division along with East Saltdean & Telscombe Cliffs ward. The County Council stated that it consulted on its initial proposals for Lewes, and in light of representations received 'subsequently amended its proposals in the area of East Saltdean, Telscombe and Peacehaven in order to keep local communities together, to recognise connections with Brighton and to take account of the parliamentary constituency boundary'. It stated that it 'tried as far as possible to keep adjoining communities together' in the Seaford area; however, the requirement for electoral equality impacted on this and 'once the boundaries in the more urban areas along the coastal strip had been settled' these 'dictated to a large extent the boundaries in the remainder of Lewes'.

89 The County Council also proposed a Lewes West & Haven division comprising Kingston and Newhaven Valley wards and the part of Lewes Priory ward that lies to the west of the

Training Gallops. The remainder of Lewes Priory ward would form a Lewes Castlebridge division with Lewes Bridge and Lewes Castle wards. It also proposed a Ringmer division comprising Newick and Ouse Valley & Ringmer wards and Barcombe parish, of Barcombe & Hamsey ward. Finally, it proposed a Chailey division comprising Chailey & Wivelsfield, Ditchling & Westmeston and Plumpton, Streat, East Chilmington & St John (without) wards and Hamsey parish, part of Barcombe & Hamsey ward.

90 Lewes District Council objected to the County Council's proposals for Lewes district and stated that the proposals would not meet the statutory criteria to reflect the identities and interests of local communities and secure effective and convenient local government. The District Council stated that the County Council's proposals 'have little regard to local ties' and split district wards between divisions. It expressed concern regarding the 'geographical size' of the County Council's proposed Ringmer division, which would include Newick in the north and South Heighton in the south of the district, resulting in a 'lack of identity and interest between those geographical extremes'. However, it noted that there 'is an identity and interest between the communities of Barcombe and Newick and between Lewes Bridge ward and Barcombe and Ringmer'. It stated that it 'is not logical to split part of the Lewes Priory ward away from the rest of the town'. It also contended that there is 'absolutely no mutual identity and interest between the communities in the Lewes Priory and Newhaven Valley wards'. It stated that 'the inclusion of the Newhaven Valley ward' in the County Council's Lewes West and Haven division 'would break the local ties in Newhaven and not reflect the identity and interests of the Newhaven community'. It noted that the inclusion of part of Peacehaven West ward in Telscombe division would 'split local ties' and that 'there is no logicity' in splitting wards between two Seaford divisions. It stated that it is not logical to create a Newhaven & West Seaford division as 'there is no common identity and interest between the two towns'. The District Council stated that the County Council's proposals for Lewes should be rejected, as they do not meet The Electoral Commission's criteria.

91 Newick Parish Council 'strongly opposed' the County Council's proposed Ringmer division as it stated 'it did not have enough in common' with the Barcombe and Ringmer area. It stated it would prefer to remain as part of the Chailey division as it contended that 'it has more in common' with this division. Ringmer Parish Council stated that it 'wishes to retain the existing parish boundary and would not wish to see the parish "warded"'. Seaford Residents' Association expressed concern that Seaford's growing electorate should continue to be represented by two county councillors.

92 We have carefully considered the representations received during Stage One. Under a council size of 49, Lewes district is entitled to nine county councillors. We note that under the County Council's proposals all nine Lewes divisions would be non-coterminous and five wards would be divided between county divisions. We agree with the County Council's comment that 'a greater degree of coterminosity with the new district and borough council wards than exists at present ... will give better opportunities for partnership working with local councillors and constituents'. In light of this, we have not been persuaded to accept the non-coterminous County Council proposals for Lewes district. We note the objections of Lewes District Council to the County Council's proposal. However, we also note that it did not submit any alternative divisions.

93 When formulating our draft recommendations for Lewes we have had a number of difficulties. The electorate of the coastal towns of East Saltdean, Newhaven, Peacehaven, Telscombe Cliffs and Seaford in Lewes district are together entitled to be represented by 5.6 councillors under a council size of 49. Thus, the coastal area does not contain sufficient numbers of electors to be represented by six councillors, but contains too many electors for five councillors. Therefore, in order to achieve electoral equality, part of the inland rural area has to be included in a division with part of one of the coastal towns, so that each councillor represents as nearly as possible, the same number of electors.

94 In the south-east of the district, we note that the County Council proposed to include part of Seaford West ward in Newhaven and West Seaford division, as Seaford West ward contains too many electors to be incorporated into its Seaford Blatchington division. We note the concerns of the District Council regarding the lack of community identity within this division. We acknowledge that ideally Seaford West should be in a division with the other Seaford wards. However, Seaford is situated in an isolated location within the district and aside from sharing a boundary with two Seaford wards, it only borders two other wards. Seaford as a whole contains too many electors to be represented by two councillors, and too few to be entitled to three councillors. It is therefore necessary for Seaford West ward to be included in a division with areas to its north or west. Therefore, as concluded above, part of the coastal area has to be included in a division with inland areas. Officers of the Committee visited the area and noted that Newhaven is separated by the River Ouse and has road links via the A26 and Lewes Road to parishes to the north, on either side of the river. Having visited the area and considered various options, including two-member divisions, we propose a Newhaven East, Ouse Valley & Seaford West division comprising Seaford West ward, part of Newhaven Denton & Meeching ward east of the River Ouse and Beddingham, Firle, Glynde, South Highton and Tarring Neville parishes of Ouse Valley & Ringmer ward. We consider that this division would provide excellent electoral equality as well as utilising the natural boundary of the River Ouse. We note that the parishes in the north of the division are linked to Newhaven by the A26 and that Newhaven and Seaford are linked by the A259. We also note that the parishes of Beddingham, Firle, Glynde, Tarring Neville and South Highton are linked with wards to the south, including part of East Saltdean and Telscombe Cliffs towns, under the existing arrangements. We would particularly welcome comments during Stage Three on our proposed division name of Newhaven East, Ouse Valley & Seaford West.

