

Final recommendations on the
future electoral arrangements
for Chichester in West Sussex

Report to The Electoral Commission

July 2002

© Crown Copyright 2002

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

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

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

This report is printed on recycled paper.

Report No: 307

CONTENTS

WHAT IS THE BOUNDARY COMMITTEE FOR ENGLAND?	5
SUMMARY	7
1 INTRODUCTION	13
2 CURRENT ELECTORAL ARRANGEMENTS	15
3 DRAFT RECOMMENDATIONS	19
4 RESPONSES TO CONSULTATION	21
5 ANALYSIS AND FINAL RECOMMENDATIONS	23
6 WHAT HAPPENS NEXT?	45
APPENDIX	
A Final Recommendations for Chichester: Detailed Mapping	47

A large map illustrating the proposed ward boundaries for Chichester City is inserted at the back of this report.

WHAT IS THE BOUNDARY COMMITTEE FOR ENGLAND?

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

Members of the Committee are:

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

Archie Gall (Director)

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

This report sets out our final recommendations on the electoral arrangements for the district of Chichester in West Sussex.

SUMMARY

The Local Government Commission for England (LGCE) began a review of Chichester's electoral arrangements on 10 July 2001. It published its draft recommendations for electoral arrangements on 26 February 2002, after which it undertook an eight-week period of consultation. As a consequence of the transfer of functions referred to earlier, it falls to us, The Boundary Committee for England, to complete the work of the LGCE and submit final recommendations to The Electoral Commission.

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

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

- **in 20 of the 34 wards the number of electors represented by each councillor varies by more than 10 per cent from the average for the district and 11 wards vary by more than 20 per cent;**
- **by 2006 this situation is expected to deteriorate, with the number of electors per councillor forecast to vary by more than 10 per cent from the average in 21 wards and by more than 20 per cent in 13 wards.**

Our main final recommendations for future electoral arrangements (see Tables 1 and 2 and paragraphs 161-162) are that:

- **Chichester District Council should have 48 councillors, two fewer than at present;**
- **there should be 29 wards, instead of 34 as at present;**
- **the boundaries of 28 of the existing wards should be modified, resulting in a net reduction of five, and six wards should retain their existing boundaries.**

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

- **In 25 of the proposed 29 wards the number of electors per councillor would vary by no more than 10 per cent from the district average.**
- **This improved level of electoral equality is forecast to remain constant, with four wards expected to vary by more than 10 per cent from the average for the district by 2006.**

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

- **Revised warding arrangements for Chichester City Council.**
- **Revised warding arrangements and the redistribution of councillors for Selsey Town Council.**

All further representations on these final recommendations and the matters discussed in this report should be sent to The Electoral Commission at the address below, and should reach the Commission by 20 August 2002:

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

Table 1: Final Recommendations: Summary

Ward name	Number of councillors	Constituent areas	Map Reference
1 Bosham	2	The parishes of Bosham and Chidham	Map 2
2 Boxgrove	1	The parishes of Boxgrove, Eartham, East Dean, Singleton, Upwaltham and West Dean	Map 2
3 Bury	1	The parishes of Barlavington, Bignor, Bury, Duncton, East Lavington, Graffham and Sutton	Map 2
4 Chichester East	3	Part of the parish of Chichester (the proposed East parish ward)	Large map and Map 2
5 Chichester North	3	Part of the parish of Chichester (the proposed North parish ward)	Large map and Map 2
6 Chichester South	3	Part of the parish of Chichester (the proposed South parish ward)	Large map and Map 2
7 Chichester West	2	Part of the parish of Chichester (the proposed West parish ward)	Large map and Map 2
8 Donnington	1	<i>Unchanged</i> – the parishes of Appledram and Donnington	Map 2
9 Easebourne	1	The parishes of Easebourne and Lodsworth	Map 2
10 East Wittering	2	<i>Unchanged</i> – the parishes of Earnley and East Wittering	Map 2
11 Fernhurst	2	The parishes of Fernhurst, Linchmere and Linch	Map 2
12 Fishbourne	1	<i>Unchanged</i> – the parish of Fishbourne	Map 2
13 Funtington	1	The parishes of Compton, Funtington, Marden and Stoughton	Map 2
14 Harting	1	The parishes of Elsted, Harting, Treyford and Trotton with Chithurst	Map 2
15 Lavant	1	<i>Unchanged</i> – the parishes of Lavant and Westhampnett	Map 2
16 Midhurst	2	The parish of Midhurst	Map 2
17 North Mundham	1	The parishes of North Mundham and Oving	Map 2
18 Petworth	2	The parishes of Ebernoe, Fittleworth, Petworth, Stopham and Tillington	Map 2
19 Plaistow	2	The parishes of Loxwood, Lurgashall, Northchapel and Plaistow	Map 2
20 Rogate	1	The parishes of Milland and Rogate	Map 2
21 Selsey North	3	Part of the parish of Selsey (the proposed North parish ward)	Maps 2 and A2
22 Selsey South	2	Part of the parish of Selsey (the proposed South parish ward)	Maps 2 and A2
23 Sidlesham	1	The parishes of Hunston and Sidlesham	Map 2
24 Southbourne	3	<i>Unchanged</i> – the parishes of Southbourne and West Thorney	Map 2
25 Stedham	1	The parishes of Bepton, Cocking, Heyshott, Stedham with Iping, West Lavington and Woolbeding	Map 2
26 Tangmere	1	The parish of Tangmere	Map 2

	Ward name	Number of councillors	Constituent areas	Map Reference
27	Westbourne	1	<i>Unchanged</i> – the parish of Westbourne	Map 2
28	West Wittering	2	The parishes of Birdham, West Itchenor and West Wittering	Map 2
29	Wisborough Green	1	The parishes of Kirdford and Wisborough Green	Map 2

Notes: 1 *The whole district is parished*

2 *Map 2 and Appendix A, including the large map in the back of the report, illustrate the proposed wards outlined above.*

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

4 *The wards in the above table and their constituent parts take account of the amended parish boundaries which have been approved by the Secretary of State and set out in The Chichester (Parishes) Order 2001.*

Table 2: Final Recommendations for Chichester

	Ward name	Number of councillors	Electorate (2001)	Number of electors per councillor	Variance from average %	Electorate (2006)	Number of electors per councillor	Variance from average %
1	Bosham	2	3,248	1,624	-7	3,391	1,696	-9
2	Boxgrove	1	1,709	1,709	-3	1,766	1,766	-5
3	Bury	1	1,787	1,787	2	1,831	1,831	-2
4	Chichester East	3	5,128	1,709	-3	5,859	1,953	5
5	Chichester North	3	4,596	1,532	-13	5,184	1,728	-7
6	Chichester South	3	4,829	1,610	-8	5,238	1,746	-6
7	Chichester West	2	3,737	1,869	6	3,881	1,941	4
8	Donnington	1	1,727	1,727	-2	1,834	1,834	-1
9	Easebourne	1	1,884	1,884	7	1,942	1,942	4
10	East Wittering	2	3,679	1,840	5	4,121	2,061	11
11	Fernhurst	2	3,866	1,933	10	3,949	1,975	6
12	Fishbourne	1	1,634	1,634	-7	1,807	1,807	-3
13	Funtington	1	2,048	2,048	17	2,085	2,085	12
14	Harting	1	1,641	1,641	-6	1,669	1,669	-10
15	Lavant	1	1,606	1,606	-8	1,735	1,735	-7
16	Midhurst	2	3,874	1,937	10	4,052	2,026	9
17	North Mundham	1	1,633	1,633	-7	1,664	1,664	-11
18	Petworth	2	3,728	1,864	6	3,984	1,992	7
19	Plaistow	2	3,676	1,838	5	3,792	1,896	2
20	Rogate	1	1,997	1,997	14	2,004	2,004	8
21	Selsey North	3	4,783	1,594	-9	5,140	1,713	-8
22	Selsey South	2	3,285	1,643	-6	3,436	1,718	-8
23	Sidlesham	1	1,749	1,749	0	1,841	1,841	-1
24	Southbourne	3	5,336	1,779	1	5,591	1,864	0
25	Stedham	1	1,891	1,891	8	1,911	1,911	3
26	Tangmere	1	1,585	1,585	-10	1,750	1,750	-6

	Ward name	Number of councillors	Electorate (2001)	Number of electors per councillor	Variance from average %	Electorate (2006)	Number of electors per councillor	Variance from average %
27	Westbourne	1	1,596	1,596	-9	1,701	1,701	-9
28	West Wittering	2	4,076	2,038	16	4,223	2,112	13
29	Wisborough Green	1	1,899	1,899	8	1,928	1,928	4
	Totals	48	84,227	-	-	89,309	-	-
	Averages	-	-	1,755	-	-	1,861	-

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

Notes: 1 The 'variance from average' column shows by how far, in percentage terms, the number of electors per councillor varies from the average for the district. The minus symbol (-) denotes a lower than average number of electors. Figures have been rounded to the nearest whole number.

2 The wards in the above table and their constituent parts take account of the amended parish boundaries which have been approved by the Secretary of State and set out in The Chichester (Parishes) Order 2001.

1 INTRODUCTION

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

2 Chichester's last review was undertaken by the Local Government Boundary Commission for England, which reported to the Secretary of State in February 1977 (Report no. 184). The electoral arrangements of West Sussex County Council were last reviewed in June 1984 (Report no. 473). We expect to begin reviewing the County Council's electoral arrangements towards the end of the year.

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

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

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

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

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

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

8 This review was in four stages. Stage One began on 10 July 2001, when the LGCE wrote to Chichester District Council inviting proposals for future electoral arrangements. It also notified West Sussex County Council, Sussex Police, the Local Government Association, West Sussex Association of Local Councils, parish and town councils in the district, the Members of Parliament with constituencies in the district, the Members of the European Parliament for the South East region, and the headquarters of the main political parties. It placed a notice in the

local press, issued a press release and invited the District Council to publicise the review further. The closing date for receipt of representations, the end of Stage One, was 15 October 2001. At Stage Two it considered all the representations received during Stage One and prepared its draft recommendations.