95 Although we have not been persuaded to include Seaford West ward in a division with the remainder of Seaford, we are proposing alternative divisions to those put forward by the County Council, in the remainder of Seaford. Electoral equality would not be compromised and coterminosity would be improved, if Seaford East and Seaford South wards formed a Seaford Sutton division, and Seaford Central and Seaford North wards formed a Seaford Blatchington division. Both divisions would have electoral variances below 10% by 2007. Therefore, we propose to adopt these two alternative divisions as part of our draft recommendations.

96 We propose including the remainder of Newhaven Denton & Meeching ward (west of the River Ouse) in a Newhaven & Kingston division. We note that the County Council proposed a Lewes West & Haven division. However, we also note the objections of Lewes District Council to the County Council's Lewes West & Haven division on the grounds that Lewes Priory and Newhaven Valley wards have no 'mutual identity'. Having visited the area, we do not consider that parts of the towns of Lewes and Newhaven should be included in the same division. We consider that these two relatively distant towns share no community interests and so placing them in the same division would not reflect community identity. However, as noted earlier, due to the allocation of councillors between different parts of the district, parts of the coastal urban area must be included with the inland area. We investigated a large number of different options and concluded that Newhaven Valley and Kingston wards have a good road link along Lewes Road. We did consider linking East Saltdean & Telscombe Cliffs ward with Kingston ward, which would be similar to the existing arrangements, but noted the lack of communication links between the two areas. We also considered placing Lewes Castle and Lewes Priory wards in a division with Kingston ward, however this would adversely affect electoral equality (producing an electoral variance 29% above the county average by 2007). Therefore, we propose a Newhaven & Kingston division comprising Kingston and Newhaven Valley wards and part of Newhaven Denton & Meeching ward west of the River Ouse. As discussed earlier, we have to include part of the urban coastal area with parts of the inland rural area, and as a result, one of the towns must be divided. We consider that the most suitable area to divide is Newhaven. Newhaven contains the strong identifiable boundary of the harbour and River Ouse, which forms the boundary between the

separate areas of Denton and Meeching, and also has good road links to inland parishes. We consider that this proposal results in the best available electoral arrangements across the whole area. Our proposed Newhaven & Kingston division would have an electoral variance 8% above the county average by 2007, and we consider that it would provide the best balance between the statutory criteria compared to the County Council's proposed Lewes West & Haven division. We also note that the parishes of Kingston ward are currently linked with part of the urban coastal area. Our recommendations would divide Newhaven parish between two divisions and create two new parish wards of Newhaven Denton and Newhaven Meeching, discussed later in this section.

97 We note that the County Council's proposal to transfer part of Peacehaven West ward into a Telscombe division would divide Peacehaven parish and create a new parish ward, which we would try to avoid proposing if other viable options were available. We also note the District Council's opposition to this proposal, which it stated would split community ties. We investigated single-member divisions for this area; however, there are too many electors in Peacehaven town and not sufficient in East Dean & Telscombe Cliffs ward for one councillor each. Peacehaven would have to be divided in order to achieve electoral equality, which we were reluctant to do as we consider that the town of Peacehaven and East Saltdean & Telscombe Cliffs ward tend to run into one another with no clear boundary between them. Therefore, it would be difficult to identify a suitable place to divide a Peacehaven ward at the same time as reflecting community identity. In order to better reflect community identity, maintain electoral equality and achieve coterminosity, we propose a two-member Peacehaven & Telscombe division comprising East Saltdean & Telscombe Cliffs, Peacehaven East, Peacehaven North and Peacehaven West wards. We consider this a sensible proposition, as it would be coterminous, ensuring that Peacehaven West ward would not be split. It would create a compact urban two-member division, which would have an electoral variance of just 2% above the county average by 2007.

98 We note that the County Council proposed to split Lewes Priory ward between two divisions and that the District Council opposed this proposal as illogical. We also note that the District Council commented on the 'identity and interest' between Lewes Bridge ward and Barcombe and Ringmer villages. Having visited the area, we concur with this view, and note that the River Ouse provides a clear division between Lewes Bridge ward and the remainder of Lewes, although the ward boundary does move away from the river in the south of Lewes. Therefore, we propose a Ringmer division comprising Barcombe & Hamsey and Lewes Bridge wards and Ringmer parish of Ouse Valley & Ringmer ward. We also propose a Lewes division comprising Lewes Castle and Lewes Priory wards, which we consider would keep the core of Lewes together and better reflect community identity than the County Council's proposals. We also note that our proposed Lewes and Ringmer divisions would be very similar to the existing divisions of the same names in these areas.

99 We note Newick Parish Council's concerns regarding the County Council's proposed Ringmer division, which would stretch from the south to the north of the district and with which the Parish Council felt it had no links. We note these concerns and, having visited the area, agree that Newick has closer links to Chailey than to Ringmer. Therefore, in order to better reflect community identity, we propose a coterminous Chailey division comprising Chailey & Wivelsfield, Ditchling & Westmeston, Newick and Plumpton, Streat, East Chiltington and St John (without) wards.

100 Under our draft recommendations Chailey and Lewes divisions would have councillor:elector ratios of 14% and 11% above the county average respectively (14% and 8% above by 2007). Newhaven & Kingston and Newhaven East, Ouse Valley & Seaford West divisions would have councillor:elector ratios of 2% and 3% below the county average respectively (8% above and 0% by 2007). Peacehaven & Telscombe and Ringmer divisions would have councillor:elector ratios of 3% and 10% above the county average respectively (2% and 12% above by 2007). Seaford Blatchington and Seaford Sutton divisions would have councillor:elector ratios of 4% and 7% below the county average respectively (3% and

9% below by 2007). Our draft recommendations would achieve a level of 63% coterminosity between divisions and district wards. Our draft proposals are illustrated on map Sheets 1 and 2.

## Rother district

101 Under the current arrangements, the district of Rother is represented by eight county councillors serving eight divisions. Bexhill East and Bexhill North divisions have councillor:elector ratios of 4% and 14% below the county average respectively (8% and 17% below by 2007). Bexhill South and Rye divisions have councillor:elector ratios of 16% and 1% below the county average respectively (19% and 5% below by 2007). Bexhill West and Ticehurst divisions have councillor:elector ratios of 13% and 11% above the county average (9% and 7% above by 2007). Winchelsea division has a councillor:elector ratio of 4% above the county average (0% by 2007). Battle division has a councillor:elector ratio of 1% above the county average (3% below by 2007).

102 Under a council size of 49 Rother is entitled to nine councillors. The County Council proposed nine single-member divisions for Rother, which would provide 33% coterminosity between divisions and district wards. Its proposals would achieve good electoral equality, with no division having an electoral variance more than 9% from the county average by 2007. However, the County Council's proposals would divide four wards between different divisions. The County Council stated that when formulating a scheme it determined its proposed arrangements in Bexhill first; it was then 'a case of finding the best fit of communities with an affinity whilst trying to keep as close as possible to the benchmark in terms of the number of electors'. In Bexhill in the south-west of the district, it proposed a Bexhill West division comprising Kewhurst and St Marks wards and a Bexhill South division comprising Central and Collington wards. It proposed a Bexhill East division comprising Sackville and St Michaels wards and a Bexhill North division comprising Old Town and St Stephens wards and part of Sidley ward. The County Council proposed to split Sidley ward so that the area south of Ninfield Road and east of St Mary's Lane would be transferred into Bexhill North division and the remainder would form part of a Battle Crowhurst & Sidley division. The latter division would also comprise Battle Town ward, Catsfield and Crowhurst parishes and Telham parish ward of Battle parish, all part of Crowhurst ward.

103 In the north-west of the district, the County Council proposed a Rother West division comprising Darwell and Ticehurst & Etchingam wards and Ashburnham and Penhurst parishes of Crowhurst ward. It proposed a Rother Central division comprising Ewhurst & Sedlescombe and Salehurst wards and Brede and Udimore parishes and part of Westfield parish of Brede Valley ward. The County Council did not put forward consequential warding arrangements for the parish. Westfield parish would be divided so that the areas in the west of the parish immediately surrounding Westfield Lane and the A21 would be transferred into Rother Central division and the remainder would form part of a Rother South division. The latter division would also comprise Marsham ward and Camber and Icklesham parishes of Eastern Rother ward. Finally, in the north-east of the district the County Council proposed a Rother Levels & Rye division comprising Rother Levels and Rye wards and East Guldeford, Iden and Playden parishes of Eastern Rother ward.

104 Rother District Council stated that it strongly objected to any proposals 'which would entail the allocation of any district ward between different county electoral divisions'. The District Council therefore expressed 'total opposition' to the County Council's proposals to divide wards between divisions. It stated that these proposals would 'be a source of potential confusion' to all, particularly as regards the unparished Sidley ward which the County Council proposed to divide so that 'an apparently arbitrary allocation of the electorate' would be removed from the current Bexhill North division. The District Council further stated that the County Council's proposals 'appear to fly in the face of The Boundary

Committee's own endeavour to include whole district wards within a county division where possible'.

105 We have carefully considered all representations received during Stage One. We note that the County Council's proposals would provide the correct allocation of nine councillors under the proposed council size of 49 as well as good electoral equality, but would also achieve just 33% coterminosity between divisions and the district wards. We agree with the County Council's comment that 'a greater degree of coterminosity with the new district and borough council wards than exists at present ... will give better opportunities for partnership working with local ... councillors and constituents'. We note the District Council's opposition to the County Council's proposals for Rother, particularly in relation to the low level of coterminosity and its proposal to split Sidley ward. Officers from the Committee visited the area and noted that Sidley appears to be clearly connected to Bexhill and does not appear to look towards the Battle community. Having considered many alternative options for divisions in Rother in order to attempt to better reflect community identity and improve coterminosity, we have produced our own proposals in the majority of the district. We propose a two-member Bexhill Central division comprising Central, Collington, Old Town, St Stephens and Sidley wards. We consider that this arrangement would better reflect community identity than the County Council's proposals for this area, by ensuring that Sidley ward would remain in an urban division with Bexhill. The division would also be coterminous and have an electoral variance within 10% of the county average. We propose adopting the County Council's Bexhill East and Bexhill West divisions as part of our draft recommendations as we consider that they would provide good electoral equality. We did consider transferring Collington and Kewhurst wards between Bexhill Central and Bexhill West divisions, however, we decided to go with the locally generated proposal for Bexhill West, which would also be comparable to the existing division. However, we would welcome local comments regarding these proposals.

106 The remainder of the district is predominantly rural, containing small numbers of electors distributed sparsely among the many parishes, and as a result, it has been necessary to split two wards along parish boundaries in order to improve electoral equality. Where we are proposing to divide wards, we have attempted to do so along parish boundaries in order to provide convenient and sensible boundaries which would be unlikely to divide communities. We acknowledge that as a consequence of the allocation of an additional councillor to the district and our decision to retain the urban area in the south within urban divisions where the bulk of electors reside, the electoral variances for the four rural divisions will be slightly more than 10%. We consider this to be acceptable in light of the above factors and the improvements to the overall level of coterminosity and reflection of community identity. We therefore propose a Battle & Crowhurst division comprising Battle Town and Crowhurst wards, Mountfield and Whatlington parishes and Netherfield parish ward of Battle parish, which are all part of Darwell ward. We note that this would result in the whole of Battle parish being included within one division along with the area surrounding Battle town where electors are likely to use facilities in Battle and therefore share community identity. In the north-west of the district, we propose a Ticehurst division comprising Ticehurst & Etchingam ward and Brightling, Burwash and Dallington parishes of Darwell ward and Hurst Green parish of Salehurst ward in order to achieve reasonable electoral equality and recognise road links between the communities.