9 Stage Three began on 26 February 2002 with the publication of the LGCE's report, *Draft recommendations on the future electoral arrangements for Chichester in West Sussex*, and ended on 22 April 2002. During this period comments were sought from the public and any other interested parties on the preliminary conclusions. Finally, during Stage Four the draft recommendations were reconsidered in the light of the Stage Three consultation and we now publish the final recommendations.

2 CURRENT ELECTORAL ARRANGEMENTS

10 The district of Chichester is situated in the west of the County of West Sussex, and stretches from the Hampshire border to upper Arun and from the Surrey border to the English Channel. The district covers a predominantly rural area of 78,678 hectares and is entirely parished, containing 67 parishes. The district also contains Chichester city and Selsey town councils. The area has good transport links and is traversed by the A27 trunk road and the London to Portsmouth railway.

11 The electorate of the district is 84,227 (February 2001). The Council presently has 50 members who are elected from 34 wards, four of which make up the city of Chichester, with the remainder being mainly rural. Five of the wards are each represented by three councillors, six are each represented by two councillors and 23 are single-member wards. The Council is elected as a whole every four years.

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

13 At present, each councillor represents an average of 1,685 electors, which the District Council forecasts will increase to 1,786 by the year 2006 if the present number of councillors is maintained. However, due to demographic change and migration since the last review, the number of electors per councillor in 20 of the 34 wards varies by more than 10 per cent from the district average, 11 wards by more than 20 per cent and seven wards by more than 30 per cent. The worst imbalance is in East Wittering ward where the councillor represents 115 per cent more electors than the district average.

Map 1: Existing Wards in Chichester

Table 3: Existing Electoral Arrangements

	Ward name	Number of councillors	Electorate (2001)	Number of electors per councillor	Variance from average %	Electorate (2006)	Number of electors per councillor	Variance from average %
1	Birdham	1	1,651	1,651	-2	1,716	1,716	-4
2	Bosham	1	2,286	2,286	36	2,416	2,416	35
3	Boxgrove	1	1,409	1,409	-16	1,461	1,461	-18
4	Bury	1	1,197	1,197	-29	1,218	1,218	-32
5	Chichester East	3	4,956	1,652	-2	5,566	1,855	4
6	Chichester North	3	4,768	1,589	-6	5,477	1,826	2
7	Chichester South	3	4,175	1,392	-17	4,584	1,528	-14
8	Chichester West	3	4,391	1,484	-13	4,535	1,512	-15
9	Donnington	1	1,727	1,727	3	1,834	1,834	3
10	Easebourne	1	1,358	1,358	-19	1,408	1,408	-21
11	East Wittering	1	3,629	3,629	115	4,071	4,071	128
12	Fernhurst	2	2,548	1,274	-24	2,609	1,305	-27
13	Fishbourne	1	1,634	1,634	-3	1,807	1,807	1
14	Funtington	1	1,981	1,981	18	2,014	2,014	13
15	Graffham	1	1,413	1,413	-16	1,450	1,450	-19
16	Harting	1	1,376	1,376	-18	1,401	1,401	-22
17	Hunston	1	1,747	1,747	4	1,829	1,829	2
18	Lavant	1	1,606	1,606	-5	1,735	1,735	-3
19	Linchmere	1	1,265	1,265	-25	1,284	1,284	-28
20	Lodsworth	1	1,420	1,420	-16	1,427	1,427	-20
21	Midhurst	2	4,125	2,063	22	4,310	2,155	21
22	Oving	1	2,288	2,288	36	2,472	2,472	38
23	Petworth	2	3,084	1,542	-8	3,313	1,657	-7
24	Plaistow	2	3,360	1,680	0	3,491	1,746	-2
25	Rogate	1	1,535	1,535	-9	1,543	1,543	-14
26	Selsey North	2	3,483	1,742	3	3,866	1,933	8
27	Selsey South	2	4,585	2,293	36	4,710	2,355	32
28	Sidlesham	1	932	932	-45	954	954	-47
29	Southbourne	3	5,502	1,834	9	5,757	1,919	7
30	Stedham	1	1,597	1,597	-5	1,601	1,601	-10

	Ward name	Number of councillors	Electorate (2001)	Number of electors per councillor	Variance from average %	Electorate (2006)	Number of electors per councillor	Variance from average %
31	Stoughton	1	1,163	1,163	-31	1,185	1,185	-34
32	Westbourne	1	1,596	1,596	-5	1,701	1,701	-5
33	West Wittering	1	2,475	2,475	47	2,557	2,557	43
34	Wisborough Green	1	1,965	1,965	17	2,007	2,007	12
	Totals	50	84,227	-	-	89,309	-	-
	Averages	-	-	1,685	-	-	1,786	-

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

Note: The 'variance from average' column shows by how far, in percentage terms, the number of electors per councillor varies from the average for the district. The minus symbol (-) denotes a lower than average number of electors. For example, in 2001, electors in Sidlesham ward were relatively over-represented by 45 per cent, while electors in East Wittering ward were significantly under-represented by 115 per cent. Figures have been rounded to the nearest whole number.

3 DRAFT RECOMMENDATIONS

14 During Stage One the LGCE received 15 representations, including a district-wide scheme from Chichester District Council, and representations from Chichester Liberal Democrats (the Liberal Democrats), eight parish councils, Chichester Constituency Labour Party (the Labour Party), the United Kingdom Independence Party, West Sussex County Council, a district councillor and a local resident. In the light of these representations and evidence available to it, the LGCE reached preliminary conclusions which were set out in its report, *Draft recommendations on the future electoral arrangements for Chichester in West Sussex*.

15 The LGCE's draft recommendations were based on the District Council's proposals; however, it proposed departing from them in a number of areas. It proposed that the Council should comprise 48 councillors as proposed by the Liberal Democrats, which secured the best allocation of councillors between Chichester City, Selsey town and the rural part of the district. The LGCE also proposed basing its draft recommendations for Chichester City on the Liberal Democrats' proposals, which allocated the City the 11 councillors it was entitled to under a council size of 48. It did, however, propose a minor boundary amendment in this area in order to provide for a more clearly identifiable boundary. It also proposed a minor amendment in the Selsey area and proposed that Linch parish should form part of the revised Fernhurst ward. The draft recommendations provided for a mixed pattern of one-, two- and three-member wards. It proposed that:

- Chichester District Council should be served by 48 councillors, compared with the current 50, representing 29 wards, five fewer than at present;
- the boundaries of 28 of the existing wards should be modified, while six wards should retain their existing boundaries;
- there should be revised warding arrangements for Chichester City Council and Selsey Town Council.

Draft Recommendation

Chichester District Council should comprise 48 councillors, serving 29 wards. The Council should continue to hold whole-council elections every four years.

16 The LGCE's proposals would have resulted in significant improvements in electoral equality, with the number of electors per councillor in 25 of the 29 wards varying by no more than 10 per cent from the district average. This level of electoral equality was forecast to improve further, with only three wards varying by more than 10 per cent from the average by 2006.

4 RESPONSES TO CONSULTATION

17 During consultation on the draft recommendations report, 16 representations were received. A list of all respondents is available from us on request. All representations may be inspected at our offices and those of Chichester District Council.

Chichester District Council

18 Chichester District Council supported the draft recommendations in relation to council size, the number of proposed wards and the revised warding arrangements in the Chichester City and Selsey Town areas. However, it proposed two amendments in the rural part of the district. Firstly, it opposed the LGCE's recommendation to transfer Linch parish to the proposed Fernhurst ward and reiterated its Stage One proposal for the parish to be contained within the proposed Rogate ward.

19 Secondly, the Council proposed that the parish of Marden be transferred from the proposed Harting ward to Funtington ward, noting the views expressed by Marden Parish Meeting. The District Council also commented on the submission made by West Sussex County Council with regard to ward names.

Chichester Liberal Democrats

20 Chichester Liberal Democrats (the Liberal Democrats) supported the draft recommendations with specific reference to the proposal that 11 councillors should represent the Chichester City area. They therefore supported the draft recommendations in the Chichester City area, together with the Selsey town area. However, they reiterated the views of the District Council with regard to the retention of Linch parish in the proposed Rogate ward. They also acknowledged the views of the District Council regarding Marden parish and its links with the parish of Compton.

21 Finally, the Liberal Democrats identified an error on the large map covering the Chichester City area.

Parish Councils

22 Compton Parish Council opposed the inclusion of Marden parish in the proposed Harting ward. It proposed that the parish be transferred to the proposed Funtington ward. Fernhurst Parish Council objected to the LGCE's proposal to transfer Linch parish to the proposed Fernhurst ward and requested that the District Council's original proposals in this area be adopted. Lynchmere Parish Council reiterated these views.

23 Marden Parish Meeting strongly opposed the inclusion of its parish in the proposed Harting ward. It therefore proposed that it remain with the parishes of Compton and Stoughton with which it is connected "socially, geographically and ecclesiastically".

24 A joint submission was received from the parish councils of Lodsworth, Lurgashall, Northchapel and Tillington. They reiterated views expressed at Stage One with regard to their preference for the District Council's proposals under its consultation scheme. They therefore strongly opposed the proposed Easebourne, Plaistow and Petworth wards. In addition, they were highly critical of the District Council's consultation process.

25 Stedham with Iping Parish Council opposed the proposed Stedham ward, expressing support for the existing warding arrangements in this area to be broadly maintained. In addition, concern was expressed with regard to the proposed reduction of councillors from 50 to 48.

Other Representations

26 West Sussex County Council stated that “the Commission’s decision not to take account of coterminosity in the district review will mean that the problems in achieving coterminous boundaries when the county review is undertaken will remain”. In addition, it “strongly” supported the case for Marden parish to be included in Funtington ward, supporting the views of County Councillor Dunn, as detailed below. The County Council also proposed that Bosham ward be renamed Bosham & Chidham ward and that Rogate ward be renamed Milland & Rogate. It argued that this would better reflect the two communities in each ward.

27 County Councillor Dunn opposed the proposed Harting ward, proposing that the parish of Marden be transferred to the proposed Funtington ward. Councillor French expressed full support for the draft recommendations, with specific reference to the proposed council size of 48 and the re-warding of Chichester City.