107 We propose a Rother Levels & Salehurst division comprising Ewhurst & Sedlescombe and Rother Levels wards and Bodiam and Salehurst & Robertsbridge parishes of Salehurst ward. We consider that this division would provide good electoral equality and would utilise road links across the area. In the south of the district, we propose a Brede Valley & Marsham division comprising Brede Valley and Marsham wards. This proposal would ensure that Westfield parish would not have to be split between divisions and the division would be coterminous. We also propose a coterminous Rye & Winchelsea division in the east of the district comprising Eastern Rother and Rye wards which we

consider would also have the benefit of placing Rye and its north-eastern and southern hinterland in one division and improve coterminosity.

108 Under our draft recommendations Battle & Crowhurst, Bexhill East and Bexhill West divisions would have councillor:elector ratios of 11%, 9% and 2% below the county average respectively (12%, 8% and 5% below by 2007). Brede Valley & Marsham, Rother Levels & Salehurst, Rye & Winchelsea and Ticehurst divisions would have councillor:elector ratios of 12%, 2%, 14% 12% and below the county average respectively (14%, 3%, 14% 13% and below by 2007). Bexhill Central division would have a councillor:elector ratio 9% above the county average (10% above by 2007). Our draft recommendations would achieve a level of 63% coterminosity between divisions and district wards. Our draft recommendations are illustrated on map Sheet 1.

## Wealden district

109 Under the current arrangements, the district of Wealden is represented by 12 county councillors serving 12 divisions. Crowborough Beacon, Crowborough Rotherfield and Heathfield divisions have councillor:elector ratios of 17%, 13% and 43% above the county average respectively, (12%, 9% and 37% above by 2007). Buxted Maresfield, Forest Row and Hailsham divisions have councillor:elector ratios of 4%, 18% and 12% below the county average respectively (8%, 21% and 16% below by 2007). Hellingly, Pevensey and Polegate divisions have councillor:elector ratios of 33%, 30% and 5% above the county average (28%, 25% and 1% above by 2007). Wadhurst and Willingdon divisions have councillor:elector ratios of 11% and 7% below the county average respectively (14% and 10% below by 2007). Uckfield division has a councillor:elector ratio of 53% above the county average (47% above by 2007).

110 The County Council proposed 14 single-member divisions for Wealden as illustrated in Table 5. Its proposals would result in 86% coterminosity between divisions and district wards, and its Chiddingly, East Hoathly, Hellingly & Horam division would have an electoral variance of 13% above the county average by 2007. The County Council stated that when 'formulating proposals it was a case of trying to achieve the best fit of communities with an affinity whilst having regard to the ... number of electors'. Its proposals would result in one division with an electoral variance of more than 10% above the county average by 2007.

Table 5: East Sussex County Council's proposals for Wealden

County Council's proposed Division name	Number of councillors	Proposed constituent district wards
1 Alfriston, East Dean & Willingdon	1	Alfriston ward; East Dean ward; part of Willingdon ward broadly south of Willingdon School
2 Buxted, Maresfield & Uckfield North	1	Buxted & Maresfield ward; Uckfield North ward
3 Chiddingly, East Hoathly, Hellingly & Horam	1	Chiddingly & East Hoathly ward; Hellingly ward; Horam ward
4 Cross in Hand, Five Ashes, Mayfield & Wadhurst	1	Cross in Hand/Five Ashes ward; Mayfield ward; Wadhurst ward
5 Crowborough North	1	Crowborough Jarvis Brook ward; Crowborough North ward; Crowborough St Johns ward
6 Crowborough South	1	Crowborough East ward; Crowborough West ward
7 Danehill, Fletching, Nutley & Forest Row	1	Danehill/Fletching/Nutley ward; Forest Row ward
8 Framfield & Uckfield	1	Framfield ward; Uckfield Central ward; Uckfield New Town ward; Uckfield Ridgewood ward
9 Frant/Withyham, Hartfield & Rotherfield	1	Frant/Withyham ward; Hartfield ward; Rotherfield ward
10 Hailsham North, Herstmonceux & Ninfield	1	Hailsham Central & North ward; Herstmonceux ward; Ninfield & Hooe with Wartling ward
11 Hailsham South	1	Hailsham East ward; Hailsham South & West ward
12 Heathfield	1	Heathfield East ward; Heathfield North & Central ward
13 Pevensey & Westham	1	Pevensey & Westham ward
14 Polegate & Watermill	1	Polegate North ward; Polegate South ward; Watermill parish ward of Willingdon ward and part of Willingdon ward broadly to the north of Willingdon School

111 The County Council consulted on its initial proposals and in light of comments received, amended its proposals for Polegate 'to reflect communities of interest', and 'also listened to advice and kept Pevensey and Westham together'. The County Council therefore proposed a Pevensey & Westham division comprising Pevensey & Westham ward. In the south of the district, the County Council proposed an Alfriston, East Dean & Willingdon division comprising Alfriston and East Dean wards and part of Willingdon ward broadly south of Willingdon School. The remainder of Willingdon ward, broadly to the north of Willingdon School, would form part of the County Council's Polegate & Watermill division, which would also comprise Polegate North and Polegate South wards.

112 Wealden District Council stated that it had 'reservations regarding the inclusion of rural and urban wards within the same county division' under the County Council's proposals. It also expressed concern regarding the high electoral equality, that Willingdon ward would be split and 'and that no particular justification had been supplied' for this under the County Council's proposals. The District Council objected to the County Council's proposal to split a housing estate in Lower Willingdon as 'unnecessary' as it would 'not improve the electoral equality figures but will ... confuse the electorate' and go against The Electoral Commission's guidance.

113 The Liberal Democrat groups submitted a joint scheme for Wealden district as illustrated in Table 6 'following the failure of East Sussex County Council to produce proposals attracting cross party support'. They contended that the County Council's

proposals 'were at variance with the statutory guidance'. Their scheme would be based on 14 single-member divisions, as they 'assumed that there existed adequate justification for the proposed increase from 44 to 49 county councillors'. They did not put forward names for their proposed divisions. They aimed to produce a scheme which would keep urban and rural areas in separate divisions, and create 'rural divisions based on geography and historic connections', while achieving 'numerical equality'. Their proposals would provide a level of coterminosity of 71% between district wards and divisions. Two divisions would have electoral variances exceeding the county average by more than 10%, both initially and by 2007.

114 The County Council's Crowborough North, Crowborough South, Hailsham South and Heathfield divisions were also proposed by the Liberal Democrat groups, although the Liberal Democrat groups did not name all of their divisions. The Liberal Democrat groups proposed a division comprising Uckfield Central, Uckfield New Town and Uckfield North wards as 'Uckfield is too large for one county division, and the Ridgewood ward, being the most rural, is excluded'. They contended that a large part of Hellingly 'forms part of Hailsham Town Council area and is part of the continuous Hailsham conurbation'. The Liberal Democrat groups therefore proposed a division comprising Hailsham Central & North ward and Hellingly parish and Upper Horsebridge parish ward of Hellingly ward. They stated that 'Polegate presents a problem' because surrounding wards are either part of other urban divisions or contain too many electors, therefore they proposed to transfer the Stone Cross area, as it 'is largely dense urban development'.

*Table 6: The Liberal Democrat groups' proposals for Wealden district*

<b>Division</b>	<b>Number of councillors</b>	<b>Proposed constituent district wards</b>
1	1	Forest Row ward; Frant/Withyham ward
2	1	Mayfield ward; Rotherfield ward; Wadhurst ward
3	1	Crowborough Jarvis Brook ward; Crowborough North ward; Crowborough St Johns ward
4	1	Crowborough East ward; Crowborough West ward
5	1	Buxted & Maresfield ward; Cross in Hand/Five Ashes ward; Framfield ward
6	1	Uckfield Central ward; Uckfield New Town ward; Uckfield North ward
7	1	Danehill/Fletching/Nutley ward; Hartfield ward; Uckfield Ridgewood ward
8	1	Heathfield East ward; Heathfield North & Central ward
9	1	Alfriston ward; Chiddingly & East Hoathly ward; Horam ward; part of Hellingly ward (Arlington parish)
10	1	Hailsham East ward; Hailsham South & West ward
11	1	Hailsham Central & North ward; part of Hellingly ward (Hellingly parish)
12	1	Herstmonceux ward; Ninfield & Hooe with Wartling ward; part of Pevensy & Westham ward (less broadly part of Stone Cross)
13	1	Polegate North ward; Polegate South ward; part of Pevensy & Westham ward (Stone Cross)
14	1	East Dean ward; Willingdon ward

115 Forest Row Parish Council opposed the County Council's proposals for its area and stated that 'the historic links that Forest Row has with Hartfield should not be broken in such an apparently arbitrary manner'. The Parish Council stated that it would prefer the status quo to be maintained; however, if this was not possible, it put forward three alternative divisions in the north of Wealden. It contended that 'Forest Row and Hartfield have a natural link' and therefore proposed a division comprising Forest Row and Frant/Withyham wards and Hartfield parish of Hartfield ward. It stated that Hartfield residents use facilities in Forest Row and there are transport links connecting the two parishes, so it would be 'logical' to maintain the 'strong economic and social links between the communities'. Forest Row Parish Council noted that residents in the south of the County Council's Danehill, Fletching, Nutley & Forest Row division 'have absolutely no links with Forest Row'. The Parish Council

therefore proposed a division comprising Mayfield, Rotherfield and Wadhurst wards. It also proposed a division comprising Buxted & Maresfield and Danehill/Fletching/Nutley wards and Fairwarp parish ward of Maresfield parish in Hartfield ward.

116 Hartfield Parish Council stated that it had discussed the electoral arrangements in north Wealden with Forest Row, Rotherfield and Withyham parish councils. It stated that it 'strongly objects' to the County Council's proposals for Hartfield parish, as 'there are strong economic and social links between Hartfield, Forest Row and Withyham'. Hartfield Parish Council put forward similar proposals to Forest Row Parish Council, though it did not propose to split Hartfield ward between two divisions. It suggested that Frant parish could be transferred to a division with Rotherfield, Mayfield and Wadhurst wards in order to improve electoral equality. It also dismissed Mayfield & Five Ashes Parish Council's proposals in the west of the area (which were not submitted to us but which were very similar to the Liberal Democrat groups' proposals) as 'unsatisfactory'. Withyham Parish Council stated that it 'concurs with the views of Forest Row and Hartfield' parish councils and would like to 'maintain their social and economic links' with the latter two parishes.

117 Polegate Town Council stated that it believes 'it is better to have county councillors representing communities rather than numbers of electors'. Therefore it contended that 'one councillor is right for Polegate and that Polegate should not be split up' though it 'understands the need to add a ward from a neighbouring parish to make up the numbers'. It stated that it should be part of a division with part of Lower Willingdon as 'this is a conurbation with similar interests and concerns'. Uckfield Town Council expressed concern that under the County Council's proposals Uckfield 'would be split' between two divisions, which 'would create confusion'. It stated that it held 'the strong view that Uckfield should remain as one [division] with one county councillor, as Uckfield is a coherent community with very definite boundaries, with no natural links to outside areas'.