28 Four representations were received from local residents with regard to Marden Parish Meeting. Concern was expressed regarding the inclusion of the parish in the proposed Harting ward, emphasising the links that Marden parish has with the parishes of Compton and Stoughton. It was therefore proposed that Marden parish be transferred to the proposed Funtington ward in order to unite it with the aforementioned parishes. Finally, a local resident fully supported the draft recommendations. However, he asserted the view that the proposal to transfer Linch parish to the proposed Fernhurst ward may well be met with opposition.

5 ANALYSIS AND FINAL RECOMMENDATIONS

29 As described earlier, our prime objective in considering the most appropriate electoral arrangements for Chichester is, so far as reasonably practicable and consistent with the statutory criteria, to achieve electoral equality. In doing so we have regard to section 13(5) of the Local Government Act 1992 (as amended) – the need to secure effective and convenient local government; reflect the identities and interests of local communities; and secure the matters referred to in paragraph 3(2)(a) of Schedule 11 to the Local Government Act 1972 (equality of representation). Schedule 11 to the Local Government Act 1972 refers to the number of electors per councillor being “as nearly as may be, the same in every ward of the district or borough”.

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

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

32 We accept that the achievement of absolute electoral equality for the authority as a whole is likely to be unattainable. However, we consider that, if electoral imbalances are to be minimised, the aim of electoral equality should be the starting point in any review. We therefore strongly recommend that, in formulating electoral schemes, local authorities and other interested parties should make electoral equality their starting point, and then make adjustments to reflect relevant factors such as community identity and interests. Five-year forecasts of changes in electorate must also be considered and we would aim to recommend a scheme which provides improved electoral equality over this five-year period.

Electorate Forecasts

33 Since 1975 there has been approximately a 17 per cent increase in the electorate of Chichester district. The District Council submitted electorate forecasts for the year 2006, projecting an increase in the electorate of approximately 6 per cent from 84,227 to 89,309 over the five-year period from 2001 to 2006. It expects most of the growth to be in the Chichester City area. 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 District Council on the likely effect on electorates of changes to ward boundaries was obtained. Having accepted that this is an inexact science and, having considered the forecast electorates, the LGCE stated in its draft recommendations report that it was satisfied that they represented the best estimates that could reasonably be made at the time.

34 No comments on the Council's electorate forecasts were received during Stage Three, and we remain satisfied that they represent the best estimates currently available.

Council Size

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

36 Chichester District Council presently has 50 members. The District Council initially put a 46-member scheme out for consultation and, following a significant response from interested parties, a revised scheme was submitted to the LGCE based on a council size of 47. It stated that “new political structures have been implemented during the past two years and the Council considered a number of alternative council sizes ranging from 45 to 52”. The District Council also concluded that the new internal political management structure it has put in place means that “a small reduction of councillors would be appropriate and would assist in ensuring that councillors continue to play a full part in the activities of the council and would also be appropriate in achieving better electoral equality”.

37 The Liberal Democrats expressed support for the District Council’s revised 47-member scheme. However, they proposed that the Chichester City area be allocated an additional councillor, increasing the level of representation for the City from 10 to 11 and consequently increasing the overall revised council size from 47 to 48.

38 Chichester City Council proposed a scheme based on the existing council size of 50 members, retaining 12 councillors for the city of Chichester. It argued that “everyone in the City is happy with the current ward arrangements and number of councillors”. However, this scheme was incomplete and the LGCE were therefore unable to fully take it into account. In addition, the City Council stated that it would support a 49-member scheme, so long as Chichester retained 12 councillors.

39 The Labour Party expressed support for the District Council’s proposals. However, it stated that “we support with reservations their plan for Chichester City division reducing the number of councillors to 10 from 12”.

40 The United Kingdom Independence Party proposed that the existing warding arrangements be retained throughout the district, strongly opposing the creation of three-member wards in the rural area and the proposed reduction of councillors serving Chichester City.

41 The LGCE carefully considered all the representations received relating to council size. It concluded that its starting point should be to determine the most appropriate allocation of councillors between Chichester City, Selsey town and the rural part of the district. It noted that at present, under a council size of 50, Chichester City is entitled to 11.3 councillors by 2006 and currently has 12, while Selsey town is entitled to 4.8 councillors and currently has four. The issue of over-representation in Chichester and under-representation in Selsey was addressed as part of the Council’s submission. However, although under the Council’s proposed council size of 47 the allocation between the three areas was correct for 2001, it was incorrect in Chichester City by 2006, which would be entitled to 10.6 councillors and had been allocated 10. By adopting a council size of 48 (as per the Liberal Democrats’ proposals), Chichester City would be entitled to 10.8 councillors by 2006 and would have 11, Selsey would be entitled to 4.6 councillors and would have five and the rest of the district would be entitled to 32.5 councillors and would have 32. The LGCE therefore concluded that the most appropriate allocation between Chichester City, Selsey and rural part of the district would best be met by a council size of 48 members. In addition, this slight modification to the proposed council size did not have too great an impact on the level of electoral equality in the Council’s proposed wards.

42 Having looked at the size and distribution of the electorate, the geography and other characteristics of the area, together with the responses received, the LGCE concluded that the achievement of the statutory criteria would best be met by a council of 48 members.

43 At Stage Three, the District Council, the Liberal Democrats, Councillor French and a local resident all expressed support for the proposed council size of 48, while Stedham with Iping Parish Council expressed concern with regard to the proposed reduction of councillors from 50 to 48.

44 Having considered the representations received at Stage Three, we propose confirming the proposed council size of 48 as final. We concur with the views expressed by the LGCE that the most appropriate allocation between Chichester City, Selsey and rural part of the district would best be met by a council size of 48 members. In addition, we note that this proposed council size has received support from the District Council at Stage Three. We note the concerns expressed by Stedham with Iping Parish Council with regard to the proposed reduction in councillors for Chichester. However, we are not minded to consider alternative council sizes at this stage of the review, particularly those which have not been supported by explicit evidence, gained local support or been consulted on. In addition, the proposed council size of 48 has received a significant amount of support at Stage Three.

Electoral Arrangements

45 In view of the support given to large elements of the Council's proposals, and the consultation exercise which it undertook with interested parties, the LGCE based its draft recommendations on the District Council's scheme, together with elements of the Liberal Democrats' proposals. It considered that this scheme provided a better reflection of the statutory criteria than the current arrangements or other schemes submitted at Stage One. However, as detailed above, in order to facilitate the correct allocation of councillors between Chichester City, Selsey and the rural part of the district, the LGCE proposed adopting a council size of 48 members as opposed to the council size of 47 proposed by the District Council. This resulted in the Chichester City area being allocated the 11 councillors which it merits, and had a minimal effect on the levels of electoral equality achieved under the District Council's proposals for the remainder of the district. The LGCE therefore proposed adopting the Liberal Democrats proposed wards for Chichester City, subject to one minor amendment. In the remainder of the district it proposed moving away from the District Council's proposals in two areas in order to provide for more clearly identifiable boundaries and improved levels of electoral equality.

46 At Stage Three broad support has been received for the draft recommendations. The main areas of contention have been concerning the LGCE's proposal to transfer Linch parish to the proposed Fernhurst ward and the inclusion of Marden parish in the proposed Harting ward.

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

- (a) Chichester East, Chichester North, Chichester South and Chichester West wards;
- (b) Selsey North and Selsey South wards;
- (c) Birdham, East Wittering and West Wittering wards;
- (d) Bosham, Donnington and Fishbourne wards;
- (e) Southbourne and Westbourne wards;
- (f) Hunston, Oving and Sidlesham wards;
- (g) Funtington, Harting and Stoughton wards;
- (h) Boxgrove and Lavant wards;
- (i) Bury, Graffham and Midhurst wards;
- (j) Fernhurst, Linchmere, Rogate and Stedham wards;
- (k) Easebourne, Lodsworth and Petworth wards;
- (l) Plaistow and Wisborough Green wards.

48 Details of our final recommendations, including changes to take account of amended parish boundaries which have been approved by the Secretary of State and set out in The Chichester (Parishes) Order 2001, are set out in Tables 1 and 2, and illustrated on Map 2, in Appendix A and on the large map at the back of this report.

Chichester East, Chichester North, Chichester South and Chichester West wards

49 The existing wards of Chichester East, Chichester North, Chichester South and Chichester West are situated in the south of the district. All four wards are currently each represented by three councillors and are coterminous with the four parish wards which comprise Chichester City Council. Under existing arrangements, Chichester East, Chichester North, Chichester South and Chichester West wards are all over-represented and contain 2 per cent, 6 per cent, 17 per cent and 13 per cent fewer electors per councillor than the district average respectively (4 per cent more, 2 per cent more, 14 per cent fewer and 15 per cent fewer by 2006).

50 At Stage One, Chichester District Council proposed revised warding arrangements for the Chichester City area, resulting in a reduction in the number of councillors serving the area from 12 to 10 serving four wards. It stated that “this would necessitate a revision of the existing wards”. It proposed a revised three-member Chichester East ward comprising the existing ward, together with the area to the east of Whyke Road and the area surrounding Whyke Lake from the existing Chichester South ward. A revised three-member Chichester North ward would comprise the existing ward, together with the areas broadly to the west of Centurion Way and bounded by West Street and Orchard Street from the existing Chichester West ward. A revised two-member Chichester South ward would comprise the existing ward, less the area broadly to the east of Whyke Road and the area surrounding Whyke Lake, as detailed above, and the area bounded by Stockbridge Road and the Chichester By Pass, around Terminus Road. Finally, a revised two-member Chichester West ward would comprise the existing ward, less the area broadly to the west of Centurion Way and bounded by West Street and Orchard Street, as detailed above, together with the area bounded by Stockbridge Road and the Chichester By Pass from the existing Chichester South ward, as detailed above.

51 The Liberal Democrats proposed that the Chichester City area be allocated 11 councillors (therefore proposing an overall council size of 48). They proposed revised warding for the City largely based on the existing arrangements. They proposed retaining the existing three-member Chichester East and Chichester North wards, and proposed a revised three-member Chichester South ward and a two-member Chichester West ward. They proposed that the boundary between the revised Chichester South and Chichester West wards should broadly follow Orchard Street, Westgate and Cathedral Way.

52 Chichester City Council proposed a scheme based on the existing council size of 50 members, retaining 12 councillors for the city of Chichester, although the scheme was incomplete and no specific boundaries were submitted. It argued that “everyone in the City is happy with the current ward arrangements and number of councillors”. It also stated that it would support a 49-member scheme, on the condition that Chichester retained 12 councillors.

53 The Labour Party expressed support for the District Council’s proposals. However, it stated that “we support with reservations their plan for Chichester City division reducing the number of councillors to 10 from 12”. The United Kingdom Independence Party expressed opposition to the proposed reduction of councillors serving Chichester City.

54 Having considered the representations received at Stage One, the LGCE adopted the Liberal Democrats’ proposals, based on 11 councillors for the Chichester City area, subject to one minor amendment to provide for a more clearly identifiable boundary. It proposed transferring the area surrounding Mansbergh Road and Palmers Field, together with a future development site, from the proposed Chichester North ward to the proposed Chichester East ward. As discussed earlier, the LGCE proposed basing its draft recommendations on a council size of 48, as it was of the view that this provided for the most appropriate allocation of councillors between Chichester City, Selsey and the rural part of the district. Under this proposed council size of 48, the Chichester City area would be entitled to 11 councillors by 2006. The LGCE was therefore unable to utilise the proposals made by the District Council or the City Council which allocated the city 10 and 12 councillors respectively. In addition, the

LGCE considered that the Liberal Democrats' proposals, as well as being largely based on existing boundaries, utilised strong boundaries such as St Paul's Road and Bognor Road.

55 Under the draft recommendations, based on a council size of 48, Chichester East, Chichester North, Chichester South and Chichester West wards would contain 3 per cent fewer, 13 per cent fewer, 8 per cent fewer and 6 per cent more electors per councillor than the district average respectively (5 per cent more, 7 per cent fewer, 6 per cent fewer and 4 per cent more by 2006).

56 At Stage Three, the District Council, the Liberal Democrats, Councillor French and a local resident all expressed support for the draft recommendations in this area. The District Council stated "That the proposals for the re-warding of the Chichester City Council area (including the amendment to the boundary between the West and South wards) be agreed". The Liberal Democrats supported the LGCE's modification between Chichester East and Chichester North wards, stating "We entirely accept this change and the reasons for it". In addition, they identified an error on the large map covering the Chichester City area.

57 Having carefully considered the representations received, we have decided to endorse the draft recommendations for Chichester East, Chichester North, Chichester South and Chichester West wards as final. We note that the proposals have received support at Stage Three and consider that the proposed wards reflect the statutory criteria. We do, however, propose amending the large map at the back of the report in order to accurately reflect the Liberal Democrats' proposals in this area, as originally intended by the LGCE in its draft recommendations. We therefore confirm that the boundary between the proposed Chichester West and Chichester South wards should follow Orchard Street not West Street as illustrated in the draft recommendations report.

58 Under our final recommendations, the number of electors per councillor in Chichester East, Chichester North, Chichester South and Chichester West wards would be the same as under the draft recommendations. Our proposals in this area are illustrated in detail on the large map at the back of the report.

Selsey North and Selsey South wards

59 The existing wards of Selsey North and Selsey South are situated in the extreme south of the district. Both wards are each currently represented by two councillors and are coterminous with the two parish wards which comprise Selsey Town Council. Under the existing arrangements Selsey North and Selsey South wards contain 3 per cent and 36 per cent more electors per councillor than the district average respectively (8 per cent and 32 per cent more by 2006).

60 At Stage One, the District Council proposed revised wards in the Selsey area, based on an increase in the number of councillors representing the area from four to five. The proposal was based on proposals from Selsey Town Council, with the District Council stating that "a scheme was submitted by Selsey Town Council which the Council consider to be acceptable and it is recommended that the re-warding suggested by that Council be approved". The District Council's proposals provided for a revised three-member Selsey North ward and a revised two-member Selsey South ward. A revised boundary between the two wards would broadly follow the rear of properties on the north side of Albion Road, East Street and West Street, resulting in the transfer of approximately 1,300 electors from Selsey South ward to Selsey North ward. The Council stated "the proposal for the new boundaries of the North and South wards does provide that the only street which actually falls within both wards is High Street. All other streets are contained wholly within one ward".

61 Two further representations were received in relation to the Selsey area at Stage One. The Liberal Democrats and the Labour Party both expressed support for the District Council's proposals in this area.

62 Having considered the representations received at Stage One, the LGCE adopted the District Council's proposals for Selsey, subject to one minor amendment. It proposed amending the boundary between the proposed Selsey North and Selsey South wards to provide for a more clearly identifiable boundary. It proposed that Seal County Primary School be transferred to the proposed Selsey South ward, uniting it with East Street from which it is accessed. The LGCE considered that the Council's proposals provided for an acceptable reflection of the statutory criteria, identifying an appropriate boundary between the two wards, which largely retained whole roads within one ward. The LGCE also noted that these proposals received support locally and were also supported by Selsey Town Council.

63 Under the draft recommendations based on a council size of 48, Selsey North and Selsey South wards would contain 9 per cent and 6 per cent fewer electors per councillor than the district average respectively (8 per cent and 8 per cent fewer by 2006).

64 At Stage Three, the District Council, the Liberal Democrats and a local resident all expressed support for the draft recommendations in this area. The District Council stated "That the proposals for the change in the boundary between the North and South wards of the Selsey Town Council area ... be agreed". The Liberal Democrats also supported the proposals stating "we entirely accept this change and the reasons for it".

65 Having carefully considered the representations received at Stage Three, we propose confirming the draft recommendations for Selsey North and Selsey South wards as final. We note that these proposals have received a degree of support at Stage Three and that the proposed wards reflect the statutory criteria.

66 Under our final recommendations, the number of electors per councillor in the proposed Selsey North and Selsey South wards would be the same as under the draft recommendations. Our proposals in this area are illustrated in detail on Map A2 in Appendix A.

Birdham, East Wittering and West Wittering wards

67 The existing wards of Birdham, East Wittering and West Wittering are situated in the south of the district, with each of the three wards currently represented by a single councillor. Birdham ward comprises the parishes of Birdham and West Itchenor, East Wittering ward comprises the parishes of East Wittering and Earnley and West Wittering ward is coterminous with the parish of the same name. Under existing arrangements, Birdham, East Wittering and West Wittering wards contain 2 per cent fewer, 115 per cent more and 47 per cent more electors per councillor than the district average respectively (4 per cent fewer, 128 per cent more and 43 per cent more by 2006).

68 At Stage One, the District Council proposed combining the existing Birdham ward with the existing West Wittering ward to form a revised two-member West Wittering ward. It proposed retaining the existing East Wittering ward, but increasing its level of representation from one to two councillors to address the high level of under-representation which currently exists. The Council acknowledged that there were a limited number of alternatives for warding arrangements in this area. With reference to the proposed West Wittering ward, it commented "these three parishes adjoin Chichester Harbour with the consequent restriction on alternatives".

69 Three further representations were received in relation to this area. District Councillor Clay proposed a new three-member The Witterings ward, comprising the parishes of East Wittering and West Wittering, transferring Earnley parish to the neighbouring Sidlesham ward, and resulting in the retention of the existing Birdham ward. She argued that Earnley shares many

rural issues with Sidlesham and there are many links between East and West Wittering. Under Councillor Clay's proposals based on a council size of 47, Birdham, Sidlesham and The Witterings wards would contain 11 per cent fewer, 15 per cent more and 9 per cent more electors per councillor than the district average respectively (12 per cent fewer, 16 per cent more and 11 per cent more by 2006). Finally, the Liberal Democrats and the Labour Party both expressed support for the District Council's proposals in this area.

70 Having considered the representations received at Stage One, the LGCE decided to adopt the District Council's proposals for this area. It considered the proposals submitted by Councillor Clay, and while it was of the view that they had merit, it was not persuaded that they provided for a better reflection of the statutory criteria than the District Council's proposals, which had also been the subject of local consultation. The LGCE also noted that, under Councillor Clay's proposals, based on the proposed council size of 48, Birdham, Sidlesham and The Witterings wards contained 10 per cent fewer, 18 per cent more and 13 per cent more electors per councillor than the district average respectively by 2006. While the LGCE accepted that the configuration of parishes and the presence of Chichester Harbour resulted in limitations on the possible re-warding in this area, it was not of the view that the levels of electoral inequality achieved under Councillor Clay's proposals could be justified in light of the alternative warding configurations that were available.

71 The LGCE noted that, having based its draft recommendations on a council size of 48 members, the variances under the District Council's proposals (based on a council size of 47) changed, with some marginally deteriorating and some marginally improving. Under the draft recommendations, East Wittering and West Wittering wards would contain 11 per cent and 13 per cent more electors per councillor than the district average respectively by 2006. The LGCE looked at the possibility of improving upon these levels of electoral equality. However, as acknowledged by the District Council, the proposed East and West Wittering wards are bounded in the north by Chichester Harbour and the Chichester Channel, significantly limiting the ability to identify any possible alternatives.

72 Under the draft recommendations, based on a council size of 48, the proposed East Wittering and West Wittering wards would contain 5 per cent and 16 per cent more electors per councillor than the district average respectively (11 per cent and 13 per cent more by 2006).

73 At Stage Three the District Council, the Liberal Democrats and a local resident all expressed support for the draft recommendations in this area.

74 Having considered the representations received, we propose confirming the draft recommendations for East Wittering and West Wittering wards as final. We note that these proposals have received support at Stage Three and concur with the views expressed by the LGCE that the ability to improve further upon the levels of electoral equality achieved by 2006 is significantly limited due to the geographical constraints in the area.

75 Under our final recommendations, the number of electors per councillor in East Wittering and West Wittering wards would be the same as under the draft recommendations. Our proposals in this area are illustrated on Map 2.