118 Arlington Parish Council expressed concern that 'numerical equality should *never* be the main criterion for the review' and that 'parishes of similar interest should be linked together as at present'. The Parish Council urged that Arlington should not be linked with an urban area, but should be part of 'a solely rural division'.

119 Councillor Whetstone noted the concerns of Forest Row, Hartfield and Withyham parish councils in the north of Wealden regarding the County Council's proposals for their area. He stated that 'Rotherfield has no wish to be in the in the same division as Hartfield and vice versa, one being one side of Crowborough and the other the other'. However, he noted that a division comprising Forest Row, Hartfield and Frant/Withyham wards would be 'too large'. He contended that 'Rotherfield wishes to be placed with Mayfield and Wadhurst' and that Mayfield parish would agree, as this would form a 'natural community of three large villages with not dissimilar populations'. He stated that the proposals put forward by the County Council 'have serious flaws' as Forest Row is 'a northern looking community' yet it would be 'grouped with parishes which are south-facing with very different outlooks'. Councillor Whetstone stated that the 'main problem' with the County Council's proposals is that the divisions would not have 'a united view on many matters' and so would 'be extremely difficult to represent'. He felt that the proposals for Wealden should achieve more of a balance between the statutory criteria, in order to better reflect community interests.

120 We have carefully considered all representations received during Stage One. Under a council size of 49 Wealden district is entitled to 14 councillors. We note that the County Council's proposals would provide good levels of electoral equality and coterminosity. However, the County Council did not offer any strong community identity arguments to justify its proposals. We note that the County Council and Liberal Democrat groups proposed identical Crowborough North, Crowborough South, Hailsham South and Heathfield divisions. We consider that these divisions would provide good levels of electoral equality (all four divisions would have electoral variances of no more than 6% by 2007), 100% coterminosity between the division and the district wards and would also have the

benefit of ensuring that Crowborough town would be within two urban divisions. In light of this, we propose to adopt these divisions as part of our draft recommendations.

121 We note that the County Council proposed a Danehill, Fletching, Nutley & Forest Row division, which was opposed by Councillor Whetstone and Forest Row, Hartfield and Withyham parish councils. Councillor Whetstone and the three parish councils contended that Forest Row and Hartfield parishes have strong links which should be maintained, and they broadly agreed on an alternative division. Having visited the area, we agree that Forest Row, Hartfield and Frant/Withyham wards share community links, and that Forest Row ward would be better placed in a division with these wards than the more distant Danehill/Fletching/Nutley ward. We also concur with Hartfield Parish Council's proposal that Frant parish be transferred into a division with Mayfield, Rotherfield and Wadhurst wards in order to improve electoral equality. We also note Councillor Whetstone's comment that including all of Frant/Withyham ward in a division with Hartfield and Forest Row would create a division with too many electors. This would result in a division with a councillor:elector ratio 22% above the county average by 2007. Therefore, we propose a Forest Row division comprising Forest Row and Hartfield wards and Withyham parish and Eridge & Mark Cross parish ward of Rotherfield parish in Frant/Withyham ward. We also propose a Wealden North East division comprising Mayfield, Rotherfield and Wadhurst wards and Frant parish of Frant/Withyham ward. We note that this division is the same as that proposed by the Liberal Democrat groups, less the inclusion of Frant parish. We consider that these proposed divisions would better reflect community identity than the County Council's proposals. Similarly, we propose to adopt Hartfield Parish Council's proposal for a division comprising Buxted & Maresfield and Danehill/Fletching/Nutley wards and to name it Wealden West division. We acknowledge that this division links areas which may not be particularly well connected, however, in light of our proposals to reflect community identity in the surrounding area and to reduce the number of divisions containing urban and rural areas, we consider that this is the best available option. Due to the number of similarly sized villages in these two divisions we have decided to simply name them Wealden North East and Wealden West as we could not determine accurate division names without producing unduly long names. We acknowledge that the division name Wealden West may not be ideal; however, there does not appear to be an obvious name for this division other than using the component ward names, which we consider would result in an ineffective, overly long division name. We would welcome suggestions during Stage Three for alternative division names which might better reflect the constituent areas.

122 We note the Liberal Democrat groups' alternative proposals in this area. However, we also note Hartfield Parish Council's opposition to similar proposals from Mayfield & Five Ashes Parish Council. Having visited the area, we do not consider that the Liberal Democrat groups' proposals would reflect community identity, as their proposals would link Hartfield ward with the parishes to the south and isolate Forest Row ward in the west of the division. In light of this and our proposed Forest Row division, we are unable to adopt these proposals for the north-west of the district. We note the County Council's and Liberal Democrat groups' proposals for the Buxted area; however, as a result of our decision to adopt Hartfield Parish Council's proposal as our Wealden West division in order to reflect community identity and avoid linking Forest Row and Hartfield wards with distant parishes, we are unable to facilitate these proposals.

123 We note the concerns of Uckfield Town Council regarding the County Council's proposal to split Uckfield between two divisions. However, we concur with the Liberal Democrat groups' statement that Uckfield contains too many electors for a single-member division. If all four Uckfield wards were included in a single-member division it would have a councillor:elector ratio 36% above the county average and the town would be severely under-represented. Although we acknowledge that it is not ideal to include part of Uckfield with outlying areas, having visited the area we noted that Uckfield Ridgewood ward is linked to the parishes to its east via Eastbourne Road. In light of this, we propose to adopt the Liberal Democrat groups' Uckfield division. We consider that this proposal would also

provide good electoral equality and ensure that the majority of the town is in one urban division. We note that the County Council proposed to include the majority of Uckfield in a division with the more rural ward of Framfield. However, we do not propose to adopt this division, as we are reluctant to include the majority of Uckfield town in a division with a relatively rural area. Furthermore, we also propose a Framfield & Horam division comprising Cross in Hand/Five Ashes, Framfield, Horam and Uckfield Ridgewood wards. This division would provide good electoral equality and would benefit from good road links, and we note that Uckfield is currently in a division with the surrounding rural area.