Bosham, Donnington and Fishbourne wards

76 The existing wards of Bosham, Donnington and Fishbourne are situated in the south of the district, with all three wards each currently represented by a single councillor. Bosham and Fishbourne wards are coterminous with parishes of the same name, while Donnington ward comprises the parishes of Donnington and Appledram. Under existing arrangements, Bosham, Donnington and Fishbourne wards contain 36 per cent more, 3 per cent more and 3 per cent fewer electors per councillor than the district average respectively (35 per cent, 3 per cent and 1 per cent more by 2006).

77 At Stage One, the District Council proposed retaining the existing Donnington and Fishbourne wards. It proposed combining Bosham ward with Chidham parish from the existing Funtington ward, to form a revised two-member Bosham ward. Again it was noted that there were restrictions on the re-warding of this area due to the constraints of Chichester Harbour. The remaining part of the existing Funtington ward would form part of a revised Funtington ward, as detailed below.

78 Two further representations were received in relation to this area at Stage One. The Liberal Democrats and the Labour Party both expressed support for the District Council's proposals in this area.

79 Having considered the representations received at Stage One, the LGCE adopted the District Council's proposals for this area. It considered that these proposals provided for the best reflection of the statutory criteria, and were largely based on the existing warding arrangements. It was also of the view that the proposed Bosham ward united the parishes of Bosham and Chidham which are linked by the A259 (Main Road).

80 Under the draft recommendations, based on a council size of 48, the proposed Bosham, Donnington and Fishbourne wards would contain 7 per cent, 2 per cent and 7 per cent fewer electors per councillor than the district average respectively (9 per cent, 1 per cent, and 3 per cent fewer by 2006).

81 At Stage Three, the District Council, the Liberal Democrats and a local resident all expressed support for the proposals in this area, while West Sussex County Council proposed that Bosham ward be renamed Bosham & Chidham ward, which it argued would better reflect the two communities in the ward.

82 The District Council commented on the submission made by West Sussex County Council with regard to ward names. It stated that "when the District Council made recommendations on the naming of the 29 wards they made a conscious decision to name each ward after the parish with the largest electorate in such ward. This practice has been followed by the District Council since 1974". In view of this, it opposed the County Council's proposals to rename Bosham ward, asserting that "there would be widespread criticism from parishes within other wards if only two of the wards were to include more than one parish name".

83 Having carefully considered the representations received, we propose confirming the draft recommendations for this area as final. We consider that the proposals in this area have received support at Stage Three and reflect the statutory criteria. We have considered the alternative ward name proposed by West Sussex County Council. However, we have not been persuaded that the proposed name of Bosham & Chidham would be more identifiable to the local community. In addition, the County Council provided no argumentation for this proposed change and the District Council has not supported it.

84 Under our final recommendations, the number of electors per councillor in Bosham, Donnington and Fishbourne wards would be the same as under the draft recommendations. Our proposals in this area are illustrated on Map 2.

Southbourne and Westbourne wards

85 The existing wards of Southbourne and Westbourne are situated in the south-west of the district, bordering the district of East Hampshire. Southbourne is currently represented by three councillors, while Westbourne is currently a single-member ward. Southbourne ward comprises the parishes of Southbourne and West Thorney and Westbourne ward is coterminous with the parish of the same name. Under existing arrangements, Southbourne and Westbourne wards would contain 9 per cent more and 5 per cent fewer electors per councillor than the district average respectively (7 per cent more and 5 per cent fewer by 2006).

86 At Stage One, the District Council proposed retaining the existing Southbourne and Westbourne wards. This proposal was supported by the Liberal Democrats and the Labour Party.

87 Having considered the representations received at Stage One, the LGCE adopted the District Council's proposals for this area. The proposals resulted in the existing warding arrangements being retained and, by basing its proposals on a council size of 48 as opposed to 47, an improved level of electoral equality was achieved.

88 Under the draft recommendations, based on a council size of 48, the proposed Southbourne and Westbourne wards would contain 1 per cent more and 9 per cent fewer electors per councillor than the district average respectively (equal to the average and 9 per cent fewer by 2006).

89 At Stage Three, the District Council, the Liberal Democrats and a local resident all expressed support for the for the draft recommendations in this area.

90 Having considered the representations received at Stage Three, we propose confirming the draft recommendations for Southbourne and Westbourne wards as final. We note that these proposals have received a degree of support at Stage Three and reflect the statutory criteria.

91 Under our final recommendations, the number of electors per councillor in Southbourne and Westbourne wards would be the same as under the draft recommendations. Our proposals in this area are illustrated on Map 2.

Hunston, Oving and Sidlesham wards

92 The existing wards of Hunston, Oving and Sidlesham are situated in the south-east of the district, bordering the district of Arun. The three wards are currently each represented by a single councillor. Hunston ward comprises the parishes of Hunston and North Mundham, Oving ward comprises the parishes of Oving and Tangmere and Sidlesham ward is coterminous with the parish of the same name. Under existing arrangements, Hunston, Oving and Sidlesham wards contain 4 per cent more, 36 per cent more and 45 per cent fewer electors per councillor than the district average respectively (2 per cent more, 38 per cent more and 47 per cent fewer by 2006).

93 At Stage One, the District Council proposed combining Hunston parish with the existing Sidlesham ward to form a revised single-member Sidlesham ward. The remaining part of the existing Hunston ward, North Mundham parish, would be combined with Oving parish from the existing Oving ward to form a new single-member North Mundham ward. The remaining part of the existing Oving ward, Tangmere parish, would form a new single-member Tangmere ward.

94 Three further representations were received in relation to this area. District Councillor Clay expressed broad support for the District Council's proposed North Mundham ward. However, she proposed a revised Sidlesham ward as a consequence of her proposals in the Witterings area, as detailed earlier. The Liberal Democrats and the Labour Party both expressed support for the District Council's proposals in this area.

95 Having considered the representations received at Stage One, the LGCE adopted the District Council's proposals for this area. It noted that these proposals had received broad support and united parishes such as Sidlesham and Hunston which are linked by the B2145 Selsey Road. As detailed earlier, the LGCE was not persuaded to adopt Councillor Clay's proposed Sidlesham ward which, under the proposed council size of 48, would contain 18 per cent more electors per councillor than the district average by 2006. The LGCE was not of the view that such a high level of electoral inequality could be justified. The LGCE noted that, having based its draft recommendations on a council size of 48 members, the variances under

the District Council's proposals (based on a council size of 47) changed, with some marginally deteriorating and some marginally improving. Under the draft recommendations North Mundham ward contained 11 per cent fewer electors per councillor than the district average by 2006. The LGCE looked at the possibility of improving upon this level of electoral inequality, however, due to the configuration of parishes in this area, was unable to identify any alternatives which did not have a consequential effect on neighbouring wards.

96 Under the draft recommendations, based on a council size of 48, the proposed North Mundham, Sidlesham and Tangmere wards would contain 7 per cent fewer, equal to the average and 10 per cent fewer electors per councillor than the district average respectively (11 per cent, 1 per cent and 6 per cent fewer by 2006).

97 At Stage Three the District Council, the Liberal Democrats and a local resident all expressed support for the draft recommendations in this area.

98 Having considered the representations received at Stage Three, we propose confirming the draft recommendations for North Mundham, Sidlesham and Tangmere wards as final. We note that these proposals have received a degree of support at Stage Three and reflect the statutory criteria. We also concur with the views expressed by the LGCE that the ability to improve further upon the level of electoral equality achieved in North Mundham ward by 2006 is limited due to the configuration of parishes in this area.

99 Under our final recommendations, the number of electors per councillor for the proposed North Mundham, Sidlesham and Tangmere wards would be the same as under the draft recommendations. Our proposals in this area are illustrated on Map 2.

Funtington, Harting and Stoughton wards

100 The existing wards of Funtington, Harting and Stoughton are situated in the west of the district and are each currently represented by a single councillor. Funtington ward comprises the parishes of Chidham and Funtingdon, Harting ward comprises the parishes of Elsted, Harting and Treyford, and Stoughton ward comprises the parishes of Compton, Marden, Stoughton and West Dean. Under existing arrangements, Funtington, Harting and Stoughton wards would contain 18 per cent more, 18 per cent fewer and 31 per cent fewer electors per councillor than the district average respectively (13 per cent more, 22 per cent fewer and 34 per cent fewer by 2006).

101 At Stage One, the District Council proposed combining part of the existing Funtington ward, Chidham parish, with the existing Bosham ward to form a revised two-member Bosham ward, as detailed earlier. The remaining part of the existing Funtington ward, Funtington parish, would be combined with the parishes of Compton and Stoughton from the existing Stoughton ward to form a revised single-member Funtington ward. Part of the remainder of the existing Stoughton ward, Marden parish, would be combined with the existing Harting ward, together with the parish of Trotton with Chithurst from the existing Rogate ward, to form a revised single-member Harting ward, while the remainder of the existing Stoughton ward, West Dean parish, would form part of a revised single-member Boxgrove ward, as detailed later.

102 Three further representations were received in relation to this area. Harting Parish Council broadly supported the Council's proposals in relation to its proposed Harting ward, while the Liberal Democrats and the Labour Party both expressed support for the District Council's proposals in this area.

103 Having considered the representations received at Stage One, the LGCE adopted the District Council's proposals in this area. It noted that the proposed Funtington and Harting wards received an element of support at a local level and it was content to put the proposals forward for consultation. In addition, the LGCE was of the view that the District Council's

proposed Funtington and Harting wards resulted in the combining of parishes which it considered to be geographically linked.

104 Under the draft recommendations, based on a council size of 48, the proposed Funtington and Harting wards would contain 13 per cent more and 3 per cent fewer electors per councillor than the district average respectively (8 per cent more and 6 per cent fewer by 2006).

105 At Stage Three a number of representations were received with regard to this area, with concern expressed in relation to Marden parish. The District Council proposed that the parish of Marden be transferred from the proposed Harting ward to Funtington ward. It noted the views expressed by Marden parish, stating that “The Chairman of Marden parish ... submitted a very strong argument for the inclusion of his parish with Funtington and Stoughton and the transfer of 75 projected electors from Harting ward to Funtington ward will have a very minor effect on the percentages within each ward. The District Council fully supports the request of Marden parish that it should be included in the Funtington ward and not the Harting ward”.

106 The Liberal Democrats also acknowledged the views of the District Council regarding Marden parish and its links with the parish of Compton. They stated, however, that “whilst linking Marden with Harting is not ideal given the terms of reference of the review we recognise that it would be hard to justify this change”. West Sussex County Council “strongly” supported the case for Marden parish to be included in Funtington ward, supporting the views of County Councillor Dunn, as detailed below.

107 County Councillor Dunn opposed the proposed Harting ward, arguing that “Your recommendation that Marden should be included in the to-be-expanded ward of Harting does not properly reflect the current, historical or topographical realities of this small parish’s existence”. He therefore proposed that the parish of Marden be transferred to the proposed Funtington ward, stating that Marden has “very strong social affinity with the residents of the parishes of Stoughton and Compton”.

108 Compton Parish Council opposed the inclusion of Marden parish in the proposed Harting ward. It proposed that the parish be transferred to the proposed Funtington ward. Marden Parish Meeting strongly opposed the inclusion of its parish in the proposed Harting ward, therefore proposing that it remain with the parishes of Compton and Stoughton with which it is connected “socially, geographically and ecclesiastically”.

109 Finally, four representations were received from local residents with regard to Marden parish. Concern was expressed regarding the inclusion of the parish in the proposed Harting ward, emphasising the links that Marden parish has with the parishes of Compton and Stoughton. It was therefore proposed that Marden parish be transferred to the proposed Funtington ward in order to unite it with the aforementioned parishes.

110 Having carefully considered the representations received, we propose modifying the proposed Funtington and Harting wards. We have been persuaded by the evidence and argumentation put forward by a number of respondents that Marden parish would be better represented in the proposed Funtington ward as opposed to the proposed Harting ward. While we consider that limited evidence has been put forward asserting that there are strong community links between Marden parish and the parishes to its south, we acknowledge that Marden is geographically separate from the parishes to its north, having stronger geographical links with the parishes to its south. We therefore propose transferring Marden parish to the proposed Funtington ward. While we note that this amendment would result in the proposed Funtington and Harting wards containing 12 per cent more and 10 per cent fewer electors per councillor than the district average respectively by 2006, we are of the view that, based on the geographical constraints in this area, these relatively high levels of electoral inequality are justified.

111 Under our final recommendations, Funtington and Harting wards would contain 17 per cent more and 6 per cent fewer electors per councillor than the district average respectively (12 per cent more and 10 per cent fewer by 2006). Our proposals in this area are illustrated on Map 2.

Boxgrove and Lavant wards

112 The existing wards of Boxgrove and Lavant are situated in the central and eastern part of the district, and are each currently represented by a single councillor. Boxgrove ward comprises the parishes of Boxgrove, Earham, East Dean, Singleton and Upwalham, while Lavant ward comprises the parishes of Lavant and Westhampnett. Under existing arrangements, Boxgrove and Lavant wards contain 16 per cent and 5 per cent fewer electors per councillor than the district average respectively (18 per cent and 3 per cent fewer by 2006).

113 At Stage One, the District Council proposed retaining the existing single-member Lavant ward. It proposed combining the existing Boxgrove ward, with West Dean parish from the existing Stoughton ward, as detailed above, to form a revised single-member Boxgrove ward.

114 Three further representations were received in relation to this area. Westhampnett Parish Council broadly supported the District Council's proposed Lavant ward based on the fact that it "would prefer to be represented by one councillor rather than three", while the Liberal Democrats and the Labour Party both expressed support for the District Council's proposals in this area.

115 Having considered the representations received at Stage One, the LGCE adopted the District Council's proposals for this area. It noted that the proposals had received an element of support at a local level and were largely based on the existing warding arrangements. It was also of the view that the inclusion of West Dean in the revised Boxgrove ward would not have an adverse effect on the local community with the parishes of Singleton and West Dean being linked by the A286.

116 Under the draft recommendations, based on a council size of 48, the proposed Boxgrove and Lavant wards would contain 3 per cent and 8 per cent fewer electors per councillor than the district average respectively (5 per cent and 7 per cent fewer by 2006).

117 At Stage Three the District Council, the Liberal Democrats and a local resident all expressed support for the draft recommendations in this area.

118 Having considered the representations received at Stage Three, we propose confirming the draft recommendations for Boxgrove and Lavant wards as final. We note that these proposals have received a degree of support at Stage Three and reflect the statutory criteria.

119 Under our final recommendations, the number of electors per councillor for the proposed Boxgrove and Lavant wards would be the same as under the draft recommendations. Our proposals in this area are illustrated on Map 2.

Bury, Graffham and Midhurst wards

120 The existing wards of Bury, Graffham and Midhurst are situated in the central and eastern parts of the district, with Bury and Graffham wards each currently represented by a single councillor and Midhurst ward currently represented by two councillors. Bury ward comprises the parishes of Bury, Bignor, Barlavington, Duncton and Sutton; Graffham ward comprises the parishes of Bepton, Cocking, East Lavington, Graffham and Heyshott; and Midhurst ward comprises the parishes of Midhurst and West Lavington. Under existing arrangements, Bury, Graffham and Midhurst wards contain 29 per cent fewer, 16 per cent fewer

and 22 per cent more electors per councillor than the district average respectively (32 per cent fewer, 19 per cent fewer and 21 per cent more by 2006).

121 At Stage One, the District Council proposed combining the existing Bury ward with the parishes of East Lavington and Graffham from the existing Graffham ward to form a revised single-member Bury ward. The remainder of the existing Graffham ward, the parishes of Bepton, Cocking and Heyshott, would be combined with part of the existing Midhurst ward, West Lavington parish, together with the parishes of Stedham with Iping and Woolbeding from the existing Stedham ward to form a revised single-member Stedham ward. The remainder of the existing Midhurst ward, Midhurst parish, would form a revised two-member Midhurst ward.

122 Three further representations were received in relation to this area. West Sussex County Council forwarded comments from County Councillor Waller (Midhurst), who proposed that Midhurst be a separate ward and that Heyshott parish should form part of the proposed Easebourne ward. It was stated that “this adjustment would leave district wards within the boundaries of two existing county electoral divisions”. The Liberal Democrats and the Labour Party both expressed support for the District Council’s proposals in this area.

123 Having considered the representations received at Stage One, the LGCE adopted the District Council’s proposals for this area. It was of the view that the Council’s proposals provided for improved levels of electoral equality while reflecting the identities and interests of the local community. It noted the comments made by Councillor Waller. However, it could not pre-empt the potential outcome of the PER of West Sussex County Council’s electoral arrangements, which is scheduled to start later this year.

124 Under the draft recommendations based on a council size of 48, Bury, Midhurst and Stedham wards would contain 2 per cent, 10 per cent and 8 per cent more electors per councillor than the district average respectively (2 per cent fewer, 9 per cent more and 3 per cent more by 2006).

125 At Stage Three, the District Council, the Liberal Democrats and a local resident all expressed support for the draft recommendations in this area. Stedham with Iping Parish Council opposed the proposed Stedham ward, which it argued “severs our link with one of our neighbouring parishes, Milland ... and adds three parishes with whom we have no common boundary”. Support was expressed for the existing warding arrangements in this area to be maintained, however, it stated that “we do see merit in the addition of Bepton. Likewise we would be happy to see Trotton with Chithurst joined with us”.

126 Having carefully considered the representations received, we propose confirming the draft recommendations for Bury, Midhurst and Stedham wards as final. We consider that these proposals provide for acceptable levels of electoral equality and have received broad support. We note the concerns of Stedham with Iping Parish Council with regard to the proposed Stedham ward. We have looked at possible alternative warding arrangements for this area but have been unable to identify any viable options which would not result in significantly high levels of electoral inequality. In addition, we note that there are elements of the proposed Stedham ward which the parish is in support of and are therefore, we are not of the view that the identities and interests of the local community would be adversely effected if the draft recommendations were to be confirmed.

127 Under our final recommendations, the proposed Bury, Midhurst and Stedham wards would contain the same number of electors per councillor as under the draft recommendations. Our proposals in this area are illustrated on Map 2.

Fernhurst, Linchmere, Rogate and Stedham wards

128 The existing wards of Fernhurst, Linchmere, Rogate and Stedham are situated in the north of the district, bordering the districts of East Hampshire and Waverley. Fernhurst ward is currently represented by two councillors, while Linchmere, Rogate and Stedham are each currently represented by a single councillor. Fernhurst and Linchmere wards are coterminous with the parishes of the same name. Rogate ward comprises the parishes of Rogate and Trotton with Chithurst and Stedham ward comprises the parishes of Linch, Milland, Woolbeding and Stedham with Iping. Under existing arrangements Fernhurst, Linchmere, Rogate and Stedham wards contain 24 per cent, 25 per cent, 9 per cent and 5 per cent fewer electors per councillor than the district average respectively (27 per cent, 28 per cent, 14 per cent and 10 per cent fewer by 2006).

129 At Stage One, the District Council proposed combining the existing Fernhurst and Linchmere wards to form a revised two-member Fernhurst ward. Part of the existing Rogate ward, the parish of Rogate, would be combined with part of the existing Stedham ward, the parishes of Linch and Milland, to form a revised single-member Rogate ward. The remaining part of the existing Rogate ward, the parish of Trotton with Chithurst, would form part of a revised Harting ward, as detailed earlier, while the remainder of the existing Stedham ward, the parishes of Stedham with Iping and Woolbeding, would form part of a revised Stedham ward, also detailed earlier.

130 Three further representations were received in relation to this area at Stage One. Harting Parish Council broadly supported the Council's proposed Rogate ward, while the Liberal Democrats and the Labour Party both expressed support for the District Council's proposals in this area.

131 Having considered the representations received at Stage One, the LGCE adopted the District Council's proposals subject to one minor amendment. It considered that these proposals received an element of support at a local level and appeared to combine parishes, which shared good communication links. However, in order to provide for an improved level of electoral equality for the proposed Rogate ward, the LGCE proposed transferring Linch parish to the proposed Fernhurst ward. It welcomed further views on this amendment at Stage Three.