124 We note the Liberal Democrat groups' proposal for an unnamed division comprising Herstmonceux and Ninfield & Hooe with Wartling wards and part of Pevensey & Westham ward broadly less the Stone Cross area of Westham parish. We do not consider that dividing Westham parish in a fairly arbitrary manner between this division and a Polegate division would provide convenient and effective local government. This proposal would entail the creation of new parish wards when alternative options are possible and we consider it would not use a strong boundary or be likely to reflect community identity. We also note the opposition, included as part of the County Council's submission, of Polegate Town Council to the County Council's initial proposal to link Polegate with part of Pevensey & Westham ward. In light of this, we are reluctant to adopt the Liberal Democrat groups' proposed division for Polegate, and we note that it would also reduce coterminosity and electoral equality. The Liberal Democrat groups' divisions (13 and 14) would provide electoral variances 6% and 12% respectively above the county average, compared to 4% above and 8% below under the County Council's Hailsham North, Herstmonceux & Ninfield and Pevensey & Westham divisions respectively by 2007. We therefore propose to adopt the County Council's two divisions.

125 We note the County Council's proposal for a Polegate division, which would include part of Willingdon ward. We also note the concerns expressed by Wealden District Council regarding this proposal, and acknowledge the Liberal Democrat groups' comment that Polegate presents a problem in terms of reflecting community identity while achieving electoral equality. This is partly due to its location within the district, surrounded by a rural area to its west and other large independent communities to its north and east, which are entitled to their own county councillors, therefore it is difficult to determine which area to link with Polegate without splitting a ward or community. Officers from the Committee visited the area and considered that the County Council's proposal would divide Willingdon ward using a poorly defined boundary, which would not be easily identifiable to the electorate. We consider that this boundary would divide a housing estate and lead to confusion among the electorate as to which division they would be included in. We noted that it is difficult to identify a suitable dividing point between Polegate and Willingdon as the two places run into one another. We could not identify a sensible proposal to transfer part of Willingdon into a division with Polegate that would provide a good reflection of community identities. However, a coterminous single-member division containing Polegate town and Willingdon ward would have an electoral variance 52% above the county average, which would be unacceptable. Therefore, we considered two-member divisions. The nature of the area and its location on the edge of the district surrounded by Eastbourne, Hailsham and a rural area, as well as our proposals elsewhere, limited our options in the Polegate area. Consequently, we propose a two-member Polegate, Willingdon & East Dean division comprising East Dean, Polegate North, Polegate South and Willingdon wards. We considered also including Alfriston ward in order to improve electoral equality, however, this would mean including a large rural area in a division with an urban area. We are of the opinion that the division should be predominantly urban, as we seek to ensure, where possible, that two-member divisions in particular, comprise primarily urban areas in order to represent the shared concerns of urban electors. We note that our proposed division would be coterminous and consider that it would ensure that the whole of the Polegate and Willingdon conurbations would be in the same division, along with the sizeable settlement of East Dean. We would welcome comments regarding this proposal at Stage Three.

126 We note the County Council's proposal for a Chiddingly, East Hoathly, Hellingly & Horam division. We note that the Liberal Democrat groups proposed a similar division, which would not include Hellingly parish but would include Alfriston ward. In light of our proposals elsewhere in the district, we propose a similar Alfriston, East Hoathly & Hellingly division, comprising Alfriston, Chiddingly & East Hoathly and Hellingly wards. We consider that this would create a predominately rural division for this area, in line with the concerns of Arlington Parish Council. The division would also be coterminous and provide reasonable electoral equality.

127 We note Wealden District Council's concerns regarding the inclusion of rural and urban areas in the same divisions. We have attempted to avoid this; however, for reasons of electoral equality we have proposed to include part of Uckfield with neighbouring areas as Uckfield town contains too many electors for a single-member division and too few for a two-member division.

128 Under our draft recommendations Alfriston, East Hoathly & Hellingly, Crowborough North and Crowborough South divisions would have councillor:elector ratios of 7%, 2% and 2% above the county average respectively (12%, 6% and 3% above by 2007). Forest Row and Framfield & Horam divisions would have councillor:elector ratios of 10% and 6% above the county average respectively (8% and 6% above by 2007). Pevensey & Westham and Polegate, Willingdon & East Dean divisions would have councillor:elector ratios of 7% and 9% below the county average respectively (8% and 12% below by 2007). Uckfield, Wealden North East and Wealden West divisions would have councillor:elector ratios of 10%, 15% and 3% above the county average respectively (8%, 12% and 3% above by 2007). Hailsham North, Herstmonceux & Ninfield and Hailsham South divisions would both have a councillor:elector ratio of 7% above the county average initially (4% and 5% above by 2007). Heathfield division would have a councillor:elector ratio of 0% (2% below by 2007). Our draft recommendations would achieve a level of 85% coterminosity between divisions and district wards. Our draft recommendations are illustrated on Sheet 1.

## Conclusions

129 Having considered all the evidence and submissions received during the first stage of the review, we propose:

- There should be an increase in council size from 44 to 49.
- The boundaries of all divisions will be subject to change as the divisions are based on district wards, which have themselves changed as a result of the district reviews.