132 Under the draft recommendations, based on a council size of 48, the proposed Fernhurst and Rogate wards would contain 10 per cent and 14 per cent more electors per councillor than the district average respectively (6 per cent and 8 per cent more by 2006).

133 At Stage Three, opposition was expressed with regard to the LGCE's proposal to transfer Linch parish to the proposed Fernhurst ward. The District Council opposed the LGCE's recommendation and reiterated its Stage One proposal for Linch parish to be contained within the proposed Rogate ward. The Council stated that "As a result of the public consultation representations were received from a number of parishes in the area stating that the parish of Linch had far greater affinity and communication with the parish of Milland". The Council also expressed concern regarding West Sussex County Council's proposal to rename Rogate ward, as detailed later. It stated that "when the District Council made recommendations on the naming of the 29 wards they made a conscious decision to name each ward after the parish with the largest electorate in such ward. This practice has been followed by the District Council since 1974". In view of this, it opposed the County Council's proposals to rename Rogate ward, asserting that "there would be widespread criticism from parishes within other wards if only two of the wards were to include more than one parish name".

134 The Liberal Democrats reiterated the views of the District Council with regard to the retention of Linch parish in the proposed Rogate ward, stating that "we anticipate that you will receive strong local representation to this effect". Fernhurst Parish Council "objects strongly" to the LGCE's proposal to transfer Linch parish to the proposed Fernhurst ward. It argued that

“Linch has far greater affinity and communication with the parish of Milland, which has been placed in Rogate ward”. It therefore requested that the District Council’s original proposals in this are be adopted. Lynchmere Parish Council reiterated these views.

135 A local resident broadly supported the draft recommendations, however, he commented on the proposal to transfer Linch parish to the proposed Fernhurst ward, stating that “I think you will find this is not popular and that is why not suggested in the original proposals from [the District Council]”.

136 Finally, West Sussex County Council proposed that Rogate ward is renamed Milland & Rogate. It argued that this would better reflect the two communities in the ward.

137 Having considered the representations received, we propose confirming the draft recommendations for this area as final. We note the concerns of a number of respondents who asserted the view that Linch parish should form part of the proposed Rogate ward as opposed to the proposed Fernhurst ward. At Stage One, the LGCE made an amendment to the District Council’s proposals in this area in order to provide for better levels of electoral equality. At Stage Three, this amendment has proved unpopular, with a number of respondents concerned at the separation of the parishes of Linch and Milland. However, on the basis of what has been received, we have not been persuaded that Linch parish has stronger community links with the parishes to its west than to its east and that the identities and interests of the local community would be adversely affected if the parish were to form part of the proposed Fernhurst ward. Furthermore, the parish itself has not submitted a view. In addition, if this amendment were adopted, the proposed Rogate ward would contain 11 per cent more electors per councillor than the district average by 2006. Based on what was received at Stage Three, we have not been persuaded that this level of electoral inequality is justifiable.

138 In relation to the proposal made by West Sussex County Council to rename Rogate ward Milland & Rogate ward, we have not been persuaded that the proposed name of Milland & Rogate would be more identifiable to the local community. In addition, the County Council provided no argumentation for this proposed change and the District Council has not supported it.

139 Under our final recommendations, the number of electors per councillor in the proposed Fernhurst and Rogate wards would be the same as under the draft recommendations. Our proposals for this area are illustrated on Map 2.

Easebourne, Lodsworth and Petworth wards

140 The existing wards of Easebourne, Lodsworth and Petworth are situated in the north-eastern corner of the district. Easebourne and Lodsworth wards are each currently represented by a single councillor, while Petworth ward is currently represented by two councillors. Easebourne ward is coterminous with the parish of the same name, Lodsworth ward comprises the parishes of Lodsworth, Lurgashall and Tillington and Petworth ward comprises the parishes of Petworth, Ebernoe and Northchapel. Under existing arrangements Easebourne, Lodsworth and Petworth wards contain 19 per cent, 16 per cent and 8 per cent fewer electors per councillor than the district average respectively (21 per cent, 20 per cent and 7 per cent fewer by 2006).

141 At Stage One, the District Council proposed combining the existing Easebourne ward with Lodsworth parish from the existing Lodsworth ward to form a revised single-member Easebourne ward. Part of the remainder of the existing Lodsworth ward, Tillington parish, would be combined with part of the existing Petworth ward, the parishes of Ebernoe and Petworth, together with part of the existing Wisborough Green ward, the parishes of Fittleworth and Stopham, to form a revised two-member Petworth ward. The remainder of the existing Lodsworth ward, Lurgashall parish, and the remainder of the existing Petworth ward,

Northchapel parish, would form part of a revised Plaistow ward, together with the parishes of Plaistow and Loxwood from the existing Plaistow ward, as detailed below.

142 A further six representations were received in relation to this area. The Liberal Democrats and the Labour Party both expressed support for the District Council's proposals. Easebourne Parish Council "overwhelmingly" objected to any proposal to combine the parish with Midhurst, arguing that "Easebourne may look like an urban suburb of Midhurst, but this is far from being the case". It therefore broadly supported the District Council's proposals which united the parish with Lodsworth with which it argues it has "much more in common". Lurgashall Parish Council expressed opposition to the Council's proposed Plaistow ward, arguing that the Parish Council has long-standing links with the parishes of Northchapel, Lodsworth and Tillington, with which it was grouped under the Council's original 46-member consultation scheme.

143 Northchapel Parish Council opposed the Council's proposed Plaistow ward, arguing that Northchapel and Ebernoe parishes should form part of the same district ward. It stated that it broadly supported the Council's original proposals for this area under its 46-member consultation scheme, subject to Ebernoe parish being included in the same ward as Northchapel parish. Tillington Parish Council opposed the District Council's proposed Petworth ward and expressed support for the proposals made under the 46-member consultation scheme.

144 Having considered the representations received at Stage One, the LGCE adopted the District Council's proposals for this area. It noted that these proposals had received an element of support at a local level and were of the view that they provided for the best reflection of the statutory criteria. In relation to the proposals made by the parishes of Lurgashall, Northchapel and Tillington favouring the original proposals made by the District Council for their area, the LGCE were unable to facilitate their proposals due to the consequential effect it would have on surrounding wards. While it noted the concerns expressed, it was unable to identify any alternatives which met with the approval of all the parishes in the area, as well as providing for an acceptable level of electoral equality.

145 The LGCE noted the comments made by Northchapel parish in relation to the links it has with the parish of Ebernoe. It looked at the possibility of transferring Ebernoe to the proposed Plaistow ward, in order that the parishes of Ebernoe and Northchapel form part of the same ward. This amendment had a negligible affect on electoral equality. However, as part of the Council's consultation exercise, Ebernoe Parish Council requested that it remain with the parish of Petworth, which would be the case under the Council's proposed Petworth ward. The LGCE particularly welcomed further views and alternative proposals for this area at Stage Three.

146 Under the draft recommendations, based on a council size of 48, the proposed Easebourne and Petworth wards would contain 7 per cent and 6 per cent more electors per councillor than the district average respectively (4 per cent and 7 per cent more by 2006).

147 At Stage Three the District Council, the Liberal Democrats and a local resident all expressed support for the draft recommendations in this area. A joint submission was received from the parish councils of Lodsworth, Lurgashall, Northchapel and Tillington. They reiterated views expressed at Stage One with regard to their preference for the District Council's proposals under its consultation scheme, which would result in the four parishes being contained within the same district ward. They therefore strongly opposed the proposed Easebourne, Plaistow and Petworth wards, which would result in the four parishes being divided between separate district wards. The link between the four parishes was strongly emphasised, stating that "Our parishes of Northchapel, Lurgashall, Lodsworth and Tillington have strong historical ties". It therefore requested that they "wish to register our strong objections to the present proposals and want a firm commitment from both the Local Government Commission for England and the Chichester District Council that these will not be implemented until the

issues contained in this letter have been discussed with us, and resolved to our satisfaction". In addition, they were highly critical of the District Council's consultation process.

148 Having carefully considered the representations received, we have decided to endorse the draft recommendation for Easebourne and Petworth wards as final. We consider that the proposals would achieve reasonable electoral equality and have received some local support. We note the concerns of Northchapel, Lodsworth, Lurgashall and Tillington parish councils in relation to the LGCE's recommendations in the north-east of the district. The LGCE stated in its draft recommendations that it was unable to facilitate the proposals made by the District Council under its consultation scheme in this area due to the consequential effect it would have on surrounding wards. It was also unable to identify any viable alternatives which would meet the approval of all the parishes in the area, as well as provide for an acceptable level of electoral equality. We concur with this view and have not been persuaded that the identities and interests of these parishes would be significantly adversely affected if they were not contained within the same district ward.

149 We did, however, also look at alternative warding arrangements in this area. We looked at the possibility of creating a ward containing the parishes of Northchapel, Lodsworth, Lurgashall and Tillington. This ward would contain 9 per cent more electors per councillor than the district average by 2006; however, the neighbouring wards of Plaistow and Easebourne would contain significantly high levels of electoral inequality of 45 per cent more and 24 per cent fewer electors per councillor than the district average by 2006 respectively. While we note the concerns expressed, we are unable to look at one area in isolation, and have therefore not been persuaded by the evidence and argumentation provided that there is justification in such high levels of electoral inequality being acceptable.

150 We note the parish councils' comments regarding the District Council's consultation process. While it is unfortunate that the desired outcome of these four parishes was not achieved, we note that on the whole, the District Council's consultation process resulted in the formulation of a scheme which reflected the views of a large number of parish councils. It stated that "It was considered that this new scheme more than adequately acknowledged the representations made, particularly by parish councils, with regards to the local identities and the sharing of common interests". In addition, while we sympathise with the views expressed, we note that the parish councils did not inform the Council of their support for the proposals under the consultation scheme, stating that "As we (the four parishes) were quite satisfied with the proposals no comments were submitted". On balance, we are therefore not minded to radically amend the draft recommendations in order to reflect the views of these parishes and propose that the LGCE's proposals for this area be confirmed as final.

151 Under our final recommendations, the number of electors per councillor in Easebourne and Petworth wards would be the same as under the draft recommendations. Our proposals in this area are illustrated on Map 2.

Plaistow and Wisborough Green wards

152 The existing wards of Plaistow and Wisborough Green are situated in the north-eastern corner of the district. Plaistow ward is currently represented by two councillors and Wisborough Green ward is currently represented by a single councillor. Plaistow ward comprises the parishes of Kirdford, Loxwood and Plaistow, and Wisborough Green ward comprises the parishes of Fittleworth, Stopham and Wisborough Green. Under existing arrangements Plaistow and Wisborough Green wards contain equal to the average and 17 per cent more electors per councillor than the district average respectively (2 per cent fewer and 12 per cent more by 2006).

153 At Stage One, the District Council proposed combining part of the existing Plaistow ward, the parishes of Loxwood and Plaistow, with Lurgashall parish from the existing Lodsworth

ward and Northchapel parish from the existing Petworth ward, to form a revised two-member Plaistow ward, as detailed earlier. The remainder of the existing Plaistow ward, Kirdford parish, would be combined with Wisborough Green parish from the existing Wisborough Green ward to form a revised single-member Wisborough Green ward. The remainder of the existing Wisborough Green ward, the parishes of Fittleworth and Stopham, would form part of a revised Petworth ward, as detailed above.

154 A further five representations were received in relation to this area. The Liberal Democrats and the Labour Party both expressed support for the District Council's proposals in this area. Wisborough Green Parish Council broadly supported the District Council's proposed Wisborough Green ward, stating that it has similar issues to Kirdford parish, with which it would be combined within the Council's proposed single-member ward. As detailed earlier, Lurgashall Parish Council expressed opposition to the Council's proposed Plaistow ward, arguing that the Parish Council has "long-established links" with the parishes of Northchapel, Lodsworth and Tillington, with which it was grouped under the Council's original 46-member consultation scheme. Northchapel Parish Council opposed the Council's proposed Plaistow ward, arguing that Northchapel and Ebernoe parishes should form part of the same district ward. It stated that it broadly supported the Council's original proposals for this area under its 46-member consultation scheme, subject to Ebernoe parish being included in the same ward as Northchapel parish.

155 Having considered the representations received at Stage One, the LGCE adopted the District Council's proposals in this area. It considered that these proposals had received an element of support at a local level as well as providing for much improved levels of electoral equality. As detailed earlier, it noted the concerns expressed by Lurgashall, Northchapel and Tillington parishes, but was unable to identify any alternatives which met with the approval of all the parishes in the area, as well as providing for an acceptable level of electoral equality. It did, however, particularly welcome further views and alternative proposals for this area at Stage Three.

156 Under the draft recommendations based on a council size of 48, the proposed Plaistow and Wisborough Green wards would contain 5 per cent and 8 per cent more electors per councillor than the district average respectively (2 per cent and 4 per cent more by 2006).

157 At Stage Three the District Council, the Liberal Democrats and a local resident all expressed support for the draft recommendations in this area. As detailed above, a joint submission was received from Lodsworth, Lurgashall, Northchapel and Tillington parish councils, reiterating views expressed at Stage One with regard to their preference for the District Council's proposals under its consultation scheme, which would result in the four parishes being contained within the same district ward. They therefore strongly opposed the proposed Easebourne, Plaistow and Petworth wards, which would result in the four parishes being divided between separate district wards. In addition, they were highly critical of the District Council's consultation process.

158 Having carefully considered the representations received, we have decided to endorse the draft recommendation for Plaistow and Wisborough Green wards as final. We consider that these proposals achieve reasonable electoral equality and have received some local support. As detailed above, while we acknowledge the views of Lodsworth, Lurgashall, Northchapel and Tillington parish councils, we have been unable to endorse their proposals due to the issues discussed earlier.

159 Under our final recommendations, the number of electors per councillor in Plaistow and Wisborough Green wards would be the same as under the draft recommendations. Our proposals in this area are illustrated on Map 2.

Electoral Cycle

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

Conclusions

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

- we propose that Marden parish should form part of the proposed Funtington ward as opposed to the proposed Harting ward.

162 We conclude that, in Chichester:

- there should be a reduction in council size from 50 to 48;
- there should be 29 wards, five fewer than at present;
- the boundaries of 28 of the existing wards should be modified.

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

Table 4: Comparison of Current and Recommended Electoral Arrangements

	2001 electorate		2006 forecast electorate	
	Current arrangements	Final recommendations	Current arrangements	Final recommendations
Number of councillors	50	48	50	48
Number of wards	34	29	34	29
Average number of electors per councillor	1,685	1,755	1,786	1,861
Number of wards with a variance more than 10 per cent from the average	20	4	21	4
Number of wards with a variance more than 20 per cent from the average	11	0	13	0

164 As Table 4 shows, our recommendations would result in a reduction in the number of wards with an electoral variance of more than 10 per cent from 20 to four, with no wards varying by more than 20 per cent from the district average. This level of electoral equality would remain constant by 2006, with only four wards varying by more than 10 per cent from the average for the district. We conclude that our recommendations would best meet the statutory criteria.

Final Recommendation

Chichester District Council should comprise 48 councillors serving 29 wards, as detailed and named in Tables 1 and 2, and illustrated on Map 2 and in Appendix A including the large map at the back of the report.

Parish and Town Council Electoral Arrangements

165 When reviewing parish electoral arrangements, we are required to comply as far as is reasonably practicable with the rules set out in Schedule 11 to the 1972 Act. The Schedule states that if a parish is to be divided between different district wards, it should also be divided into parish wards, so that each parish ward lies wholly within a single ward of the district. In the LGCE's draft recommendations report it proposed consequential changes to the warding arrangements for Chichester City Council and Selsey Town Council to reflect the proposed district wards.

166 Chichester City Council is currently served by 20 councillors representing four wards: East, North, South and West, each currently returning five councillors. At Stage One, the District Council, the Liberal Democrats and Chichester City Council proposed alternative warding arrangements for the City, although, as detailed earlier, the proposals from Chichester City Council were incomplete and could therefore not be fully taken into account. As discussed previously, to determine the most appropriate council size for the district as a whole, the LGCE considered the allocation of councillors between Chichester City, Selsey and rural part of the district. It concluded that the most appropriate council size for Chichester District Council was 48, allocating 11 councillors to the Chichester City area. It was therefore unable to facilitate the schemes proposed for the City by the District Council and the City Council who proposed allocating the city 10 and 12 councillors respectively, as opposed to the 11 of which it would be entitled to under a council size of 48 by 2006.

167 As part of its draft recommendations, the LGCE therefore proposed adopting the Liberal Democrats' revised Chichester East, Chichester North, Chichester South and Chichester West district wards, subject to a minor boundary amendment between the proposed Chichester East and Chichester North wards. As a consequence of the draft recommendations, the LGCE proposed creating revised East, North, South and West wards of Chichester City Council to reflect the proposed district wards. It proposed that each of the revised wards should retain five councillors.

168 At Stage Three, the District Council, the Liberal Democrats, a local resident and Councillor French all expressed support for the draft recommendations in this area.

169 Having considered all the evidence received, and in light of the confirmation of the proposed district wards in this area, we confirm the draft recommendation for the revised warding of Chichester City Council as final. We do, however, propose amending the large map which illustrates the proposals in this area in order to accurately reflect the Liberal Democrats' proposals as originally intended.

Final Recommendation

Chichester City Council should comprise 20 councillors, as at present, representing four wards: East ward, North ward, South ward and West ward, each returning five councillors. The parish ward boundaries should reflect the proposed district ward boundaries in the area, as illustrated and named on Map 2 and on the large map at the back of the report.

170 Selsey Town Council is currently served by 14 councillors representing two wards: North and South, each currently returning seven councillors. At Stage One, the District Council proposed revised Selsey North and Selsey South district wards, increasing the level of representation for the town from four to five to facilitate the correct allocation of councillors. It stated that this increase would “necessitate a revision of the existing wards”. As part of its draft recommendations, the LGCE proposed adopting the District Council’s proposals for Selsey, subject to a minor amendment between the two district wards. As a consequence of its draft recommendations, the LGCE proposed creating new North and South wards of Selsey town to reflect the proposed district ward boundary. It proposed that both of the revised wards should continue to be represented by seven councillors as requested by the District Council. However, the LGCE noted that a better allocation of councillors between the two wards would result in North ward returning eight councillors and South ward returning six councillors and it welcomed the Town Council’s views on this issue at Stage Three.

171 At Stage Three, the District Council, the Liberal Democrats and a local resident all expressed support for the draft recommendations in this area. The District Council also concurred with the view expressed by the LGCE that a better allocation of councillors between North and South wards would result in the wards returning eight and six councillors respectively.

172 Having considered all the evidence received, and in light of the confirmation of the proposed district wards in this area, we confirm the draft recommendation for the revised warding of Selsey Town Council as final. However, we propose that North ward should return eight councillors and South ward should return six councillors in order to provide for a better allocation of councillors between the two wards.

Final Recommendation

Selsey Town Council should comprise 14 councillors, as at present, representing two wards: North (returning eight councillors) and South (returning six councillors). The boundary between the two parish wards should reflect the proposed district ward boundary, as illustrated and named on Map A2 in Appendix A.

Map 2: Final Recommendations for Chichester

6 WHAT HAPPENS NEXT?

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

174 It is now up to The Electoral Commission to decide whether to endorse our recommendations, with or without modification, and to implement them by means of an Order. Such an Order will not be made before 20 August 2002.

175 All further correspondence concerning our recommendations and the matters discussed in this report should be sent to The Electoral Commission at the address below, to arrive no later than 20 August 2002:

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

APPENDIX A

Final Recommendations for Chichester: Detailed Mapping

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

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

Map A2 illustrates the proposed boundary between Selsey North and Selsey South wards.

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

Map A1: Final Recommendations for Chichester: Key Map

Map A2: Proposed boundary between Selsey North and Selsey South wards