130 As already indicated, we have based our draft recommendations on a combination of locally generated proposals, but propose to depart from them in some areas to improve electoral equality or coterminosity and to better reflect community identities. Our draft recommendations are summarised below:

- In Eastbourne borough we propose adopting the County Council's proposals.
- In Hastings borough we propose adopting the majority of the County Council's proposals. However, we propose adopting two of Hastings Borough Council's proposed divisions in the east of the borough in order to better reflect community identity.
- In Lewes district we propose adopting our own proposals in order to improve coterminosity and better reflect communities compared to the County Council's proposals.

- In Rother district we propose adopting two of the County Council's proposals. However, we propose putting forward our own proposals in the remainder of the district, in order to improve coterminosity and to ensure that, where possible, urban and rural areas are in different divisions.
- In Wealden district we propose adopting a combination of the County Council's, Liberal Democrat groups' and Hartfield Parish Council's proposals as well as putting forward some of our own proposals in order to provide the best reflection of community identity.

131 Table 7 shows how our draft recommendations will affect electoral equality, comparing them with the current arrangements (based on 2002 electorate figures) and with forecast electorates for the year 2007.

*Table 7: Comparison of current and recommended electoral arrangements*

	2002 Electorate		2007 Forecast electorate	
	Current arrangements	Draft recommendations	Current arrangements	Draft recommendations
Number of councillors	44	49	44	49
Number of divisions	44	46	44	46
Average number of electors per councillor	8,741	7,849	9,087	8,160
Number of divisions with a variance more than 10% from the average	26	8	23	9
Number of divisions with a variance more than 20% from the average	7	1	11	0
Level of coterminosity	64%*	83%	–	–

\* level of coterminosity following the completion of the LGBC review in 1981

132 As shown in Table 7, our draft recommendations for East Sussex would result in a reduction in the number of divisions with an electoral variance of more than 10% from 26 to eight. By 2007, nine divisions are forecast to have an electoral variance of more than 10% and no divisions are projected to have an electoral variance of more than 20% from the county average. We note that the number of divisions with electoral variances over 10% would increase from eight in 2002 to nine by 2007. However, we consider that our proposals would reflect community identity and provide good coterminosity, given the large rural areas in the county and the allocation of councillors under a council size of 49. Therefore, we are content to allow this small decrease in electoral equality. We also note that the number of divisions with an electoral variance over 20% would decrease over the five-year period, from one to none.

*Draft recommendation*

East Sussex should comprise 49 councillors serving 46 divisions, as detailed and named in Tables 1 and 2, and illustrated in Appendix A and on the large maps.

## Parish council electoral arrangements

133 When reviewing electoral arrangements we are required to comply as far as possible with the rules set out in Schedule 11 to the 1972 Local Government Act. The Schedule states that if a parish is to be divided between different county divisions it must also be divided into parish wards, so that each parish ward lies wholly within a single division of the

county. Accordingly, we propose consequential warding arrangements for the parish of Newhaven to reflect the proposed county divisions in those areas.

134 The parish of Newhaven in Lewes district, is currently served by 18 councillors representing two wards: Newhaven Denton & Meeching (returning 11 councillors) and Newhaven Valley (returning seven councillors). We did not receive any submissions regarding parish arrangements for Newhaven parish.

135 In order to reflect our proposed county divisions in the area, we propose that Newhaven Denton & Meeching parish ward should be divided into two parish wards, Newhaven Denton and Newhaven Meeching, which would be represented by six and five councillors respectively. Newhaven Denton parish ward would form part of Newhaven East, Ouse Valley & Seaford West division. Newhaven Meeching parish ward would form part of Newhaven & Kingston division. At Stage Three, we would welcome comments on this proposal from local people, especially Newhaven Parish Council, Lewes District Council and East Sussex County Council.

*Draft recommendation*

Newhaven Parish Council should comprise 18 councillors, as at present, representing three wards: Newhaven Denton (returning six councillors), Newhaven Meeching (returning five councillors) and Newhaven Valley (returning seven councillors). The boundary between Newhaven Denton and Newhaven Meeching parish wards should reflect the proposed county division boundary, as illustrated and named on Sheet 1.



## 5 What happens next?

136 There will now be a consultation period, during which everyone is invited to comment on the draft recommendations on future electoral arrangements for East Sussex contained in this report. We will take fully into account all submissions received by 8 March 2004. Any received *after* this date may not be taken into account. All responses may be inspected at our offices and those of the County Council. A list of respondents will be available from us on request after the end of the consultation period.

137 Express your views by writing directly to us:

**The Team Leader  
East Sussex Review  
The Boundary Committee for England  
Trevelyan House  
Great Peter Street  
London SW1P 2HW**

138 In the light of responses 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 Electoral Commission. After the publication of our final recommendations, all further correspondence should be sent to The Electoral Commission, which cannot make the Order giving effect to our recommendations until six weeks after it receives them.



# Appendix A

## Draft recommendations for East Sussex: **Detailed mapping**

The following maps illustrate our proposed division boundaries for East Sussex.

**Map 1 (Sheet 2)** illustrates, the proposed electoral divisions for Newhaven, in Lewes district.

The **large map (Sheet 1)** illustrates in outline form the proposed divisions for East Sussex, including constituent district wards and parishes.



# Appendix B

## Code of practice on written consultation

The Cabinet Office's November 2000 *Code of Practice on Written Consultation*, <http://www.cabinet-office.gov.uk/regulation/Consultation/Code.htm> requires all Government Departments and Agencies to adhere to certain criteria, set out below, on the conduct of public consultations. Public bodies, such as The Boundary Committee for England, 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.

*Table B1: The Boundary Committee for England's compliance with Code criteria*

Criteria	Compliance/departure
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.	We comply with this requirement.
It should be clear who is being consulted, about what questions, in what timescale and for what purpose.	We comply 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.	We comply 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.	We comply 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.	We consult 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.	We comply with this requirement.
Departments should monitor and evaluate consultations, designating a consultation coordinator who will ensure the lessons are disseminated.	We comply with this requirement.